



**Council of Senior Centers & Services of
New York City
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CSCS

Intro. 352

A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to requiring protective devices for seniors and disabled persons who reside in multiple dwellings.

This legislation would provide for grab bars in bathtubs and shower stalls. These grab bars are an important device for minimizing the potential injuries that may result when an elderly or disabled individual slips on the bathroom floor or entering or exiting the bathtub or shower. Additionally, CSCS requests that the protection of the legislation be expanded to include the provision of grab bars in key areas of the home where falls are most likely to occur. At a minimum, the legislation should include the option of grab bars not only in the shower, but also by toilets and bathroom and kitchen sinks. Based on our research, and consultation with experts in this field, we believe that all these areas pose potential safety hazards.

Falls are the leading cause of unintentional injury death for people 65 and over. Of those who fall, 20%-30% suffer severe to moderate injuries. A shocking 25% of elderly who sustain a hip fracture die within 1 year of injury. In 1994 the average direct cost for all senior falls injuries was \$20.2 billion and by 2020 that cost is expected to reach \$32.4 billion. The current lack of an effective falls prevention program costs New York City more in health care, Medicaid, Medicare and related expenses than implementing such a program would cost.

There is a demographic revolution underway. The number of elderly people across the country is increasing dramatically. New York is no exception. Currently, there are 1.3 million people age 60 + in New York City alone and that number is projected to grow dramatically in the years to come. New York City must take active steps to plan for the fact that the population is aging and take the measures necessary to ensure that all New Yorkers may age safely, independently and with dignity in their homes and communities.

Council of Senior Centers and Services of New York City, Inc. (CSCS) is the central organization for New York City's senior service providers, representing 265 senior service organizations, ranging from individual community-based senior centers to large, multi-service, citywide organizations that, in turn, serve over 300,000 older New Yorkers daily. These programs provide the City's senior citizens with case management and information and referral; recreation and social activities; hot meals and transportation; wellness and health promotion; legal services and crime prevention programs; home care and meals-on-wheels; social adult day care and Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities; intergenerational and cross-cultural programs; and housing and assisted living services. Our mission is to promote the quality of life, independent living, productivity, and dignity of mature and older adults and their families. Therefore, CSCS, on behalf of its memberships, strongly supports the above referenced legislation.

This initiative would have the potential of saving thousands of lives, and preventing thousands of injuries while saving scarce city government resources.

For all these reasons, CSCS urges City Council to enact Intro. 352

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