

● Sample Proclamation ●

National Birth Defects Prevention Month, January 2017

Birth defects are common, costly, and critical. While many unknown factors play a role in birth defects occurrence, steps can be taken to help prevent or limit certain risks for birth defects, such as exposure to chemicals in the home or at work, use of alcohol and street drugs, a lack of folic acid in a woman's diet, lack of prenatal care, and infections during pregnancy.

- Whereas, Every 4 ½ minutes, a U.S. baby is born with a birth defect. Birth defects are a leading cause of death in the first year of life, causing one in every five infant deaths. These conditions lead to \$2.6 billion per year in hospital costs alone in the United States. In *(name of your state)* birth defects account for about ### infant deaths every year; and
- Whereas, Birth defects can occur in any family regardless of race, ethnicity, health history, economic status, or level of education; and
- 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 the crucial first weeks of a baby's 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, Taking steps to avoid infections during pregnancy can reduce the chance that a child is born with a birth defect. The National Birth Defects Prevention Network and CDC encourage parents-to-be to reduce the chance of developing an infection during pregnancy by observing the following guidelines:
- 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.
- Whereas, The good health and well-being of the people of *(state name)* are enhanced by the support of a national effort to educate about preconception health and strategies to prevent birth defects; and
- Whereas, The *(name of your state Department of Health Services)* and the *(name of your state Birth Defects Monitoring Program)* join with the March of Dimes, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the National Birth Defects Prevention Network, as well as many dedicated volunteers, healthcare professionals, and parent groups by participating in this promotion.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, -----, Governor of the State of -----, do hereby proclaim January 2017 as
NATIONAL BIRTH DEFECTS PREVENTION MONTH.