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**‘Every Journey Matters.’ Focus of National Birth Defects Prevention Month 2024**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Contact: [***Name of person submitting release***] January 1, 2024 [***Contact Phone Number***] – or – [***Contact Email***]

[***City, State***] **–**. As the rate of babies born every 4 ½ minutes with a major birth defect holds strong in the United States, YOUR ORGANIZATION NAME in partnership with the National Birth Defects Prevention Network (NBDPN) launches ‘Every Journey Matters,’ a new campaign to increase awareness.

This January and throughout the year, NBDPN raises awareness of birth defects and promotes strategies that reduce the risk of birth defects and their complications. Birth defects are structural changes that can affect almost any part of the body (e.g., heart, brain, foot) and can cause lifelong health challenges. As medical care and treatment have improved, babies and children with birth defects are living longer and healthier lives. Most are now living into adulthood. Recent reports show that rates of infant deaths due to birth defects have declined by 10% in the U.S. However, even today, every 4½ minutes a baby is born with a major birth defect.

Achieving the best possible health will look different for different people. No two people living with these conditions are exactly alike. Everyone’s journey is unique, shaped by their specific condition, individual strengths, and the support system in place. For Amanda Devereaux, the parent of a child living with a birth defect, the “Every Journey Matters” theme especially resonates with her family. “Having a child with a birth defect is both challenging and rewarding,” she explained. “We have learned over time to parent the child we have, and not the child we expected!”

NBDPN recognizes that not all birth defects can be prevented; however, research shows that certain behaviors and health choices can reduce the risk of having a baby born with a birth defect. For more information on prevention of birth defects click [here.](https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/prevention.html) “Many birth defects require lifelong care, but efforts to raise awareness about available resources and supports can help to improve the health of people impacted by these conditions” - Nina Forestieri, MPH, Board Member and 2024 Chair of the National Birth Defects Prevention Network.

There is hope for a healthier future. Join NBDPN and our partners in improving health in your community. Consider sharing tools found in the NBDPN education and awareness packet that can be accessed online at <https://bit.ly/3xeN12U>.

**More about NBDPN**

The NBDPN is a volunteer-based organization that addresses the issues of birth defects surveillance, research, and prevention under one umbrella by maintaining a national network of state and population-based birth defects programs. Learn more at nbdpn.org.

*National Birth Defects Awareness Month materials and activities are an output of the National Birth Defects Prevention Network (NBDPN), in partnership with Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), March of Dimes, MotherToBaby, Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (AMCHP), and others. The contents of the awareness month materials and related promotional messaging are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by state public health agencies or other NBDPN members and partners.*