Policy Applies to
This policy aims to all Mercy staff and students.

Related Standards
- Code of Health & Disability Services Consumers Rights 2009, Right 4: Right to services of an appropriate standard.
- EQuIP Standard 1.5: The organisation provides safe care and services.
- EQuIP Criterion 1.5.4: The incidence of falls and fall injuries is minimised through a falls management programme.
- EQuIP Standard 3.2: The organisation maintains a safe environment.
- EQuIP Criterion 3.2.1: Safety management systems ensure safety and wellbeing for consumers/patients, staff, visitors and contractors.

Cultural Considerations:
Older Maori and Pacific people over the age of 50 have a shorter life expectancy, poorer health outcomes and a higher burden of chronic illness than non-Maori of the same age, and are more likely to be exposed to risk factors for poor health, it can be assumed that underlying conditions contributing to falls risk factors appear earlier and disproportionately in Pacific peoples.

Outcome
Risk assessments should be considered at an earlier age point of 55 years for this population.

Rationale:
The purpose of this policy is to prevent falls by standardising a patient centred approach to hospital falls prevention and management guidelines, using falls prevention strategies that align nationally.

Definitions:

Fall: An unexpected event in which the participant comes to rest on the ground, floor, or lower level (Lamb et al cited in HQSC, Reducing Harm from Falls, Topic 2)

Falls Risk Screening: A process to identify those patients with an increased falls risk who need either increased supervision or a detailed falls risk assessment (Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care [ACSQHC], 2009).

Falls Risk assessment and care planning: Processes fundamental to ensuring that individual patients receive the interventions and support which address their particular risks. (HQSC 2017)
Objectives:

- To provide framework and tools for nurses to identify and communicate about / to the patients at risk of falling
- Provide relevant education to staff and patients/whanau about fall prevention
- Minimise (eliminate) falls and/or harm to patients in Mercy Hospital
- To ensure a safe process is followed for supporting a patient who has fallen
- Create strong governance and process to ensure falls are monitored and results are communicated at service level.

Implementation:

- All patients are screened using the Mercy Hospital Falls risk (adapted from HQSC). If risk is identified, an individual falls care pathway is completed (online or written). This would be communicated at every point of transitions of care, i.e. between departments and at inpatient bedside handovers
- A red bracelet to visually indicate patient is at risk of falling should be applied at the point of assessment (but can be added if condition changes) and the high risk assessment alert put on patients clinical file
- A management Plan is reviewed and signed each shift (inpatients) and is discussed with the patient during handover as appropriate
- If the patient’s condition changes or they have a fall, they must be reassessed
- In the event of a fall, a patient should be assessed for injury prior to moving, then when safe, moved to a bed for further assessment. The Credentialed Specialist and patient’s whanau will be notified and an incident/ and ACC form generated as required.
- Falls Prevention strategies such as non-stick socks, appropriate footwear, and educational material is used and clearly documented in partnership with patient/Whanau.

Documentation:

- Following a fall, an online incident form must be completed
- Any patient fall must be documented in the patients clinical notes including actions taken, any injury sustained, and notification of patients relatives & credentialed specialist
- A repeat falls assessment to be completed post fall and appropriate strategies implemented
- Appropriate elevation of frequency of clinical assessment period post fall.
- ACC (45) completed if required.

Discharge:

- Where appropriate, information relating to an inpatient fall shall be included in the patients discharge summary
- Appropriate referrals made to community allied health for any follow up concerns.
Education (staff and family):
- The patient & whānau/family are included in falls screening /assessment and are provided with information and education material regarding falls prevention.
- Staff having patient contact are provided with education on falls, falls screening and assessment, and prevention and management strategies during their orientation to the organisation and at regular intervals.
- Falls Prevention Staff E-Learning Package (refer to HealthLearn)
- Identify current New Zealand Programmes available to staff and patients on the ACC & HQSC websites in relation to the falls risk and prevention education and community support programmes.

Evaluation:
- Trend number of falls with injury; SAC 1 & 2 falls are included in reports to the Quality and Risk Committee and the Health Quality & Safety Commission (HQSC)
- Audit appropriate documents to ensure that the tools are being used correctly
- Audit the incidence of falls appropriate actions taken
- Feedback from patient/family/staff included in the incident process
- Incidents reviewed and communicated with Clinical Staff

Associated Documents:
- Code of Health & Disability Services Consumers Right 1996
- ACC falls prevention – Staying safe from trips and falls
- HQSC – Reducing Harm from falls

Internal Documents:
- Clinical Records Management
- Consumer Engagement
- Cultural Policy
- Discharge of Patients
- Nursing Model of Care and Clinical Handover
- Patient Assessment
- Patient Restraint Minimisation Policy
- Environmental Cleaning
- Hazard Management
- Health and Safety
- Incidents
- Risk Management
- Safe Handling and Moving
In the Clinical Services Work Manual

- Bed Rails – How to use Safely

References / Acknowledgements:

- Health Quality and Safety Commission New Zealand: Reducing Harm from Falls retrieved from: [https://www.hqsc.govt.nz](https://www.hqsc.govt.nz)
- Retrieved from Health Quality safety commission New Zealand [https://www.hqsc.govt.nz](https://www.hqsc.govt.nz)

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 – Universal Falls Prevention Strategies
- Appendix 2 – Falls Screening
- Appendix 3 – Falls Risk Assessment and Management Plan
- Appendix 4 – responding to a Patient Fall

For all appendices refer to Work Manuals.