



State of
North Dakota
Office of the Governor

Doug Burgum
Governor

PROCLAMATION
BIRTH DEFECTS PREVENTION MONTH
JANUARY 2017

WHEREAS, birth defects can occur in any family, regardless of the parents' age, gender, race, health history, economic status or education; and

WHEREAS, every four and one-half minutes a baby is born in the United States with a birth defect. Birth defects cause one in every five infant deaths and lead to \$2.6 billion per year in hospital costs alone in the United States. In 2014, birth defects accounted for 51 infant deaths in North Dakota; 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 early weeks of embryonic development; and

WHEREAS, early identification of a child with a birth defect and early intervention services typically improve 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 North Dakota Department of Health encourages parents-to-be to lessen the risk 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; and

WHEREAS, the good health and well-being of the people of North Dakota are enhanced by the support of a national effort to educate about and prevent birth defects.

NOW, THEREFORE, as Governor of the State of North Dakota, I do hereby proclaim January 2017, **BIRTH DEFECTS PREVENTION MONTH** in the state of North Dakota.



Doug Burgum
Governor

ATTEST:



Alvin A. Jaeger
Secretary of State