

# Patient Falls Prevention

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**FALL RISK!**

## BACKGROUND/SIGNIFICANCE:

Patient falls and fall-related injuries are devastating to patients, clinicians, and the health care system and can increase length of stay, hospital costs, long term care admissions, and death. Muscle weakness can result in increased fall risk and can also cause balance issues. Mobility exercises are effective in reducing fall risk. Department 6N is a 32 bed Surgical/Trauma Department that also serves medical and palliative patients. During the time period of May 2014-November 2014, this department experienced 25 inpatient falls. They implemented a mobility program to aid in reducing falls.

## PURPOSE:

The purpose of the project was to decrease the incidence of fall events and promote patient safety, and improve quality of care on the department.

## METHODOLOGY/PROCEDURE:

This project evolved out of a Shared Governance and System wide mobility initiative. 6North was one of the 3 departments selected as pilot units to refine the program prior to system-wide implementation. A three day skills fair was held in August of 2014. Physical Therapists instructed staff on utilizing the gait belts, performing the egress test, and appropriate use of walkers. Also a white board was used to inform staff of days since last fall. The following interventions were implemented and guided by the system-wide mobility project:

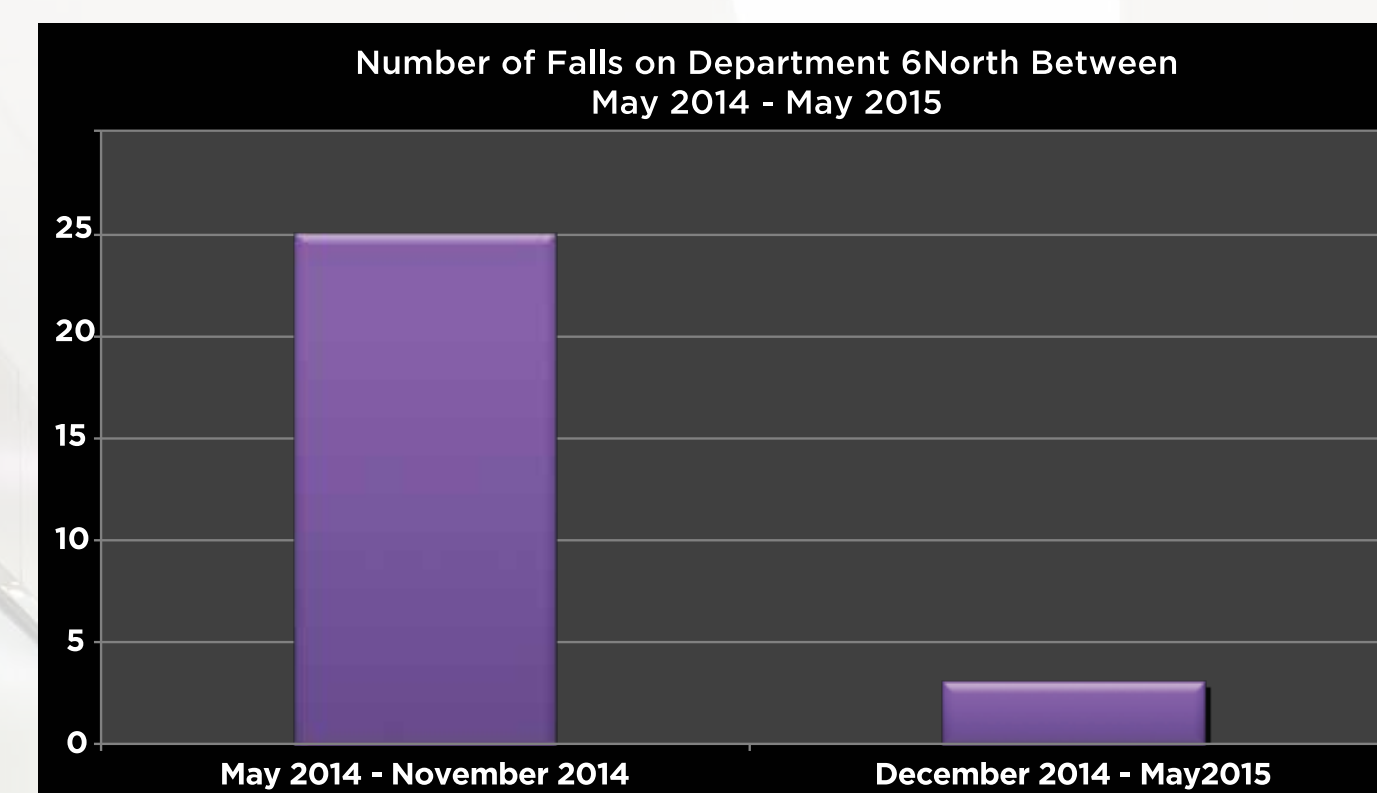
- Gait belts and walkers were added to each room
- Bedside reporting process changed
- Video camera surveillance was expanded
- Chair alarm pads became a floor stocked item

In addition, a mobility screen was added as part of the routine assessment. Results from the screen could trigger a PT/OT consult. Falls were monitored each month.

## RESULTS/OUTCOMES:

From May 2014-November 2014, there were 25 falls.

From December 2014-May 2015, there were 3 falls—an 88% reduction.



## DISCUSSION/CONCLUSIONS:

Fall prevention requires a multi-factorial approach. The benefits from improved function and mobility outweigh the risks of immobilization.

## IMPLICATIONS:

Staff engagement and heightened awareness were necessary components to the success of this project. This study demonstrated how a patient mobility program can reduce falls. Clinical nurse involvement and collaboration among healthcare professionals and patient/family engagement were key to the program's success. More emphasis needs to be placed the importance of mobility in fall prevention.

## OBJECTIVES:

- List 3 interventions that can reduce fall
- Discuss the importance of mobility in fall prevention

