



VA BUTLER HEALTHCARE
325 New Castle Rd.
Butler, PA 16001

News Release

Contact: Joshua Hudson or
Paula McCarl
(724) 285-2576 or 2575

For Immediate Release

May 19, 2010

VA BUTLER VETERANS LOOSES THE WEIGHT

"We don't do diets—we do lifestyle."

(BUTLER, PENNSYLVANIA) – A large number of Veteran's are living larger. According to a 2009 study by the Veteran Health Administration, obesity is creating significant health risks, from hypertension and diabetes to cancer and heart disease. It is also costing the Veteran's Administration over \$100 billion annually in added healthcare costs. VA Butler Healthcare Center is battling the bulge with a weight management program called ["MOVE!"](#) ("Move more, sit less").

"This is a national program that focuses on healthy lifestyle changes as well as weight management," said Laurie Conti, physical therapist and [MOVE!](#) program coordinator. "Over 77 percent of our Veterans are overweight or obese. These unhealthy lifestyles are creating a significant health risks. Having Veterans live healthier and leaner reduces healthcare costs, adds quality to Veteran's lives; and allows them to live longer and independently."

[MOVE!](#) is an eight-week group program that meets weekly working with veterans to make lifestyle changes for healthier living. The program also has a bi-monthly support group and will soon expand into the Butler VA [outpatient clinics](#) and tele-health programs. Veterans can even track their progress and coordinate their weight loss, blood pressure, and diet with their primary care physician online through the ["MyHealthVet"](#) service provided to all Veterans.

"I lost 40 pounds, and I needed to lose that weight," said Butler-native Peter Miano. "I couldn't do it myself. I just didn't have the knowledge, support and incentive. They kept me on my toes and because they cared so much I did."

VA Butler Healthcare's [MOVE!](#) program involves a team of specialists: physical therapists, dieticians, behavioral health professionals and nurses. Each professional educates and trains the Veteran about proper exercise, diet as well as reorients Veterans how to develop a long-term healthy lifestyle.

"I used to just jump on whatever diet my wife was on," said Miano who has unsuccessfully battled with his weight for years. "Now I am reading all the (food) labels more than she does."

"Our goal is not to make every Veteran skinny," said Conti, "but promote healthy lifestyles and reduce health risks. Regardless of activity and diet, a Veteran that has extra weight is adding stress to the body. A 5 to 10 percent weight loss significantly reduces many risks to their health."

The program has completed over 13 eight-week programs since its start and recorded an accumulative weight loss of 1,200 pounds. The loss of weight is significant, but more significant is the increase in physical stamina and increased vigor that each Veteran regains. Improved physical fitness also increases mental wellbeing.

"I feel good," said Miano. "Not just because I am healthier without the weight, but I feel good because I accomplished something important for myself."

The program is available free of charge to all [enrolled Veterans](#) at VA Butler Healthcare. Those interested in the program need to consult with their primary care physician.

VA Butler Healthcare, located on a scenic wooded 88-acre campus in the heart of Butler County, Pennsylvania, is the provider of choice for over 17,000 Veterans throughout Western Pennsylvania and parts of Ohio. VA Butler, a member of VA Healthcare-VISN 4, provides primary care, specialty care, mental health and social support services to Veterans at its main campus and serves a rural Veteran population through community based outpatient clinics (CBOCs) in Armstrong County, southern Butler County (Cranberry Township), Clarion County, Lawrence County, and Mercer County. VA Butler Healthcare has over 600 employees and volunteers dedicated to meeting the diverse needs of America's heroes, now and in the future. For more information about VA Butler Healthcare, and links to special programs and initiatives, interested persons can log onto <http://www.butler.va.gov>". Media queries and requests should be directed to David Virag at (724)-285-2576 or David.Virag@va.gov.

###