

● Sample Letter to Healthcare Providers ●

Dear Medical Professionals and Health Care Providers (*or individual's name*):

January is National Birth Defects Prevention Month! Prevention of infections that can cause birth defects is the theme for 2017. The National Birth Defects Prevention Network (NBDPN), in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the March of Dimes, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Teratology Society, has put together a resource packet titled “**Prevent to Protect: Prevent Infections for Baby’s Protection**”. It is designed to raise awareness that some infections can cause birth defects, and that many of these infections are preventable.

This year (“*I*”, “*We*”, or *YOUR ORGANIZATION’S NAME*) (am/are/is) encouraging you to work with your patients and the community to prevent current and future infections that can not only affect the patient’s health, but also cause birth defects in developing babies. The **Prevent to Protect** packet contains up-to-date, targeted information for professionals, their patients, and interested members of the general public.

The key messages this year are:

- **Properly prepare food.**
- **Talk to your healthcare provider.**
- **Protect yourself from animals and insects known to carry diseases such as Zika virus.**
- **Maintain good hygiene.**

Medical professionals are a powerful part of this campaign by working to assure that all of their patients are up-to-date on their vaccinations against rubella, varicella and influenza. Additionally, making patients aware of effective ways to prevent, detect and treat sexually transmitted infections, including the newly emergent Zika virus, is a forward-thinking way of preventing future birth defects.

Regardless of your specialty or the age group you serve, you are in a prime position to affect the occurrence of birth defects in the United States by reducing the risk of infections in your own patients and, thus, across the population. Ultimately, these efforts will lead to a healthier future for children and families, and reduce the personal and societal burden of disabilities and health care costs.

You can make a significant difference. (We/I) urge you to join (me/us) as an active participant in *National Birth Defects Prevention Month - 2017* and to continue your efforts throughout the year. You can access the **Prevent to Protect** packet online at: www.nbdpn.org/bdpm#2017.php. All materials can be printed, copied electronically, or embedded in webpages and newsletters free of charge. Archives of past packets focusing on other measures for preventing birth defects are also available.

(I/we have a limited quantity of preprinted materials that you can request.) If (I/we) can help you or your patients further, please feel free to let (me/us) know how.

Sincerely,
(*Your own name if appropriate or your organization*)