



Success Stories

Healthy Living Matters. Prevention Works.

A Team Approach to MOVE! Success...

AFTER HIS DECLINING HEALTH NEARLY CAUSED A SERIOUS FALL, VETERAN JIM NYS DID SOMETHING ABOUT IT. HE REACHED OUT TO HIS CARE TEAM AT THE FORT HARRISON VA MEDICAL CENTER IN HELENA, MONTANA.

The result was an uplifting example of how this Veteran and his VA health care team worked together to achieve his goals. Find out how each member of the team contributed to a 45-pound weight loss and a stunning improvement in Jim's health!



A near miss becomes a call for change.

Jim Nys, of Clancy, MT, is a 22-year Navy Veteran with a 100% service-connected disability. Jim has been a patient at the Fort Harrison VA Medical Center in Helena, MT, for about 15 years.

While vacationing in Florida in February 2015, Jim noticed a weakness in his legs and lower back pain while walking down some stairs. Though he didn't fall, the event concerned him. So after returning home, Jim visited with his Fort Harrison care team, headed by Dr. Mike Strekall.

Jim and his MOVE! care team start working together.

Jim and Dr. Strekall agreed that the MOVE! program was the best option to improve his health. Jim soon began working with Fort Harrison physical therapist Hannah Marron. After Jim regained the strength in his legs and lower back, Hannah suggested that Jim take part in Fort Harrison's twice-weekly MOVE! Exercise Program.

Meanwhile, Jim also began working with Holly Alastra, a registered dietitian and MOVE! Coordinator at Fort Harrison. Holly introduced Jim to the four-month MOVE! Weight Management Program. He started learning about things like proper portion size and how to make healthier food choices. And as part of a trial MOVE! program, Jim even tried his hand at yoga!

“VA delivered on its offer of providing a life-changing service. The MOVE! Program works.”

– Jim Nys

The team approach pays off.

With the support of his MOVE! coaches, Jim began to see the benefits of his hard work. Between his fitness and nutrition programs, Jim lost more than 45 pounds! What's more, another key team member, Jim's wife Nancy, attended MOVE! with him in support—and Nancy lost weight, too!

In about a year, Jim dropped from a size-44 waistline to a size 36. His blood sugar levels dropped so much, Jim was able to cut his insulin to just 25% of the amount he was taking before starting MOVE!.

MOVE!'s results still felt years later.

It's been two years since Jim joined MOVE! With the help of his wife, smarter eating, and regular physical activity, Jim has maintained his weight loss. He spends a lot of time walking, which before his MOVE! success had been painful due to an old leg injury.

Lasting health, lasting friendships.

According to Jim, his care team, including the entire physical therapy department and the MOVE! nutrition and diabetes education experts at Fort Harrison, left him “more than impressed. They have been professional, helpful, friendly, and encouraging.”

But, Jim adds, his terrific health gains aren't even the best part of his MOVE! experience. Instead, it's the friendships made with other Veterans in the MOVE! program met along his journey.