

PROCLAMATION

- Whereas, The good health and well-being of the people of *(name of your state)* are enhanced by our local support of a national effort to increase communication, education and prevention strategies to reduce the number of birth defects; and
- Whereas, Birth defects affect an estimated *(XX babies born in your state with a birth defect)* in *(name of your state)*; and an estimated 120,000 (one in every 33) babies nationwide are born each year with serious birth defects; and
- Whereas, Birth defects can and do affect any family, regardless of age, sex, race, family history, economic status or education in our state; and are the leading cause of death in children less than one year of age; accounting for one in every five deaths; and
- Whereas, Early identification of a child with a birth defect coupled with early intervention services saves lives and improves long term chances of a meaningful life; and
- Whereas, There are steps a woman can take to increase her chances of having a healthy baby, which include: consuming 400 micrograms of folic acid daily; knowing one's family history; having a check-up from a health care provider *prior* to conception; seeking reproductive genetic counseling, if appropriate; managing chronic maternal illnesses such as diabetes, seizure disorders, lupus or phenylketonuria (PKU); avoiding alcohol, nicotine, and illicit drugs; ensuring that prescription medications, over-the-counter medications and herbal supplements are safe at the time of conception and during pregnancy; and avoiding harmful occupational and environmental exposures; and
- Whereas, Each year, January is designated as birth defects prevention month to increase public awareness about birth defects and prevention strategies; prevention efforts offer the hope to decrease the number of families in *(name of your state)* affected by birth defects; up to 70% of birth defects of the brain and spinal cord, including anencephaly and spina bifida, can be prevented if all women of childbearing age consume 400 micrograms of folic acid daily, beginning before 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 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 all women of reproductive age take a multivitamin with 400 micrograms of folic acid everyday, as well as eat a healthy diet, which is essential for good health.