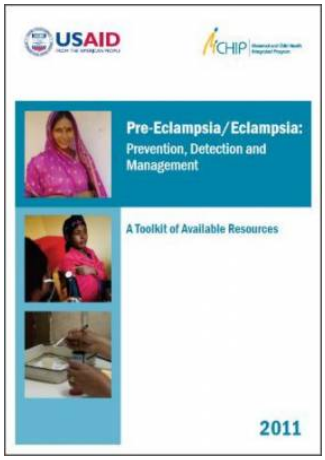

As maternal mortality ratios have declined globally, there have been accompanying shifts in the leading causes of maternal deaths, resulting in a higher proportion of maternal mortality due to preeclampsia. Preeclampsia and eclampsia (PE/E) are now receiving focused attention from donors, governments and providers to further reduce maternal and newborn mortality. Achieving Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 4 (reducing maternal mortality) and MDG5 (reducing child mortality) are going to be largely dependent on comprehensive and innovative programs to address PE/E as public health priorities.

For the last two years, the Preeclampsia Foundation has been an invited participant in the Technical Working Group on Pre-Eclampsia/Eclampsia, sponsored by USAID-funded Maternal and Child Health Integrated Program (MCHIP). This Pre-Eclampsia/Eclampsia: Prevention, Detection and Management toolkit was the resulting product. It reflects contributions from many donors, agencies, associations, academic institutions and organizations which have identified preeclampsia and eclampsia as a priority-and contribute in different ways to addressing it. The purpose of this toolkit is to collect and package resources that are useful to country programs for developing, implementing, monitoring and scaling up maternal health-related interventions at various levels.

As an aside, in the global health community, the term eclampsia is often used to define the problematic hypertensive disorders of pregnancy, primarily because its prevalence is so much greater in the developing world. To be clear, maternal mortality and morbidity rates are just as affected by preeclampsia (i.e., without the eclampsia-defining seizures).

In addition to presenting to and participating in the larger task force meetings, the Preeclampsia Foundation contributed to a working group on community interventions, one of five working groups addressing the various challenges facing PE/E. The result was this 1-page guidance , summarizing a comprehensive review of current literature on preeclampsia patient education studies and making recommendations for the creation of an educational product. Pictorial cards serve an important function of increasing pregnant women's awareness of symptoms that could lead to preeclampsia and taking appropriate action ahead of time. Women who had the pictures and information explained to them by a health care provider had a higher success rate of retaining the information provided, particularly those who subsequently shared it with a husband or mother.