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For Immediate Release

Peter Joseph Pappas Research Grant Program Announces 2020 Award Recipients

Melbourne, FL – January 30, 2020 – The Preeclampsia Foundation announced the recipients of its 2020 Peter Joseph Pappas Research Grants, a funding program designed to accelerate preeclampsia research. Based on the recommendations of its Scientific Advisory Council, the Preeclampsia Foundation awarded two grants totaling \$184,624 to Dr. Virginia D. Winn, MD, PhD and Julia Fridman Simard, ScD. Both researchers are from Stanford University in California.

Dr. Virginia D. Winn, MD, PhD, Associate Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, H&H Evergreen Faculty Scholar, and Director of Perinatal Biology at Stanford University will serve as Principal Investigator for a research proposal entitled, ***Determining Heme oxygenase-1 genotype contribution to endothelial dysfunction in preeclampsia.***

A large body of evidence is accumulating supporting the importance of heme oxygenase-1 (HO-1) in endothelial function and the development of preeclampsia. This study will seek to determine the extent to which HO-1 promoter genotypes differ between women with preeclampsia and the general population, how genotype correlates with clinical presentation, and if the different expressions of HO-1, as the result of known human genetic variants, alters the intrinsic and responsive functional capacity of endothelial cells. Establishing relationship between HO-1 and endothelial cell function could provide key insights into the development of preeclampsia and reveal potential therapeutic strategies.

Principal Investigator Julia Fridman Simard, ScD is Assistant Professor in the Department of Epidemiology and Population Health at Stanford University School of Medicine. Her study is entitled, ***Learning about Preeclampsia from High-Risk Pregnancy.*** Pregnant women with lupus are at particularly high risk for preeclampsia and preterm delivery. Using a large population-based administrative claims database, her team's work will evaluate the effectiveness of a common lupus treatment, hydroxychloroquine, in the prevention of preeclampsia.

Hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) has been proposed as a potential preeclampsia treatment in the general population as it may interrupt the development of preeclampsia by mitigating oxidative stress and targeting toll-like receptors to prevent pro-inflammatory cytokine production. The general pregnant population rarely uses HCQ, making comparative effectiveness studies of existing data impossible. This study will systematically examine a US population-based administrative health claims database with over 43 million individuals to see whether pregnant women with lupus who use HCQ have less preeclampsia and, consequently, less preterm delivery.

Named for the infant son of preeclampsia survivor Lauren Pappas and her husband Clement, the Peter Joseph Pappas Research Grants program award grants totaling up to \$200,000 each year. The goal of the program is to drive research that will eliminate the delivery of pre-term babies as an intervention for severe preeclampsia, HELLP syndrome, and related hypertensive disorders of pregnancy.

“We lost our son Peter due to preeclampsia following a 29-week delivery in 2015,” explained Lauren Pappas. “Since then we have dedicated our lives to helping others avoid the same outcome by establishing the Peter Joseph Pappas Fund.”

“Thanks to generous contributions from family and friends, and our partnership with the Preeclampsia Foundation, we are making strides to reach our ultimate goal of eliminating pre-term births due to preeclampsia by 2050,” added Clement Pappas.

The Peter Joseph Pappas Research Grants program adds to the Preeclampsia Foundation’s portfolio of research programs including the Vision Grant program for young investigators, PRIME for health services research, and EMPOWER, which helps build research capacity in low- and middle-income countries. Recipients of the Peter Joseph Pappas grants frequently utilize data available through the Preeclampsia Registry™, the Preeclampsia Foundation’s dynamic database of research participants that includes preeclampsia and HELLP syndrome survivors, family members, and controls (unaffected individuals).

Researchers interested in more information about the Foundation’s research funding programs should visit www.preeclampsia.org/research/research-funding.org.

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About the Preeclampsia Foundation

The Preeclampsia Foundation is a U.S.-based 501(c)(3) non-profit organization established in 2000. Its purpose is to improve the outcomes of hypertensive disorders of pregnancy by educating, supporting and engaging the community, improving healthcare practices, and finding a cure. The Preeclampsia Foundation envisions a world where preeclampsia and related hypertensive disorders of pregnancy no longer threaten the lives of mothers and their babies. For more information, visit www.preeclampsia.org.

About the Peter Joseph Pappas Research Grant Program

Clement and Lauren Pappas of Philadelphia, PA, lost their firstborn child, Peter Joseph, after HELLP syndrome necessitated his early delivery. Their son, born at 29 weeks’ gestation, spent a week in the neonatal intensive care unit before dying from a central line infection. The Pappas family, along with friends and family, have established this special fund with the Preeclampsia Foundation to advance research, with the overarching goal of eliminating pre-term births due to preeclampsia by 2050.

About The Preeclampsia Registry

The first of its kind to focus solely on hypertensive disorders of pregnancy, the Preeclampsia Registry captures self-reported and clinical information (medical records) as well as family and pregnancy history, and DNA. Overseen by an Institutional Review Board, the Registry ensures participants’ privacy and rights in medical research. The Registry only shares de-identified information with approved scientists, researchers, and clinicians; de-identified information has had all personal identifiers such as name,

address, and other information that identifies the participant and/or the participant's family removed. Launched in 2013, it currently includes over 5,000 participants from every state in the nation as well as dozens of countries around the world. For more information, visit www.preeclampsiaregistry.org.