

Don't Give Up!:

Veteran Frank Sinclair Explains How MOVE![®] Helped Him End A Decade-Long Battle With His Weight

"I'd been struggling with my weight for more than 10 years, gradually gaining weight. In 2001, I weighed 221 pounds; by 2003, my weight was in the 230s. In 2004, it was in the 240s, then in the 250s by 2006! In 2007, I attended my first MOVE![®] session, but dropped out after three sessions because I go to Florida for the winter. By 2008, my weight was in the 270s. It stayed there for years and I was frustrated.

By October 2012, I was the heaviest I'd ever been: 273 pounds! I knew I had to do something because I was buying larger pants and unhappy with my appearance. The excess weight was putting so much strain on my knees that I had to have them replaced.

I heard about the MOVE![®] Program again from my physician, Dr. Tysvin at the Boston VA HCS. She recommended it not only because of my upwardly spiraling weight. My blood sugar levels had also started increasing, and that scared me. I knew I had to do something—I had a friend who didn't manage his diabetes, so I knew what could happen to me.

Prior to doing MOVE![®] at the Framingham (MA) Outpatient Clinic, I'd never tried any other weight loss programs. I knew I was ready to start the program because I was motivated to make the dietary and life style changes necessary to prevent diabetes, reduce my weight, and control my blood pressure and lipids. I began MOVE![®] in October 2012, and during my first meeting with the dietician, she asked about my typical food intake. I said that I would dine out one to two times a week and eat takeout one to two times a week. She discussed which foods I should avoid or eat more of. She also helped me understand portions and portion control, which was really helpful.

The clinic I attended didn't have a MOVE![®] group, but they did offer one-to-one MOVE![®] counseling. At the first meeting, I learned about making healthy food choices, doing food and activity logs, and which online resources were available. During the first



month of MOVE!®, I just concentrated on consuming lean protein and more fruits and vegetables. I eliminated junk food, cut down on beer, and started exercising every day—35 minutes on my bicycle, 30 minutes of stretches and calisthenics.

A month later, at my second meeting, I'd already lost over 12 pounds! By the third month in MOVE!®, I'd lost another 7 pounds simply by continuing my lifestyle changes, drinking more water, and watching my portions.

From December to May of 2013, I went to Florida. Although I wasn't doing MOVE!® there, I continued to maintain my healthy diet. I also stayed active, going to the gym and walking each day. When I returned to MOVE!® in May, I'd lost a total of 50 pounds!

Throughout my weight loss journey, my wife and the VA staff were my biggest supporters. While I was in Florida, I unexpectedly lost my wife to a stroke. Around that time, it was hard to focus on diet and exercise. But I knew that she would've wanted me to stay healthy for our young grandchildren. I've kept on track by seeing VA staff about every 3 months, and I recently set a goal to lose another 15-20 pounds.

Since losing the weight through MOVE!®, I've noticed that I can breathe much better, walk longer distances, and keep up more easily with my four grandsons. The best part of losing weight is that my doctor has started to cut my medication dosages, and my knees don't hurt like they used to!

To stay healthy, I continue to watch my portion sizes. I eat more salads, fruits, and fish, and I exercise three to four times a week. When shopping, I stay away from the center aisle where the chips and cookies are. Instead, I stick to the outside aisle—fruits and vegetables. To remind myself to keep moving forward, I look in the mirror: it helps me remember what I looked like before.

I'd like other Veterans to know that the weight goes on slowly, so it'll come off slowly, too. If you put on a few pounds, don't worry...but don't ignore it either. Just stay focused and start again the next day—it's not a race, it's a lifestyle change! It takes time to improve your health and achieve a healthier weight. So be patient and don't give up!"

