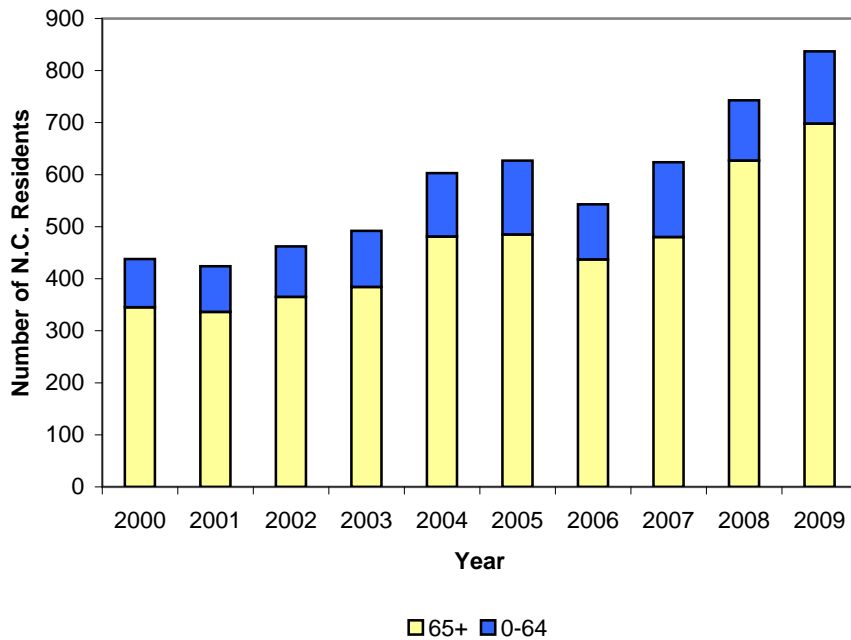


# Unintentional Falls In North Carolina

**Figure 1: All Unintentional Fall Deaths:  
N.C. Residents, 2000-2009**



- In 2009, there were 837 unintentional fall deaths among N.C. residents. This number has almost doubled since 2000 with 438 deaths (Figure 1).

- Fall injuries account for over 30 percent (182,313) of all unintentional injuries resulting in hospitalizations and emergency department visits (605,300).

- The N.C. death rate due to unintentional falls among the white population in 2009 was over two times that of blacks age 65 and over.

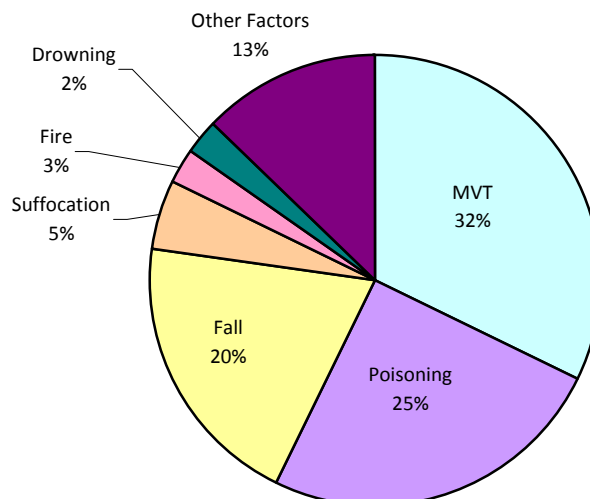
- Of N.C. residents age 65 and over, women account for over 2.5 times more ED visits from unintentional falls than men.

- Falls account for 20 percent of all unintentional injury deaths in N.C. in 2009 (Figure 2).

- Falls are the third leading cause of unintentional injury death, behind motor vehicle crashes (MVT) and poisoning (Figure 2).

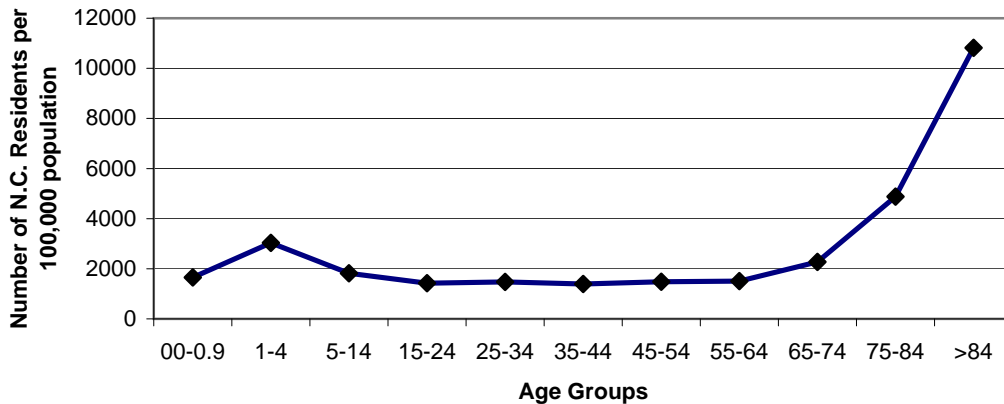
- Over 50 percent of people hospitalized for falls are discharged to a nursing facility, 16 percent return home, 13 percent have home health care, and 8 percent enter rehabilitation.

**Figure 2: Unintentional Injury Deaths:  
N. C. Residents, 2009**



# Older Adult Falls In North Carolina

Figure 3: Unintentional Fall Rates by Age Group: N.C. Residents, 2009



-Of the 837 unintentional fall deaths in 2009, more than 83 percent were over the age of 65.

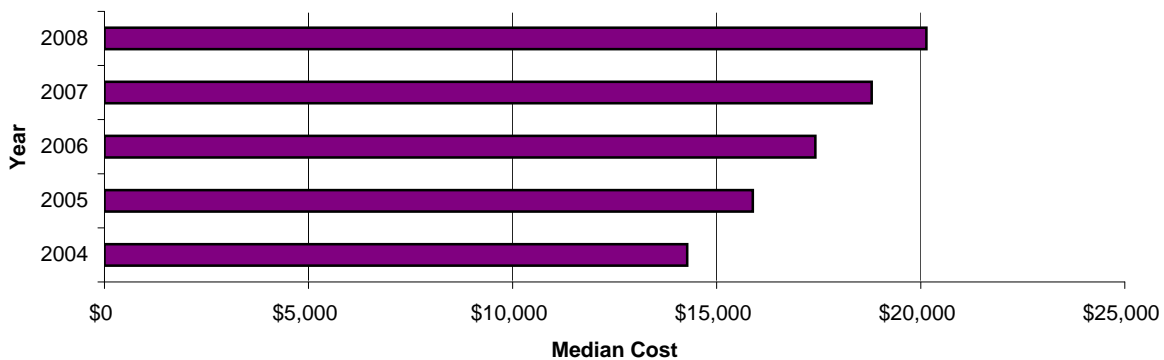
- Although unintentional fall rates slightly peak between the age of 1 and 4 (3,035.14), rates dramatically continue to increase from age 65 to the >84 age range (10,815.82) (Figure 3).

## THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW!

Many of North Carolina's counties are projected to have more people over the age of 59 than people under the age of 18. This shift in the percentage of older adults will result in a falls "epidemic" unless North Carolina addresses the issue systematically across all sectors of the state.

- Between 2004 and 2008, there were 87,358 hospitalizations due to unintentional falls in adults 65 and older. The annual total noticeably increased from 2004 (16,469) to 2008 (18,588).
- In 2008, adults age 65 and older accounted for 71 percent of all unintentional fall injury hospitalizations in N.C.
- There were 135,202 emergency department visits by adults age 65 and older from 2007 to 2009 in N.C.
- Women accounted for 73 percent of unintentional fall injury hospitalizations in adults 65 and older in 2008.
- The median hospitalization cost for unintentional fall injuries in adults 65 and older has increased by 41% since 2004, and in 2008 is \$20,139 (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Unintentional Falls Hospital Discharge Median Costs: N.C. Residents 65+, 2004-2008



N.C. Division of Public Health / [www.ncpublichealth.com](http://www.ncpublichealth.com) / Injury Epidemiology & Surveillance Unit/ 919-707-5425 / [www.injuryfreenc.ncdhhs.gov](http://www.injuryfreenc.ncdhhs.gov)  
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