JULY 08, 2003 - The Preeclampsia Foundation, together with more than 30 global health and patient advocacy organizations, leading researchers, clinicians, and experts in preeclampsia today issued the results of the International Preeclampsia Summit (IPS) held in Seattle in early April. *"The Seattle Mandate: An International Call-to-Action for the Prevention and Treatment of Preeclampsia and Eclampsia"* is the result of the group's analysis, lively debate and consensus on key recommendations.

The Seattle Mandate underscores the impact of the disease juxtaposed against its relative neglect in research and awareness: preeclampsia/eclampsia affects approximately five to eight percent of all pregnancies and is a leading cause of maternal and infant mortality, especially in developing countries where prenatal care and technologies are less available. Despite this, the cause is unknown and its only known "cure", which starts with the delivery of the baby regardless of gestational age, makes it the second leading cause of premature births.

At IPS, research and clinical experts in preeclampsia joined forces with epidemiologists and global health program designers for the first time to chart a recommended course to eradicate this life-threatening complication of pregnancy. IPS was made possible by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

The overall goals of the resulting Seattle Mandate are to represent a consensus among traditionally disparate communities, prioritize known interventions that could reduce maternal and infant illness and death in the developing world and, most importantly, to send a loud message that preeclampsia has been marginalized for far too long and must be addressed more prominently in all world health agendas, governments, and maternal health programs, commensurate with its reach and impact.

"We're delighted to see progress on one of our goals this week at a Rockefeller Foundation conference in Bellagio, Italy," said Anne Garrett, executive director of the Preeclampsia Foundation and IPS organizer. "Many of our top recommendations are being included in the discussion intended to identify interventions for reducing maternal mortality."

The Seattle Mandate priority areas include:

- Improving patient and public education to increase awareness of the signs and symptoms;

- Ensuring the availability of simple diagnostics such as low-cost urine dipsticks and blood pressure measuring equipment;
- Providing access to drugs such as anti-hypertensives and magnesium sulfate;
- Developing guidelines for symptoms and management protocols, and training healthcare providers on the protocols;
- Promoting research on causative factors; and
- Encouraging continued commitment and cooperation among influential organizations.

A complete copy of the paper is available in pdf by clicking on the following link - Seattle Mandate.pdf .
The priorities represent the consensus of representatives from leading health organizations such as the World Health Organization, Family Care International, Save the Children, PATH and the world's leading researchers and medical doctors in the field.

"It is our sincere hope that any organization that can impact maternal health at any level implements as many of these recommendations as possible," said Jean-Marie Moutquin, president of the International Society for the Study of Hypertension in Pregnancy (ISSHP) and a participant in IPS.

The next IPS is scheduled to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in September 2004, concurrent with the 14th World Congress of the ISSHP.