

# THE NATIONAL QUALITY FORUM

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **NQF Works to Develop National Action Plan For DVT Prevention, Treatment, and Research**

Washington, DC – Representatives of consumer, clinical, and research groups came together today at a National Quality Forum (NQF) summit to devise a national plan to increase public awareness of the dangers surrounding deep vein thrombosis (DVT) and push clinicians and researchers to close the existing knowledge gaps.

The summit was a daylong series of briefings, discussions, and working sessions that focused on setting a plan of action to help reduce the incidence of DVT by advancing knowledge among clinicians, researchers, and consumers. March is DVT Awareness Month.

“DVT is a serious medical condition for which virtually every adult is at risk,” said Janet M. Corrigan, PhD, MBA, President and CEO of NQF. “That so many stakeholders from so many diverse backgrounds have convened to work on this demonstrates the gravity of DVT, both in human and in financial costs.”

DVT occurs when a thrombus (blood clot) forms in one of the large veins, usually in the lower limbs, leading to circulation blockage. The condition often results in health complications such as a pulmonary embolism (PE), which is often fatal if not diagnosed and treated properly. Yet, evidence shows that of patients at risk for DVT, only about one-third actually receive treatment – despite the fact that it is often diagnosable and treatable.

Symptoms of DVT may include pain, swelling, tenderness, discoloration or redness of the affected area, and skin that is warm to the touch. However, as many as half of all DVT episodes are “silent;” for thousands of sufferers, the first symptom is a PE that is followed by death.

### **DVT FACTOIDS:**

Every person is at risk of suffering a DVT, commonly known as a blood clot. Everyday activities – including traveling long distances, undergoing surgery, receiving treatment for cancer, pregnancy, or even suffering an injury – can lead to development of a DVT.

VTE, which encompasses DVT and pulmonary embolism (PE), is the most common preventable cause of hospital death.

Over 900,000 Americans suffer VTE each year, with about 400,000 of these being DVT; of the 900,000 about 500,000 suffer PE.

Of the PE cases, some 300,000 are fatal.

Prophylaxis is one component of the prevention of DVT but at least 50 percent of those diagnosed and hospitalized with DVT have not received preventive treatment.

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*NQF's mission is to dramatically improve quality of care. Its portfolio includes the endorsement of performance measurement consensus standards, educational programs for health care leaders on key environmental trends, and award recognition programs. NQF, a non-profit organization (qualityforum.org) with diverse stakeholders across the public and private health sectors, was established in 1999 and is based in Washington, DC.*

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