

Minneapolis, MN - May is Preeclampsia Awareness Month and will be recognized throughout the United States and Canada with Awareness Walks and special events. Governors from Iowa and New Hampshire and the Mayor of San Diego, California, have issued proclamations designating the month and recognizing the serious crisis that lack of preeclampsia awareness creates.

"The need for awareness is critical," said Leslie Weeks, Chair of the Preeclampsia Foundation Board of Directors. "Findings from a large survey conducted by the Foundation indicate that over half of pregnant woman are not routinely informed about the signs and symptoms of preeclampsia, a life-threatening condition that complicates one in twelve pregnancies. This lack of awareness is devastating: the incidence of infant death is twice as great for women who give birth prematurely, but were not properly educated by their health care providers. Other research findings support this need, as well."

May 8 is Preeclampsia Awareness Night at Modern Woodmen Park in Davenport, Iowa. The park is home of the Quad City River Bandits (the Class A baseball team for the St. Louis Cardinals). Four-year-old Hailey Bridgewater, whose mother died from preeclampsia after giving birth to her, will throw out the first pitch at the ballgame. The Preeclampsia Foundation will have a table on the concourse where game-goers can pick-up brochures and register for the walk on May 9, as well as purchase tennis balls for the tennis ball toss. At the Awareness Walk the next day, the Governor's Commissioner on the Status of Women will read the Governor's state proclamation.

Eighteen cities across the U.S. and Canada will host annual fundraising and awareness walks for Preeclampsia Awareness Month. Walks will take place in:

- San Diego, Calif.
- Colorado Springs, Colo
- Davenport, Iowa
- Dartmouth, Mass.
- Davison, Mich
- Minneapolis, Minn
- Las Vegas, Nev
- North Conway, N.H
- Cranford, N.J.

- Beaver Falls, Penn
- Stahlstown, Penn.
- York, Penn.
- Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas
- Toole, Utah
- Abingdon, Va.

- Wausau, Wis.
- Madison, Wis.
- Vancouver, B.C., Canada

People interested in supporting Preeclampsia Awareness Month may either join a walk near them or become a “virtual walker” by registering online at www.preeclampsia.org/pfwat/walkinfo.asp. A link is also available on the homepage.

Inverness Medical Innovations, Inc. and Royal Neighbors of America are national sponsors of the 2009 Awareness Walks.

The Preeclampsia Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to funding research and raising awareness to prevent death and disability of mothers and babies. Its mission is to eliminate delays in diagnosis, apply and develop best practices, and support families whose lives have been touched by preeclampsia, HELLP Syndrome and other hypertensive disorders of pregnancy. For more information, call toll free (800) 665-9341 or visit www.preeclampsia.org.