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NATF Will Host Timely Discussion on Follow-on Biologics

Boston, MA, July 8, 2009 - The North American Thrombosis Forum (NATF) is convening a meeting among healthcare professionals, policy makers, and industry representatives to discuss recently proposed United States legislation and its effects on patient safety. Two competing bills at issue are the "Promoting Innovation and Access to Life-Saving Medicine Act," introduced in both the House and the Senate by Representative Henry Waxman (D-CA) and Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY), respectively, and the "Pathways for Biosimilars Act," introduced in the House by Representative Anna Eshoo (D-CA). These bills deal with guidelines for approval of biogenerics, or follow-on biologics, which include the low molecular weight heparin drug class, used to treat thrombosis and related diseases. Biogenerics, or follow-on biologics are the generic equivalents to name brand medications.

NATF is spearheading the discussion out of concern that such legislation could result in abbreviated pre-approval testing. NATF Executive Director Ilene Sussman, PhD, has previously stated that "the rushed approval of generic biological products sounds promising for increasing availability and decreasing the cost of such biologics as heparin," but in reality such legislation "may have a net negative effect on public health outcomes in the United States," particularly for high risk patients.

The discussion will be held in Boston at the Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel (138 St James Avenue, Boston, MA) on Saturday, July 11 from 12 PM to 5 PM. Topics for discussion include current issues and statements surrounding biosimilars and follow-on biologics; heparin contaminants and quality issues surrounding unfractionated heparin; and the European perspective on biosimilars and follow-on biologics. The discussion will also include several question and answer sessions.

For an event itinerary and to register to attend the discussion, contact Ilene Sussman at 617-525-8326 or visit www.natfonline.org.

About the North American Thrombosis Forum - NATF is a multi-disciplinary organization founded with the objective of improving patient care through the advancement of thrombosis education. The goal of NATF is to focus on unmet needs and issues related to thrombosis and cardiovascular diseases such as deep vein thrombosis, pulmonary embolism, myocardial infarction, peripheral arterial occlusive disease, and stroke. NATF's five areas of major focus are 1) basic translational research, 2) clinical research, especially diagnosis and therapy, 3) prevention and education, 4) public policy, and 5) advocacy.