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HARC Research Shows Seniors Here Continue to Suffer From Falls

(PALM DESERT, CA) – Over 12% of Eastern Riverside County seniors have fallen one or more times within the past three months. The findings, published in the most recent Health Assessment Resource Center (HARC) *Community Health Monitor*, coincide with June being Home Safety Month.

An estimated 12.1% of those interviewed, representing 32,745 adults 55 or older, state they have fallen one or more times. Of those who did fall, 37.2%, representing 12,140 residents, reported experiencing an injury resulting from their fall. Seniors when asked if they had a fear of falling, 1 in 5 (22.5%) reported they had this concern. This represents 53,659 residents. Related findings included:

- Whites and Hispanic/Latino are just as likely to report being afraid of falling.
- Those in the lowest income category are the most likely to report a fear of falling.
- The fear of falling is highest among adults 75 years of age and older.
- A fear of falling is most prevalent among those who have coursework beyond high school. However, no clear pattern emerges when looking at the relationship between educational level and fear of falling.
- Over 1.5 times as many women as men report they fear falling.

According to the Center for Disease Control, falls are the leading cause of injury-induced deaths among seniors in the United States. They also represent the most common cause of nonfatal injuries and hospital admissions for trauma. By 2020, the annual direct and indirect cost of fall injuries is expected to reach \$43.8 billion.

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HARC's *Community Health Monitor* contains data from more than 3,500 completed household surveys conducted throughout Eastern Riverside County. Respondents fielded questions related to health status, behavioral risks, quality of life issues, access, and utilization of services. A total of 172 questions comprised the adult survey and 136 for children.

Because of the large sample size, researchers were able to deliver statistically valid results in virtually every major survey category. This is in stark contrast to prior needs assessment initiatives with low sample sizes and an emphasis on qualitative, rather than quantitative data.

The research initiative aims to deliver healthcare providers, cities, government agencies, and private interests a snapshot of public health in eastern Riverside County. HARC data will be used to facilitate decision-making on future issues such as program development, access, funding, utilization, and more.

About HARC

Formed in 2006 by a consortium of more than 35 public and private healthcare agencies, the Health Assessment Resource Center (HARC) conducts a confidential community health status assessment in eastern Riverside County every 3 years to identify major health and quality of life issues. The nonprofit 501 ©3 organization is funded in part by contributions from community partners, as well as entities who contract with the agency for customized public health research. More information can be obtained by calling HARC at (760) 601-3663, or visiting the organization's website at www.harcddata.org.

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