

SENATE NO. 421

AN ACT RELATIVE TO THE PREVENTION OF FALLS IN THE ELDERLY COMMUNITY

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled,
And by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 19A of the general laws, as appearing in the 2004 Official Edition, is
2 hereby amended by inserting after section 4C, the following new section:-
3 (a) There shall be a special commission on falls preventions to make an investigation and
4 comprehensive study of the creation of a statewide falls reduction in the elderly community
5 program. The commission shall consist of 4 members of the senate, 1 of whom shall be the
6 senate chairperson of the joint committee on health care financing, 1 of whom shall be the
7 senate chairperson of the joint committee on elder affairs, 1 of whom shall be a member of the
8 majority party to be appointed by the president of the senate and 1 of whom shall be a member
9 of the minority party to be appointed by the minority leader of the senate; 4 members of the
10 house of representatives, 1 of whom shall be the house chairperson of the joint committee on
11 health care financing, 1 of whom shall be the house chairperson of the joint committee on elder
12 affairs, 1 of whom shall be a member of the majority party to be appointed by the speaker of the
13 house of representatives and 1 of whom shall be a member of the minority party to be appointed

14 by the minority leader of the house of representatives, the secretary of the executive office of
15 health and human services or his designee, the commissioner of the department of public health
16 or his designee, the secretary of elder affairs or his designee, the commissioner of medical
17 assistance or his designee; and 3 members appointed by the Governor, 1 of whom shall be a
18 designee from the Home Care Alliance of Massachusetts, 1 of whom shall be a designee from
19 the American Association of Retired Persons, and one of whom shall be a designee from the
20 Massachusetts Councils on Aging.

21 (b) The Commission on Falls Prevention shall conduct a review of the effects of falls of older
22 adults on health care costs, the potential for reducing the number of falls of older adults and the
23 most effective strategies for reducing falls and health care costs associated with falls. The
24 commission shall:

- 25 1. Consider strategies to improve data collection and analysis to identify fall risk, health
26 care cost data and protective factors;
- 27 2. Consider strategies to improve the identification of older adults who have a high risk of
28 falling;
- 29 3. Consider strategies to maximize the dissemination of proven, effective fall prevention
30 interventions and identify barriers to those interventions;
- 31 4. Assess the risk and measure the incidence of falls occurring in various settings;
- 32 5. Identify evidence-based community programs designed to prevent falls among older
33 adults;
- 34 6. Review falls prevention initiatives for community-based settings; and

35 7. Examine the components and key elements of the above falls prevention initiatives,
36 consider their applicability in Massachusetts and develop strategies for pilot testing,
37 implementation and evaluation

38 (c) The Commission on Falls Prevention shall submit a report to the secretary of health and
39 human services and the joint committee on health care financing, no later than November 2,
40 2009 that includes findings under section 1, recommendations and suggested legislation. The
41 report must include recommendations for:

- 42 1. A statewide demonstration project assessing the utility of targeted fall risk screening and
43 referral programs;
- 44 2. Intervention approaches, including physical activity, medication assessment and
45 reduction of medication when possible, vision enhancement and home-modification
46 strategies;
- 47 3. Programs that are targeted to fall victims who are at a high risk for 2nd falls and that are
48 designed to maximize independence and quality of life for older adults, particularly
49 those older adults with functional limitations; and
- 50 4. Programs that encourage partnerships to prevent falls among older adults and prevent or
51 reduce injuries when falls occur.