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## **Falls - the Leading Cause of TBI Injury in Massachusetts Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts Offers Tips for Prevention**

Falls are the leading cause of traumatic brain injury (TBI) in Massachusetts, according to the most recent statistics from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. In fact, TBI hospitalizations from falls increased 93 percent over 10 years. Although people of all ages can sustain a brain injury from falling, people over 65 are at particular risk.

- 73.1% of all fall deaths were among those ages 65 and over
- Among persons ages 65 and over, falls were the leading cause of fatal traumatic brain injury (58%)
- From 2000-2005 fall related traumatic brain injury hospital discharge rates among persons ages 65 and over increased 39.9% (from 136.3 per 100,000 to 190.7 per 100,000)

“Many of these injuries are preventable,” says Michelle Weinstein, Director of Prevention at BIA-MA. “With a few simple steps, you can greatly reduce the risk of falling.”

Following are tips for making home safer for you and your loved ones:

- Place no-slip mats under throw rugs or remove them completely.
- Install hand grips in bathrooms to help with balance and support.
- Make sure rooms are free from clutter and obstacles that may cause tripping.
- Review medications; many drugs, or combination of drugs, cause side effects that may inadvertently lead to falls.
- Have regular vision screenings; vision correction can make a huge difference.
- Stay active and eat well. Those who exercise regularly and eat a balanced diet have stronger bodies and are less likely to fall.

The Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts, a private, non-profit organization, provides support services to brain injury survivors and their families, offers programs to prevent brain injuries, and educates the public on the risks of irresponsible behavior and the impact of brain injury. The association advocates for funding for individuals with brain injury, supports legislation to prevent brain injuries, and collaborates on educational campaigns with state agencies and related associations.

