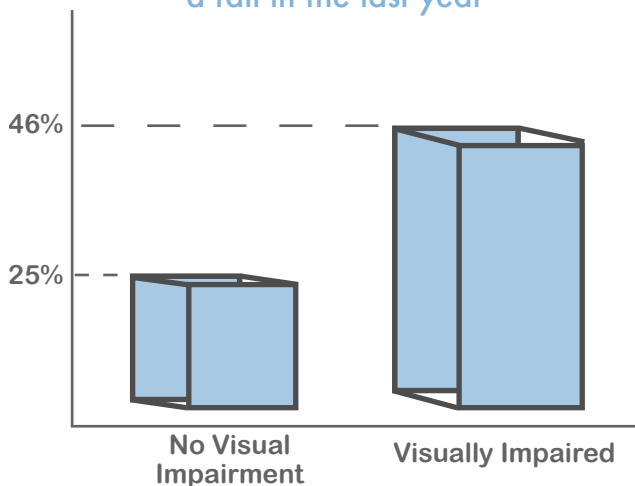


# Vision Impairment and Health Risks

Vision impairment (VI) is associated with falls, which occur frequently among older adults and often cause long-term disabilities<sup>2</sup>. In 2013, the direct medical costs Nationally of falls among persons aged over 65 years were \$34 billion<sup>1</sup>.

Factors associated with falls include contrast sensitivity and poor balance, as well as poor visual acuity. Additional reasons include multiple chronic conditions, gait problems, lower extremity muscle weakness, and the use of multiple medications, some of which might exacerbate these problems<sup>2</sup>.

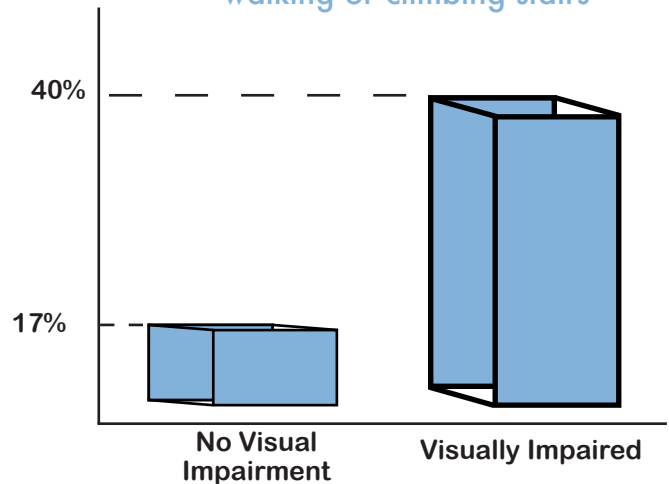
Nebraskans who have experienced a fall in the last year



## In Nebraska

- 46% of Nebraskans with vision impairment have experienced one or more fall in the last year
- 46% of Nebraskans with vision impairment have serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs
- 59% of Nebraskans with vision impairment have “any health problem that requires use of special equipment such as a cane, wheelchair, special bed or special telephone.”

Nebraskans who have serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs



Of Nebraskan’s with visual impairment, that have experienced one or more falls in the past 12 months:

White	51%
Black or African American	37%
Hispanic	29%
Non-Hispanic	48%

Beyond the physical health risks posed by visual impairment, there are also emotional and mental, as well as economic and access problems that accompany impairment.

	VI	No VI
Limited in any way in any activities because of physical, mental or emotional problems	56%	17%
Delayed getting needed medical care due to lack of transportation	18%	2%
Needed to see a doctor in past 12 months but did not due to costs	28%	11%

Self Reported Data from 2014 CDC Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

Cited Resources

1 Stevens JA, Corso PS, Finkelstein EA, Miller TR. The cost of fatal and non-fatal falls among older adults. Inj Prev 2006. 12;290-5. CrossRef PubMed.

2 Lord SR, Smith ST, Menant JC. Vision and falls in older people: risk factors and intervention strategies. Clin Geriatr Med 2010; 26:569-81. CrossRef PubMed.