



Pa. seniors deserve better fall prevention

October 30, 2026

I've been practicing physical therapy for years. I've seen a lot in that time. But until recently, I had never had the chance to meet with a lawmaker face to face. That changed when Representative Mike Kelly took the time to visit our practice.

One of the main things we discussed during his visit is the serious threat that falls pose to Erie's aging population. According to the CDC, falls are the leading cause of fatal and non-fatal injuries among older adults — and they're on the rise. As scary as that sounds, there's also an effective countermeasure that can help seniors avoid a fall that could result in serious injury or death: physical therapy.

Physical therapists help seniors improve their strength, balance, and mobility — all of which can help them avoid falls in the first place. Yet too many seniors still struggle with barriers that prevent them from accessing that kind of care and support. The Stopping Addiction and Falls for the Elderly (SAFE) Act (H.R. 1171) could change that.

The SAFE Act, a bipartisan bill, would ensure that Medicare beneficiaries receive a free falls risk assessment by a trained physical or occupational therapist as part of their annual wellness visits. That's a simple step that would help prevent falls and keep seniors in Pennsylvania, and across the country, healthier.

I am glad that Congressman Kelly took our meeting to heart and recently signed on as a cosponsor of the SAFE Act. Now, it's time for Congress to pass this commonsense legislation; tens of millions of older Americans are counting on it.

Kevin Kane, Hilliard, Ohio, regional vice president of Drayer Physical Therapy, Erie