



Department of
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News Release

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VA Weight Control Campaign Ramps Up *Obesity, Diabetes Major Health Threats: Secretary Nicholson*

WASHINGTON – By the start of Healthy Weight Week (Jan. 21-27), more than 41,000 veterans were participating in a weight management program designed by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to reduce the high rates of illness among VA’s patients caused by obesity.

“There is a growing epidemic of obesity and diabetes in the nation, especially among veterans,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson. “Seventy percent of the veterans VA cares for are overweight and one in five has diabetes, both of which increase the risk of many diseases.”

The MOVE! program – “Managing Overweight Veterans Everywhere” – not only encourages veterans enrolled in VA care to get in shape but also offers information to family members and anyone trying to lose weight through an Internet link.

VA started MOVE! to encourage veterans to increase their physical activity and improve their nutrition. Through individual and group counseling, physicians, nurses, dieticians and recreational therapists help enrollees change their eating behavior and increase their exercise. Primary care teams at all VA medical centers stay in touch with participants to track their progress. Increasing numbers of VA community-based clinics also are enrolling veterans.

Among activities they promote are competitions in fitness challenges, joining community exercise programs that partner with VA medical facilities, and leading families and friends into movement and nutrition routines.

Anyone can log onto www.move.va.gov, where a questionnaire helps identify personal barriers to weight control. The questions link to about 100 informational materials on the site. People not enrolled in VA health care can take the information about themselves to their personal health care providers.

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MOVE 2/2/2/2

Hall of Fame quarterback John Elway is promoting the VA campaign. He began appearing in television public service announcements (PSAs) nationwide in early January. In the 15-, 30- and 60-second PSAs, Elway is seen at the playing field of the Denver Broncos, encouraging veterans to become more active and improve their nutrition habits. The Elway PSAs can be viewed at www.healthierUSveterans.va.gov.

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