

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; 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, The prevalence of pregestational diabetes mellitus in women of childbearing age has doubled in the last decade, affecting about 2.5% or 1.3 million nationwide and approximately *(prevalence information for your state, from BRFSS or other source...)* women of childbearing age in the state of *(name of your state)* ; plus

The prevalence of gestational diabetes is also increasing, now experienced by 5-9% of expectant mothers nationwide and approximately *(prevalence information for your state, from PRAMS or other source...)* women of childbearing age in the state of *(name of your state)*; and

Whereas, The chance for all types of birth defects, and especially of multiple birth defects, is increased when mother has diabetes type 1 or type 2; plus

Women who have gestational diabetes are at greater risk for complications, including preeclampsia and delivery by cesarean section, and are at greater risk to develop insulin dependent diabetes in future; plus

Nearly 9 in 10 women of childbearing age with pregestational diabetes are overweight or obese, illustrating how the obesity epidemic contributes to the development of preventable diabetes and other conditions that are associated with poor reproductive outcomes including birth defects; and

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, maintaining optimal glucose levels prior to pregnancy and reaching a healthy weight to improve health outcomes; and

Whereas, The *(your state)* Department of Public Health and the *(name of your state)* Birth Defects program join with the March of Dimes 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, maintain healthy blood glucose levels, pursue effective methods to attain an ideal weight, and seek appropriate medical care to ensure a healthy pregnancy.