

University of Iowa Dept. of Obstetrics and Gynecology partners with Preeclampsia Foundation

In January of 2005, Davenport, Iowa residents John and Brenda Warner faced the most horrific experience of their life: one week after giving birth to their first grandchild, their 25-year-old daughter Shelly, a fifth grade teacher, died from a severe complication of preeclampsia called HELLP Syndrome. As a family, they were devastated.

Seeking more information about what happened to their daughter during her traumatic pregnancy experience, the Warners found the Preeclampsia Foundation as a source of information and support. The Preeclampsia Foundation is the only national 501(c)(3) not-for-profit patient advocacy organization serving the 5-8% of pregnant women - 300,000 women each year in the U.S. - who are affected by hypertensive disorders of pregnancy such as preeclampsia (formerly known as toxemia), eclampsia and HELLP syndrome. Their mission is to reduce maternal and infant illness and death due to preeclampsia, HELLP syndrome, and other hypertensive disorders of pregnancy by providing patient support and education, raising public awareness, catalyzing research and improving healthcare practices.

Since then, the Warners have organized preeclampsia awareness walks, several educational events, and numerous fundraisers to support the education and research provided by the Preeclampsia Foundation in their home state.

In 2013, they will join the University of Iowa in bringing the Preeclampsia Foundation's dinner benefit, *Saving Grace – A Night of Hope* to Iowa City on October 18, 2013 at the Celebration Farm. The Saving Grace benefit began in 2004 in Minneapolis, Minn. and has since traveled to a unique city each year to raise awareness and funds to support the Foundation's mission. One of the Foundation's goals is to bring education and awareness to each of these diverse communities across the country through educational events for patients and health care providers.

For the educational outreach of the 2013 Saving Grace benefit, the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology of the University of Iowa will be co-hosting a continuing medical



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education course on October 18, 2013, “Controversies in the Care of Women with Preeclampsia: A National Debate.” For additional information, contact CME Division, University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine at 319-335-8599.

Every six minutes a woman in this country is diagnosed with severe preeclampsia, putting her and her baby’s life at risk. Worldwide, every year, more than 6 million women experience pregnancies complicated by preeclampsia, and about 76,000 of these women and half a million of their babies die. Preeclampsia is the leading known cause of premature births, and we now know that women who develop preeclampsia have twice the risk of heart disease or stroke. Preeclampsia is one of the oldest disorders on record, yet still no cure exists.

The Preeclampsia Foundation envisions a world where preeclampsia no longer threatens the lives of mothers and babies.

“The Warner family is the face of the mission for the Preeclampsia Foundation and represents the reason that our Foundation continues working to help save lives through education and improving health care provider

practices,” explained Preeclampsia Foundation Executive Director Eleni Tsigas.

The Preeclampsia Foundation has partnered with organizations like the World Health Organization and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists to update health care guidelines and emphasize the importance of patient education and improved health care practices. They have also contributed more than half a million dollars in research funding and have a robust research study participant recruitment service.

I am hoping you will join me in supporting both Preeclampsia Foundation events, the CME course, “Controversies in the Care of Women with Preeclampsia: A National Debate,” and the gala dinner, “Saving Grace – A Night of Hope.” Feel free to contact me about these events I am co-chairing. More information about the Saving Grace benefit is available at

<http://www.preeclampsia.org/make-a-difference/saving-grace>.

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