

## **Properly and Faithfully:** **VETERAN DAVID SIAS, FORMERLY HOMELESS,** **DROPS 63 POUNDS THROUGH MOVE!<sup>®</sup>**

Veteran David Sias says that he didn't have problems with weight until he became homeless. "I started to gain weight, and struggled with it over the 16 years I was in a shelter and later, a Soldiers Home," he explains. The food there was good and plentiful, but loaded with starches and carbohydrates—potatoes, white rice and pasta, lots of bread, etc. And the only way David could manage his weight—through physical activity—was often impeded by his poor health.

### **Persuasive Advice**

Ongoing health issues coupled with repeated advice from his VA doctors finally motivated David to get involved with MOVE!<sup>®</sup>. "My PCP, Dr. Beverly Greenwold, was very persuasive, as was my cardiologist, Dr. Katherine Britton," he recalls. "I was coping with high blood pressure and blood sugar, elevated cholesterol levels, and asthma. But they kept telling me how much better I would feel if I were more active and changed my diet."

David listened, and when he later moved into his own home, he knew it was time to "do something."

### **Healthy Competition**

David started the MOVE!<sup>®</sup> Program at the Causeway Outpatient Clinic of the VA Boston Healthcare System in June 2011. Knowledge and support from VA staff—RD Christine Reid and LPN Julianne Farrell—as well as from fellow group members are the things that have kept him regularly attending the meetings ever since. "In our MOVE!<sup>®</sup> group, I learned about the best foods to eat, how much to eat, and how important daily exercise



would be to help with weight loss,” he explains. “And the encouragement and compliments I received motivated me the most to stay committed.”

David adds that while MOVE!® didn’t directly encourage competitive participation, his natural competitiveness helped give him something to work towards. “Our MOVE!® leaders, for example, encouraged us to use pedometers to record the number of steps we took each week,” he recalls. “From October 2012 through October 2013, our MOVE!® group members walked 11,689,772 steps—a total 5,888 miles!”

### **Nice Work**

Over the past 2 years, David’s weight loss has been a “work in progress”—but an impressive one. “In June 2011, I weighed 340 pounds. Today, I’m at 277,” he says proudly. “That’s 63 pounds, which is almost halfway to my desired weight of 144 pounds!” His pants are down eight sizes, he’s dropped a size in compression stockings, and his health numbers have dramatically improved. “Before MOVE!®, my A1c was up to 7.1. Now, it’s 6.6,” he reports. “And my cholesterol has dropped from 172 way down to 112!”

Today, David is pleased with his weight loss and newfound health. “It’s really improved my mood,” he explains. “I eat right, walk, and do light calisthenics to stay healthy and active, and my diet consists of lots of fruits and vegetables.” David limits his starchy foods and red meat each week, and eats more brown rice and whole-wheat pasta—typically 2-3 vegetarian meals a week. Now able to walk 2-3 miles every day and do pushups and sit-ups, he’s also exercising more than ever.

David’s advice to other Veterans about MOVE!® is very simple: “This program works if you follow it properly and faithfully!”