Minneapolis, Minn. – The Preeclampsia Foundation announced that, despite the downturn in the economy and the related impact on charities, it is continuing its research grant program this year, with a goal of making up to 2 grants from a total pool of $50,000. The application deadline is May 15, 2009 with awards announced August 28, 2009. More information and application instructions can be found at www.preclampsia.org .

Dr. Thomas Easterling, professor from the University of Washington School of Medicine and Director of the Preeclampsia Foundation's Medical Board said, "These grants are intended to provide initial funding for innovative ideas which might otherwise not be pursued due to lack of funding."

Eleni Tsigas, Executive Director and preeclampsia survivor herself added that "the Foundation's main programmatic pillars are education and research; the Vision Grants are a critical component in fulfilling our mission, which is to reduce maternal and infant death and illness due to preeclampsia."

Preeclampsia is one of the most common complications of pregnancy, with estimates ranging from 5% to 8% of all pregnancies, and is one of the leading known causes of premature birth. Every year, over 300,000 pregnancies in the U.S. are complicated by preeclampsia; with 25% of those reaching severe or critical status. That equates to almost 1,500 severe cases each week and unfortunately – even in the US – more than one of those mothers die each week because of preeclampsia. Worldwide estimates suggest that 76,000 women and 500,000 babies die annually because of preeclampsia and related hypertensive disorders of pregnancy.