**NEWS RELEASE**

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**Ohioans invited to walk a mile to help state take “10 Million Steps to Prevent Falls”**

*Fifth-annual campaign raises awareness of older adult falls in recognition of
National Falls Prevention Awareness Day*

**Columbus, Ohio** – For the fifth consecutive year, the Ohio Department of Aging, through its STEADY U Ohio falls prevention initiative, invites all Ohioans to help take “10 Million Steps to Prevent Falls.” To date, community partners have organized more than four dozen local walking events and groups on National Falls Prevention Awareness Day, Monday, Sept. 23, and throughout September.

Find a list of community events and groups at [www.aging.ohio.gov/steadyu/10MillionSteps](http://www.aging.ohio.gov/steadyu/10MillionSteps) . The list is still growing, and individuals and organizations are encouraged to continue planning and registering groups and events.

Individuals can also participate all month long by walking independently and posting a photo of their walk to social media with the hashtags #10MStepsOH and #PreventFalls. Be sure to set your post privacy to “public” so your effort can be counted toward the state’s goal.

“’10 Million Steps to Prevent Falls’ is a fun way to help all Ohioans understand that falls are not a normal part of aging,” said Ursel J. McElroy, director of the department. “Regular physical activity, like walking, is one of many things older Ohioans and their loved ones can do to reduce the risk of a potentially life-changing fall.”

Falls are the leading cause of injury-related emergency room visits, hospitalizations, and deaths for older Ohioans, but they do not need to be. In addition to regular physical activity, simple steps to prevent falls also include:

* Talk to your health care provider about falls and your risk at every visit; discuss recent falls and ask for a risk assessment.
* Ask your health care provider or physical therapist for recommended exercises to maintain or re-build strength, balance, and stamina.
* Review your medications with your health care provider or pharmacist for combinations and side effects that may increase falls risk.
* Get your hearing and vision checked annually and use eyeglasses and hearing aids as prescribed.
* Stay hydrated and eat a balanced diet.
* Examine your home for common slipping and tripping hazards – such as rugs, poor lighting, lack of handrails, and more – and remove them.

The Department of Aging’s STEADY U Ohio website, [www.steadyu.ohio.gov](http://www.steadyu.ohio.gov), offers more tips and resources to help older adults and their families make changes to their homes, health, and habits that can reduce the risk of falling.

Join the Ohio Department of Aging, its partners, and your neighbors and help take “10 Million Steps to Prevent Falls.”

**About ODA –** The Ohio Department of Aging serves and advocates for the needs of Ohioans age 60 and older, as well as their families, caregivers and communities. Programs include home and community based long-term supports and services, as well as initiatives to promote health and wellness throughout the lifespan. Visit www.aging.ohio.gov.

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