Proclamation

National Birth Defects Awareness Month, January 2023

Whereas, birth defects are common, costly, and critical conditions that affect 1 in every 33 babies born in the United States each year;

Whereas, annually approximately [**enter number here**] children in [**enter your state here**] are diagnosed with a birth defect;

Whereas, birth defects can occur in any family regardless of race, ethnicity, health history, or economic status;

Whereas, taking a daily vitamin with folic acid before and during pregnancy, planning a visit with your healthcare provider, reducing your risk of infections, caring for your body and mind, and avoiding the use of alcohol or drugs increases the chances of a healthy pregnancy;

Whereas, early identification of a child with a birth defect coupled with early intervention services can improve the child's quality of life;

Whereas, affordable, accessible, and culturally responsive healthcare in birth defect diagnoses is needed to address unmet health needs, delays in receiving appropriate care, and inability to get preventive services;

Whereas, absence of health insurance coverage increases the likelihood that individuals with a birth defect may have poorer health status, be diagnosed with a condition later in life, and die prematurely;

Whereas, awareness of birth defects across the lifespan helps provide individuals, parents, and families affected by birth defects the information they need to seek proper care. It also provides healthcare professionals the evidence they need to deliver the best care for patients across all stages of life;

Whereas, Birth Defect Awareness Month provides the opportunity for families affected by these conditions to share their experiences and knowledge with the public, so that we all may be made more aware of how birth defects affect all our lives.

NOW, THEREFORE, I [**enter name here**], GOVERNOR OF [**YOUR STATE HERE**], DO HEREBY PROCLAIM JANUARY 2023 AS BIRTH DEFECTS AWARENESS MONTH in [**YOUR STATE HERE**].