



# MEDIA RELEASE

## For immediate release

From: Kasey McCulloch, Media Officer, Mercy Health

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## Mercy Health recognised for falls prevention program

Mercy Health's Aged Care Quality team has won a prestigious Australian Aged Care Quality Agency *Better Practice Award* for successfully implementing a falls prevention program across its residential aged care homes. The awards showcase examples of innovative, high-quality aged care practice within the aged care community.

The *FIT for the Future* program resulted in a marked reduction in the number of aged care residents having falls and in the severity of falls.

Mercy Health General Manager of Quality Susan Blackbourn said research indicates that more than half of all people living in residential aged care homes will have at least one fall each year.

"We also know half of all falls in aged care will result in a serious injury, including fractures, which can negatively impact on a resident's independence, abilities and quality of life," explained Ms Blackbourn.

"We wanted our homes to be doing everything they could within their control to minimise the incidence and severity of falls occurring."

In 2012, Mercy Health introduced a new Falls Indicator, and developed and implemented a Falls Investigation Tool (FIT) to be used each time a resident had a fall. This document gathered data on not just the mechanics of the fall but potential causes (medication changes, toileting issues, footwear being worn etc.) as well. A Falls Data Sheet was also put in place to track each resident's falls risk in real time.

Ms Blackbourn said as a result of using these three new tools, together with targeted education of staff, there were 408 fewer falls across eleven homes during a two year period.

"Seven of the eleven homes involved in the program experienced a reduction in both the number of falls and the number of falls resulting in serious injury," said Ms Blackbourn.

"The number of falls at three other homes remained static but the new tools reduced the number of falls that resulted in injury. The fourth home significantly increased the bed numbers during the period and did not reduce their overall fall numbers."

Mercy Health will continue to monitor and evaluate the ongoing effectiveness of *FIT for the Future* to ensure it is helping each resident to have the best day possible, every day.

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