



## January 2024: National Birth Defects Awareness Month

**Whereas**, every 4.5 minutes a baby is born with a condition that affects the structure or function of their body; these conditions are referred to as birth defects;

**Whereas**, they can vary widely in how and where they affect the body;

**Whereas**, while medical advancements have greatly improved the health and survival of these individuals, many of these conditions are lifelong and require extended care.

**Whereas**, everyone's journey is unique, shaped by their specific condition, individual strengths, and the support system in place.

**Whereas**, knowledge empowers parents to make the best choices for their child's future. Understanding the child's condition is essential to making informed decisions about their health and well-being;

**Whereas**, early identification and early intervention also can help a child receive the right care and resources they need to thrive;

**Whereas**, family members and healthcare providers can ensure that individuals with birth defects receive the care and services they need to be as healthy and independent as they can be;

**Whereas**, community plays an integral role in the lives of individuals and families affected by birth defects;

**Whereas**, families navigating this journey, connecting with others who share similar experiences can be a helpful source of support, advice, and understanding.

**Whereas**, a community-wide focus on inclusion encourages an environment of acceptance that benefits everyone;

**Whereas**, every community member can make a difference and play a part to help create a place where everyone knows that they belong.

**NOW, THEREFORE, I \_\_\_\_\_, governor of \_\_\_\_\_, do hereby proclaim January 2024 as Birth Defects Awareness Month in \_\_\_\_\_.**