



SAMPLE PROCLAMATION

The nation’s most precious resource is our children, and in the first year of life birth defects are a leading cause of death. Birth defects are devastating to parents, the whole family and the community.

- Whereas, Birth defects can occur in any family, regardless of age, gender, social level, race, health, history, economic status or education; and
- Whereas, Every 4.5 minutes a baby is born in the U.S. with a birth defect, affecting one in every 33 babies. A leading cause of death, birth defects cause one in every five deaths in infants nationwide. Birth defects lead to \$2.6 billion per year in hospital costs alone in the U.S. While in (*name of your state*), birth defects account for about (-##-) infant deaths every year; and
- Whereas, Nearly 40,000 infants are born with congenital heart defects in the U.S. each year; plus
- Whereas, The prevalence of diabetes in women of childbearing age has doubled in the last decade, affecting 1.3 million nationwide. Babies born to women with diabetes, especially women with poor diabetes control are at greater risk of having a birth defect; 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; 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 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 daily to prevent serious defects, maintaining a healthy weight, having regular checkups, learning about family history and genetic risks, 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.

THEREFORE, I, (*Governor’s name*), urge every citizen who lives in or visits the state of (*name of your state*) to support the National Birth Defects Prevention Network activities, I urge all women, especially those of reproductive age, to take a multivitamin with 400 micrograms of folic acid every day, be physically active, eat a healthy diet, maintain healthy emotional and mental status, know their family history, 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.

NOW, I, (*Governor’s name*), Governor of the state of (*name of your state*), do hereby declare the month of January 2013 as Birth Defects Prevention Month.