

STATE OF ALASKA



Executive Proclamation by *Governor Sean Parnell*

WHEREAS, older Alaskans are the fastest growing population in our state; and

WHEREAS, 140,847 residents of Alaska are 55 years of age and older, approximately 20 percent of our state's total population; and

WHEREAS, an estimated one-third of seniors over the age of 65, and half of those over the age of 80, will fall each year; and

WHEREAS, falls are the leading cause of non-fatal injuries in Alaska for people age 55 and older and of fatal injuries for people 75 and older; and

WHEREAS, approximately 840 Alaskans age 55 and older are hospitalized from fall injuries each year, at an average cost of \$27,000 per fall, amounting to \$22.7 million annually; and

WHEREAS, after one fall, older adults are two to three times more likely to fall again; and

WHEREAS, falls are often caused by lack of strength and balance, the use of four or more medications, chronic health, vision or hearing problems, and tripping hazards in homes; and

WHEREAS, many older Alaskans become isolated by staying home during the long winter days out of fear of falling on icy walkways. Communities can help seniors and other Alaskans with physical disabilities by keeping their sidewalks clear of ice and snow; and

WHEREAS, fall prevention education is an important first step to making positive changes that will help prevent older Alaskans from falling and improve their overall health and quality of life.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Sean Parnell, Governor of the State of Alaska, do hereby proclaim September 18 - 24, 2011 as:

Senior Fall Prevention Week

in Alaska, and encourage businesses, individuals, agencies, and communities to commit to promoting awareness of the causes and consequences of falls for our elders, and improve winter maintenance conditions to reduce the risk of falls for Alaska's seniors.

Dated: September 1, 2011



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sean Parnell".

*Sean Parnell, Governor
who has also authorized the
seal of the State of Alaska to
be affixed to this proclamation.*