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OLDER ADULTS EMPOWERED TO REDUCE RISK OF FALLING

HICKORY, NC – Every year one out of three adults age 65 and older will fall, most in their own home. Less than half of those who fall will let their family or doctor know.

Catawba County Home Health is empowering older adults to lower their risk of falling through a new service called Smart Moves. Through this service, a home-based therapy team works with an individual's doctor to develop a plan that helps improve balance and increase independence, which can ultimately decrease the risk of falling.

"Falls are the most common cause of nonfatal injuries among older adults," said Alice Layne, RN, BSN, program manager, Catawba County Home Health. "By working to prevent falls, our therapists help older adults avoid related consequences such as hospitalization or nursing home admission."

The Smart Moves program focuses on five prevention tips:

- (M)edicine: review medicine regularly with your doctor
- (O)bstacles: assess your home to help make it safer
- (V)ision: have your vision checked regularly
- (E)xercise: build strength and balance by exercising regularly
- (S)tand: take your time when standing up and stay hydrated

Building on the five prevention tips, Home Health therapists visit the home and assess individuals in their home environment. The assessment evaluates the risk of falling by observing how an individual navigates the home and determines the need for adaptive equipment. The therapist also reviews overall health and looks for red flags, which may increase the risk of falling, such as certain medical conditions and medications that can interfere with each other.

Care provided through Smart Moves is covered by Medicare benefits for all individuals 65 and older who qualify. To find out more, talk to your doctor or call (828) 695-5849.

Serving the entire Catawba Valley area, Catawba County Home Health provides skilled nursing care and rehabilitation services for infants to the elderly. For more information, including how to access services, call (828) 695-5823 or visit www.catawbacountyhomehealth.com.