The Balance and Falls Special Interest Group (B&F SIG) of the Academy of Geriatrics Physical Therapy (AGPT) membership call on June 16, 2015 had 32 participants from 29 states. Falls Prevention Awareness Day (FPAD) which is scheduled for September 23, 2015 was the topic of discussion.

AGPT has started to network with the Occupational Therapy Association and move forward with a joint effort to promote FPAD. Letters have been crafted which can soon be viewed on the B&F SIG page at http://www.geriatricspt.org/members/special-interest-groups/index.cfm. These will be sent out to chapter presidents and Physical and Occupational Therapy programs throughout the U.S. The AGPT has also been contacted by the Podiatry Association to join forces for FPAD.

Most states have an advocate and coalition for Falls Awareness. You can locate your state advocate at http://www.ncoa.org/improve-health/center-for-healthy-aging/falls-prevention/state-coalitions-map/. There are currently 6 states with a vacancy! If you are interested in what this position entails or how to best utilize your state coalition, please contact Mindy Renfro at mindy.renfro@umontana.edu

The APTA’s AGPT has a group of state advocates. This group also supports FPAD activities. For more information please contact Beth Black PT, GCS at bblack@gmail.com

A number of ideas on how FPAD has been promoted were shared during our hour long membership call. They included mall presentations, falls screenings with the assistance of PT students, educational handouts, speaking at senior centers and media outreach along with a number of other great ideas!

Mindy Renfro, our B&F SIG chair recently participated in the National Council on Aging Falls Prevention Summit for the White House Conference on Aging. One of the overarching themes from this group of national experts was the need for positive messaging and a huge public health approach to simply increasing physical activity for older adults. Her full report can be viewed at http://www.geriatricspt.org/members/special-interest-groups/index.cfm

Please use the following links for more information on Falls Awareness and Prevention.

www.ncoacrossroads.org
www.cdc.gov/injury/steadi
www.stopfalls.org
We also discussed the STEADI tool kit and how to promote this. Information can be found at http://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalsafety/Falls/steadi/index.html?_cid=tw_injdir15

We will be having another membership call on July 28th at 8pm eastern time! Even if you missed our first call, please join in! We will continue our discussion of FPAD.

Respectfully submitted
Ann Lowrey, B&F SIG secretary