

Proclamation Template

- Whereas, Birth defects can occur in any family, regardless of race, health history, economic status or education; and
- Whereas, Birth defects affect one in every 33 babies and are a leading cause of death—causing one in every five deaths in children under one year of age nationwide, while in *(name of your state)*, birth defects account for about (-##-) infant deaths every year; and
- Whereas, Early identification of a child with a birth defect coupled with early intervention services typically improves the child’s quality of life and may even save his or her life; and
- Whereas, Two out of every three women take prescription medications during pregnancy, many to treat chronic conditions that may impact pregnancy; plus
- Whereas, About half of all pregnancies are unplanned, contributing to late entry into prenatal care and presenting a barrier to optimal pregnancy management, particularly during critical early weeks of embryonic development; plus
- Whereas, The good health and well-being of the people of *(name of your state)* are enhanced by the support of a national effort to educate about and prevent birth defects; and
- Whereas, To decrease the number of babies born with birth defects in *(name of your state)* and across the country, the month of January is dedicated each year to raising awareness about birth defects and strategies for their prevention. Preventive strategies include taking a multivitamin with folic acid to prevent serious defects of the brain and spinal cord, managing maternal medical conditions while minimizing unnecessary medication exposure in pregnancy; and
- Whereas, The *(your state)* Department of Public Health and the *(name of your state)* Birth Defects program join with the March of Dimes, the Organization of Teratology Information Specialists, the Teratology Society and the National Birth Defects Prevention Network, as well as many dedicated volunteers, health care professionals, and parent groups by participating in this promotion.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, *(Governor’s name)*, Governor of the state of *(name of your state)*, do hereby declare the month of January as Birth Defects Prevention Month. I urge that all women of reproductive age take a multivitamin with 400 micrograms of folic acid every day, be physically active, eat a healthy diet, work with their providers to manage chronic conditions appropriately prior to conception and during pregnancy, and seek to limit unneeded medication use to ensure a healthy pregnancy.