

ACT 285

H.B. NO. 474

A Bill for an Act Relating to Fall Prevention.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that unintentional falls among seniors age sixty-five years and older in Hawaii are the leading cause of fatal injuries (an average of forty-nine per cent) and injury-related emergency room visits (an average of sixty-one per cent). On average, one hundred and fourteen seniors die, ten thousand are treated in hospitals, and six thousand one hundred are treated in emergency departments as a result of falls.

The legislature further finds that falls among the elderly also result in over \$100,000,000 in combined hospital charges each year. In recognition of this critical public health issue, Act 153, Session Laws of Hawaii 2014 (Act 153), established and provided funding for a fall prevention and early detection coordinator position within the department of health's emergency medical services and injury prevention system branch. This position enables the department of health to support a coordinated statewide approach to prevent and reduce the impact of falls among older adults.

The legislature also finds that access to fall prevention services and programs would significantly reduce costs associated with falls among older adults by expediting treatment, minimize serious long-term consequences, reduce the extent of the injury, and, in some instances, avoid death.

Falls among older adults are a significant public health issue. Yet, there are insufficient resources to develop a coordinated statewide approach to reduce and promptly detect falls among seniors. A dedicated fall prevention program can serve as a focal point for statewide injury prevention and detection efforts to ensure multidisciplinary support, coordination of prevention and detection efforts, and continuity of implementation and accountability.

The legislature additionally finds that continued support of fall prevention programs and services ultimately results in longer, healthier lives for the State's aging population.

The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds to the department of health for the current fall prevention campaign.

SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$100,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 for the department of health's current fall prevention campaign.

The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department of health for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

(Approved July 3, 2025.)