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Our Website **How You Can Help** **Donate Now** **Promise Walk Website** **Community Forums**

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MAY 2011

Raising Awareness in 2011

May is Preeclampsia Awareness Month, as well as being the month where all of us celebrate the many maternal figures that have positively impacted our lives. As many of you can attest, motherhood is about more than a single day's recognition for the work that you lovingly (or at times begrudgingly!) do year-round for your family.

The same could be said about Preeclampsia Awareness month, which has always been about more than raising a banner or hosting a single event. Preeclampsia Awareness month is about taking action on behalf of a greater family: the global community of women and their families. For the Preeclampsia Foundation, May is not a culmination, but a beginning.

As such, May's newsletter is a call-to-action to make preeclampsia not just "that pregnancy thing," but a word that reminds people of the 10,000,000 women across the globe that are impacted, sometimes devastatingly, by preeclamptic pregnancies each year.

Read Janel Kovarik's account of sharing her preeclampsia experience with three generations of women, or find out how Promise Walks are delivering local awareness. Discover how healthcare providers are joining our call-to-action to make a difference.

It is also with sadness that we mourn the loss of a great preeclampsia researcher, Dr. Richard Levine, whose contributions to the understanding of the pathophysiology of preeclampsia will continue to live on through his research projects.

We also encourage you to take part in a variety of awareness events this month, including social media events with the March of Dimes, our blog button advertising campaign and a meaningful public art display that could

the Promise Walk™ for Preeclampsia
Making Strides Delivering Hope

Survivor Shirts

Our Survivor Shirts are in!

Click the image to visit the PF Marketplace and order them in any size from Infant to Adult Extra Large. Price includes shipping and handling.

Our Price: $18.00 (adult)
$15.00 (infant/child)

Write a blog?

Help us make a difference!

Click on this blog button to visit the Promise Walk Web Ad campaign and add the image to your blog or website to help spread awareness about preeclampsia.

come to your community.

Happy Mother's Day to all!

PREECLAMPSIA AWARENESS MONTH

Taking Action from Awareness

Raising awareness in 2011 is no easy task.

A recent internet search of awareness efforts in May turned up 22 different causes, from asthma and allergy to stuttering awareness. As yet, the National Health Observances Calendar doesn't include Preeclampsia Awareness Month, although efforts are underway (with Congressional support) to add it.

So what can the Preeclampsia Foundation, an organization that recently celebrated its 10th birthday, learn from more established organizations and their campaigns?

Pink ribbons, red dresses, and yellow rubber bracelets immediately come to mind. Certain trends are prevalent in these successful awareness campaigns: a concerted public relations campaign, a celebrity spokesperson, partnerships with like-minded organizations, but most importantly, a clear message of the impact that a condition has on the American population.

Can an awareness "month" matter as we seek to raise the profile of our lesser-known, but equally worthy cause, amidst all the media noise - social and traditional - that surrounds us today? Raising awareness in 2011 may seem impossible, but we're trying - and succeeding - with your support.

Learn more about May's awareness activities...

BEYOND THE PROMISE WALK

Engage Walkers to Create Lifelong Supporters

Many of our newsletter readers will participate in or support a Promise Walk for Preeclampsia this May and June. The Promise Walks are one of the biggest fundraisers that the Preeclampsia Foundation hosts: they not only generate funds for the Foundation, but raise awareness

Upcoming Activities

ACOG Annual Meeting
4/30/2011-5/04/2011
March of Dimes PE Blog
5/3/2011
Atlanta, GA Promise Walk
5/7/2011
Davenport, IA Promise Walk
5/7/2011
Raleigh, NC Promise Walk
5/7/2011
Easton, PA Promise Walk
5/7/2011
Cranford, NJ Promise Walk
5/7/2011
Dallas, TX Promise Walk
5/7/2011
San Jose, CA Promise Walk
5/7/2011
South Florida Promise Walk
5/7/2011
March of Dimes Twitter Chat
5/11/2011
Madison, WI Promise Walk
5/14/2011
Las Vegas, NV Promise Walk
5/14/2011
Irvine, CA Promise Walk
5/14/2011
St. Paul, MN Promise Walk
5/14/2011
San Diego, CA Promise Walk
5/14/2011
Neenah, WI Promise Walk
5/14/2011
Lansing, MI Promise Walk
5/15/2011
Abingdon, VA Promise Walk
5/15/2011
"I Give You Words" Project
5/18-19/2011
Ladies Night Out/PW Celebr.
5/21/2011
Ames, IA Promise Walk
5/21/2011
Conway, NH Promise Walk
5/21/2011
Chicago, IL Promise Walk
5/22/2011
ACNM Conference Exhibit
5/24/2011-5/28/2011
Messaging Training Webinar
5/31/2011

Find us on Facebook

about the disease in local communities. For many people, a walk is their first experience with the Foundation - their first time connecting with our community and becoming aware of preeclampsia's devastating impact. This connection is an excellent opportunity to motivate Promise Walk attendees to become year-round Foundation supporters within their local community.

There are many ways you can help get your neighbors, friends and families involved after the Walk is over:

- Encourage walkers to sign up for the *Expectations* newsletter to stay connected and motivated about our work; to see the impact their contributions are making.
- Host an event to raise awareness or money for the Preeclampsia Foundation. 92% of Promise Walk donations go directly back into programs of the Foundation (research, patient education, and provider education)...

Read more involvement tips...

GENERATIONAL PREECLAMPSIA

Heart-to-Heart With A Fellow Survivor

by Janel Kovarik

Upon being diagnosed with any medical condition, it is human nature to ponder, "Did anyone in our family have that?"

This is especially the case when diagnosed with preeclampsia - what our mothers' and grandmothers' generations called "toxemia."

When I was diagnosed with preeclampsia during the 35th week of my first pregnancy, I was mystified and kept thinking: What on Earth is this? I am 27. I run. I eat well. My blood pressure is always a perfect 120/80.

But I have to say before any of these questions surfaced, I looked to my mother and asked, "Mama, did you have that?" She looked at me with tears in her eyes and shook her head no, unable to give me the normal guidance and comfort that mothers so naturally bestow.

One woman that could provide some guidance was my mother-in-law, Kathy Hutchison, who immediately called me upon hearing my diagnosis, being a two-time survivor herself. What were the odds that she too had had preeclampsia?

Read more on sharing with family survivors...

IN MEMORIAM

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Contributors

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Jamie Watson

Remembering A Dedicated Researcher

Richard J Levine, MD an outstanding physician-researcher died on April 12th, 2012 in Washington DC at the age of 71. Dr. Levine made significant contributions to our understanding of preeclampsia during the last two decades of his productive career, and while battling a devastating disease during the last three years of his life he continued to work tirelessly on problems important for the health of pregnant women and their unborn children. In fact his published results have appeared as late as January of this year, and he was working on new manuscripts at the time of his death...

Richard's insight to store samples from his study performed in the 1990s led to his more recent signal studies demonstrating that measuring levels of certain proteins called antiangiogenic factors in maternal blood could predict preeclampsia before it manifested clinically, especially the more devastating early-onset preeclampsia. Other work suggested a link, albeit small, between preeclampsia and the development of hypothyroidism later in life. And in work published in January 2011, he joined a team that has clarified relationships between obesity and preeclampsia.

Read More About Dr. Levine's Scientific Contributions...

VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH PROFILE

Heather Curtis: Community Forum Director

What was your experience with preeclampsia?

I had hypertensive complications and delivered at 37 weeks with all three of my children. I've been very lucky that my personal experience with the disease has been mild. I spent one week on hospital bed rest before being induced with my first; I was induced as soon as I was diagnostic with my second; and I was on "house rest" and labetalol from 35 weeks with my third. My highest blood pressures were in the 180s/100s, but I was lucky that those readings were only spikes, and for the most part I stayed in the 140s/90s range. My firstborn spent four days in the NICU because of high magnesium sulfate levels, but my other two babies roomed in with me. They were all small - 5lbs 8oz; 6lbs, 14oz; and 5lbs, 12oz - but today they are all healthy.

What volunteer positions have you held? Why do you volunteer for the Preeclampsia Foundation?

I have been a moderator with the Preeclampsia Foundation Community Forums for over three years, and I've just accepted the position of Community Forum Director. I started volunteering because I know how

scared and lost and confused I felt when I was hospitalized and induced in my first pregnancy. Preeclampsia is such a confusing disease and I didn't even know what questions to ask. The Forums is a place where women can share our experiences and what we've learned about the disease - what our doctors tell us, what the experts say in "Ask the Experts", and information from the main website's pages, what we read in medical journals, and anything else we can find. The combined brainpower of all of us has helped me understand the disease and treatment so much better than I could ever learn on my own.

Read More About Heather's Involvement...

MEMBERS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Help Outreach to Health Care Providers

There are many education opportunities when pregnant women interact with a variety of care providers - childbirth educators, doulas, midwives, nurse-midwives and the traditional physicians and nurses they encounter in clinics, hospitals and medical offices. Each of those encounters is an opportunity to provide that woman with important information about the signs and symptoms of preeclampsia and to encourage her to take action if she has concerns. Throughout 2010, the Preeclampsia Foundation attended medical conferences and conducted an educational survey on what nurses, midwives and doulas provide in the way of preeclampsia patient education. The statistics, which will soon be published, show an alarming lack of regular preeclampsia education.

This year, thanks to a grant from the Beckman Coulter Foundation, the Preeclampsia Foundation will again be traveling to health care provider conferences and working to advocate for better prenatal preeclampsia education. The focus in 2011 will be on educating the educators on how to provide signs and symptoms information and include access to printed, audio and video materials. This also benefits the main audience, the patients themselves. Ultimately, our goal in reaching out to the extended medical provider community is that they will be providing the patients with accurate information in a form that is easy to understand and not overwhelming. We are looking for volunteers in the following cities: **San Antonio, TX; Denver, CO; Dallas, TX; Boston, MA**, so if you live there and would be interesting in volunteering to help at the exhibit for a few hours, please email Program Coordinator Laney Poye.

HEARD ON THE HILL

Questionnaire Encourages Research Support

Research!America and their outreach partners have launched "Your Congress-Your Health." Every Member of Congress has been invited to respond to a questionnaire about medical research, the deficit, and support for federal agencies that conduct research to improve health (NIH, FDA, CDC, NSF, and AHRQ). Cuts to research funding have already occured at the National Institutes of Health, the Center for Disease Control and Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

Please contact your Representative and Senators TODAY to urge them to respond to the questionnaire. Visit the Preeclampsia Foundation's advocacy page and click on the "Elected Official Finder" link to locate your Representatives and Senators.

FEATURED STORY

The Lucky Ones

Jamie Watson of Thackerville, Okla. experienced preeclampsia not once, but three times with each of her pregnancies.

"After about 1½ years of marriage my husband and I decided we were ready to have a baby. We were pregnant in no time and aside from the nausea and constant vomiting, I had a perfectly normal pregnancy until about 37 weeks. I thought I was going into labor and so I headed to labor and delivery to be checked out. I was not in labor, but my blood pressure was so high I was kept overnight. I was sent home the next day on bedrest but went into labor that night and delivered a healthy 6 lb, 9 oz baby girl.

We named her Carly. I was on the dreaded magnesium drip for 12 hours and then they turned it off. I was sent home without any instructions regarding what could happen after delivery... or that this same scenario could repeat itself in my next pregnancy."

Read her engaging story of survival--and why she counts herself as one of the "Lucky Ones"...

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