Minneapolis, MN – September 24, 2009 – The Preeclampsia Foundation today announced the final speaker list for the Preeclampsia & HELLP Syndrome Patient Symposium to be held in Chicago, Ill., on Friday, October 23 at the University of Chicago's Gleacher Center. The speakers, some of the country's best researchers and practitioners in their respective specialties, will be presenting topics ranging from genetics, prevention, and the risk of recurrence to the long-term impact of these relatively common disorders of pregnancy.

Speakers include:

- Dr. Doug Woelkers, University of California, San Diego, will provide a quick overview of preeclampsia and related hypertensive disorders of pregnancy such as HELLP Syndrome, including history, contemporary definitions and diagnosis.
- Dr. Tom Easterling, University of Washington, will discuss the impact of underlying disorders and the risk of recurrence in women considering further pregnancies.
- Dr. Jim Roberts, University of Pittsburgh, Magee Womens Research Institute, will share the latest research on the long-term health impact on surviving mothers and babies, including a greater risk for cardiovascular disease.
- Dr. Ananth Karumanchi, Harvard Medical School, the father of angiogenic research and patent-holder to several biomarkers, will share current research and developments that could lead to screening and diagnostic tests.

Dr. James Martin, Jr., University of Mississippi, will explore the short- and long-term impact of HELLP Syndrome, including research that has recently been published.

- Dr. Denise Raynor, Emory University, Atlanta, will share the myths and facts associated with prevention of preeclampsia and hypertensive disorders of pregnancy.
- Dr. Melissa Wilson, a geneticist at the University of Southern California will answer the question: "Does it matter who your parents are?" Exploring the role of heredity through both maternal and paternal lineages.

Attendance is encouraged for all preeclampsia and HELLP Syndrome survivors, whether they are considering future pregnancies or want to better understand what happened to them. It will also be informative for women past their childbearing years who need to understand the impact of their pregnancy history on their future health.

Registration is still available. The cost is $55 and includes beverages, light snacks and lunch. Parking vouchers can also be ordered. A registration form can be downloaded at http://www.preeclampsia.org/pdf/patient_symp.pdf
. Contact Jamie Schmidt via email at
jimmy-james@charter.net
or call the Preeclampsia Foundation office at (800) 665-9341

Preeclampsia, sometimes referred to by its older name, toxemia, is a disorder that occurs during pregnancy and affects both the mother and the fetus. It is a rapidly progressive condition characterized by elevated blood pressure and protein in the urine; other symptoms often include swelling in the hands and face. Preeclampsia affects the mother's kidneys, liver and other vital organs and, if undetected or untreated, can lead to seizures (eclampsia), cerebral hemorrhage, failure in vital organs (i.e., kidney and heart) and death. The cause of preeclampsia is still not fully understood, and the only “cure” for the condition starts with delivery. Approximately 5 to 8 percent of pregnancies are affected by preeclampsia, it is the leading known cause of preterm births, and is responsible for approximately 76,000 maternal deaths worldwide.