

PROCLAMATION

- Whereas, Birth defects can occur in any family, regardless of the parents' 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 U.S. Surgeon General has declared that overweight and obesity have reached epidemic proportions. Approximately one in five women of childbearing age nationwide is obese and approximately *(prevalence information for your state, from BRFSS or other source...)* women of childbearing age in the state of *(name of your state)* are overweight or obese; and
- Whereas, The chance for birth defects, particularly neural tube defects, is increased when mother is overweight; plus
- Women who are overweight and obese during pregnancy have a higher risk, for themselves and their infants, of additional adverse outcomes such as hypertension, preeclampsia, gestational diabetes, large-for-gestational-age infants, and labor and delivery complications; 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 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, pursue effective methods to attain an ideal weight, and seek appropriate medical care to ensure a healthy pregnancy.