



Melanie Bloom
*National Patient
Spokesperson
Coalition to Prevent DVT*

*Honorary Chairwoman
& Keynote Speaker for the
Celebration of Gratitude
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Melanie Bloom never envisioned herself taking center stage on an important public-health issue. But after her husband, NBC News correspondent David Bloom, unexpectedly died from complications of deep-vein thrombosis (DVT) while covering the war in Iraq, she felt compelled to speak out.

After David's sudden death in April 2003, Melanie became acutely aware of DVT and pulmonary embolism (PE), a potentially fatal complication of DVT. In her early research about the condition, she was startled to learn that DVT-related PE claims the lives of more than 300,000 people each year—more lives taken than from AIDS and breast cancer combined. Melanie discovered that David had a silent risk factor, Factor V Leiden—an inherited blood-coagulant disorder that can increase a person's risk for DVT. She also discovered David's risk factors for DVT included long airplane rides, dehydration and restricted mobility, all of which when combined, may have led to the development of his fatal blood clot. She learned that there are even more common causes of DVT, and having three or more risk factors may lead to a potentially fatal PE.

One of the most important things Melanie uncovered is that the risk of DVT can be significantly reduced if one is aware of the risk factors, signs and symptoms.

Since the loss of her husband, Melanie has received thousands of letters and e-mails of support, including those from people who said David's tragic story made them aware of their own risk for DVT, motivated them to take action, and consequently save their lives. Such letters and personal stories have inspired Melanie to take an active role in awareness and serve as the National Patient Spokesperson on behalf of the Coalition to Prevent DVT.

Since becoming an ambassador of DVT awareness, Melanie has worked behind the scenes to develop campaign strategies and expand the Coalition's messaging. For six consecutive years she has participated in the Coalition's annual awareness month campaign, given speeches at countless hospitals and medical conferences throughout the country, and taken center stage in the Coalition's public Service Announcements. Melanie has effectively delivered her message over the radio airwaves, and has frequently appeared on national network news programs on NBC, CNN, FOX, MSNBC, as well as their regional and local affiliates in her ongoing efforts to raise public awareness.

To date, more than one billion educational messages have been disseminated through the Coalition's efforts, but Melanie knows that this is just the beginning. More needs to be done to defeat this important medical condition.

On the public policy front, she has played a role locally and nationally. On the local level, Melanie has helped to garner the support of top policy makers in cities and states nationwide, resulting in more than 20 city and state resolutions and proclamations officially declaring March as DVT Awareness Month. On the federal level, she has served on the Steering Committee for the National Quality Forum to help establish guidelines. She actively champions outreach on Capitol Hill to further legislation, much of which became a catalyst for the recent Surgeon General's Call to Action. Melanie had the distinct honor of representing the Coalition, as Acting Surgeon General, Rear Admiral Steven K. Galson, M.D., M.P.H., issued the Call to Action on September 15, 2008 to drive awareness to reduce the number of cases of DVT and PE in the United States. The Call to Action deems DVT a national public health priority, and at the event Melanie was nationally recognized for her commitment to raising DVT awareness.

Now, almost everywhere Melanie goes someone has their own DVT tale to tell. Some have happy endings—treatment was received and they lived—and some stories, like David's story, have heartbreaking endings. To raise further awareness in our nation, Melanie will continue her ongoing mission and dedication to this cause. It is her ambition to make DVT a household name and to ensure others are informed with the knowledge needed to reduce their risk of developing a DVT and the potentially fatal complication, PE.

Melanie is recently remarried, and she and her three daughters now reside with her new husband, Daniel McNulty, and his two children in Connecticut. She is writing her first book to be published in the spring of 2010.