



Success Stories

Healthy Living Matters. Prevention Works.

A Second Chance at Better Health

VETERAN STEPHEN GREIG DISCUSSES HOW MOVE! HELPED HIM COMMIT TO MAKING HEALTHY CHOICES EACH DAY AND LOSE OVER 36 POUNDS

"When I was younger, I was thin and active. But after getting married, I gradually began to get heavier and it affected my health. For the past 12 years, I've had a problem with my weight. I tried different diets and exercise programs without success. I even tried the MOVE! Program in 2013, but quit. By 2015, I knew that I needed to get my weight under control. So I decided to give MOVE! another chance.



I originally got interested in MOVE! because of the 'health buddy' device I used at home through VA Telehealth. It asked if I knew that the VA offers MOVE!. It also said that I just had to talk to my VA provider or telehealth coordinator to get into the program.

Last fall, I asked my coordinator to get me an appointment with a VA dietitian. The dietitian did a thorough assessment on me, then set me up with the MOVE group at the Boston VAMC.

This second time, MOVE! worked for me. I started in September of 2015, weighing over 252 pounds. I finished the program in December 2016, weighing 216 pounds. In 4 months, I lost a total of over 36 pounds!

The structure of MOVE! was very helpful. The program gives you a book with all the information you need. The book made it easier for me to follow the program. MOVE! also stresses portion control, rather than just saying 'you can't have this or that.' I learned a lot about nutrition, exercise, and making small changes.

MOVE! really changed my thinking about food. I remember going to a banquet, and as I was at the buffet filling my plate, I thought about all the things that our MOVE leader, Melissa Moore-Boyle, emphasized in class.

Before MOVE, I would make two to three trips to the buffet, pile the food on my plate, and sample every dessert. Honestly, I would have gladly pulled my chair up and sat at the buffet! Now, instead of overflowing my plate with food, I only make one trip to the buffet and choose healthier foods. I'm much more aware of my portion sizes. If I have dessert, I'm satisfied with a small portion.

I'm also more mindful about what I put in my mouth. I no longer have cravings and I will choose an apple over cookies, for example.

Melissa really helped me by continuing to stress the importance of being committed to making healthy choices each and every day. Everyone in my MOVE! group was in the same boat—we all needed to lose weight, and many had diabetes and were dealing with complications, such as neuropathy. It was great to know we were all struggling with the same issues, and that we all understood the challenges that we needed to overcome.

Throughout the 16-week program, I had the incredible support of my wife, who cooked healthier meals for me and celebrated all my successes, big or small. My son also encouraged me along the way to stay committed.

“ It was great to know we were all struggling with the same issues and...understood the challenges that we needed to overcome.”

– Stephen Greig

My health has improved a lot. I was able to reduce my blood pressure medication to once-a-day dosing. Before MOVE!, my A1C was as high as 8.8%, and I was taking a concentrated insulin that's used by diabetics who need a large amount to manage their disease. Now, my A1C is 6.7% and although I still take insulin, I no longer need the concentrated insulin.

I also have more energy. I used to get winded going up the stairs, but now I can walk farther without getting tired. I've noticed a difference in how my clothes fit, too. Three years ago, I bought an extra-large American Legion shirt, which didn't really fit me. Today, that shirt feels loose on me!

Other Veterans should know that MOVE! focuses on them as individuals. Nobody will ridicule them if they don't reach their weight goal; instead, they'll get a lot of help and support.”