



Press Release

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SENATORS ARLEN SPECTER (R-PA) AND BYRON DORGAN (D-ND) ANNOUNCE PASSAGE OF S.RES.56

DECLARING MARCH DEEP-VEIN THROMBOSIS AWARENESS MONTH

-- Honors Memory of Fallen NBC News Correspondent David Bloom--

WASHINGTON, D.C., March 3, 2005 --With unanimous consent, Senate co-sponsors Arlen Specter (R-PA) and Byron Dorgan (D-ND) yesterday moved to raise public awareness of deep-vein thrombosis (DVT)—a condition that affects up to two million Americans annually, according to the American Heart Association. Among the many victims was NBC News Correspondent David Bloom. While covering the war in Iraq, Bloom was stricken with a fatal pulmonary embolism (PE), a complication of DVT

“DVT strikes millions unknowingly each year,” Senator Specter said. “With this resolution, we hope to raise public awareness for DVT—a serious yet preventable condition—so that others, like David Bloom, will not suffer at its hand.”

Of those who develop PE, up to 200,000 will die each year, which is more than from breast cancer and AIDS combined. Yet, most Americans (74 percent) have little or no awareness of DVT, according to a national survey sponsored by the American Public Health Association.

“This little-known condition hospitalizes up to 600,000 people each year, causing additional healthcare costs of more than \$20,000 per person, per case,” said Senator Byron Dorgan, chair of the Congressional Heart and Stroke Coalition. “If we are able to raise awareness, we’ll save health care costs, but more importantly, we’ll save lives.”

This resolution advances the mission of the Coalition to Prevent DVT—an organization of more than 35 leading public health organization seeking to raise awareness of this condition. With Melanie Bloom, widow of David Bloom, as its national spokesperson, the Coalition is sponsoring a public education initiative focused on this preventable silent killer.

To commemorate the resolution’s passage, Tim Russert, host of NBC’s “Meet the Press” and NBC News Washington Bureau Chief will be serving as master of ceremonies of a reception in the US Capitol March 3, in memory of David Bloom, with Senators Specter and Dorgan as honored guests

Coalition Medical Advisory Board Member Geno Merli, M.D. of Thomas Jefferson University exclaimed, “It will take all our collective efforts to continue to raise the level of awareness about this common yet preventable condition. The resolution passed today is a broad step towards our goal.”

About Deep-Vein Thrombosis and Pulmonary Embolism

Deep-vein thrombosis is a medical condition that occurs when a thrombus (blood clot) forms in one of the large veins, usually in the lower limbs, leading to either partially or completely blocked circulation. The condition may result in health complications, such as PE and even death if not diagnosed and treated effectively.

DVT may be caused by a variety of risk factors and triggering events, including restricted mobility, major surgery, cancer and certain heart or respiratory diseases.

Pulmonary embolism can occur when a fragment of a blood clot breaks loose from the wall of the vein and migrates to the lungs, where it blocks a pulmonary artery or one of its branches. Preventative treatments for DVT include early mobilization, sequential compression devices to prevent blood clotting, and anticoagulants and/or blood-thinning drugs, such as low-molecular-weight heparin, unfractionated heparin and warfarin sodium. It is important to consult your healthcare provider about the signs and symptoms associated with DVT.

DVT Awareness Month is sponsored by the Coalition to Prevent Deep-Vein Thrombosis and supported by an unrestricted educational grant from sanofi-aventis.

About the Coalition to Prevent Deep-Vein Thrombosis

In February 2003, more than 60 organizations assembled at the Public Health Leadership Conference on Deep-Vein Thrombosis in Washington, D.C. to discuss the urgent need to make DVT a major U.S. public health priority. As a result of this meeting, which was co-hosted by the American Public Health Association and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, participants agreed to establish a Coalition of organizations committed to educating the public and healthcare community about DVT. To date, more than 35 organizations have joined the Coalition to Prevent Deep-Vein Thrombosis, comprised of national thought leaders and representatives from key organizations, including the American College of Chest Physicians, the American Public Health Association and the Society of Hospital Medicine.

The mission of the Coalition to Prevent Deep-Vein Thrombosis is:
To reduce the immediate and long-term dangers of deep-vein thrombosis (DVT) and pulmonary embolism (PE), which together comprise one of the nation’s leading causes of death. The Coalition will educate the public, healthcare professionals and policy-makers about risk factors, symptoms and signs associated with DVT, as well as identify evidence-based measures to prevent morbidity and mortality from DVT and PE.

For more information, visit www.preventdvt.org.

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