



Gary Richard Herbert

Governor

## Declaration

*Whereas, birth defects are health conditions present at birth and can cause problems in how the body works;*

*Whereas, birth defects are a leading cause of death in the first year of life, associated with three in 10 infant deaths in Utah;*

*Whereas, birth defects may occur regardless of the family's race, ethnicity, health history, economic status, or educational level;*

*Whereas, the risk of some birth defects may be increased by exposure to chemicals at home or work, use of alcohol and recreational drugs during the pregnancy, a lack of sufficient level of folic acid in the expectant mother's diet, or a lack of prenatal care;*

*Whereas, all parents-to-be are encouraged to avoid harmful substances, choose a healthy lifestyle, and talk to a healthcare provider before and during pregnancy;*

*Whereas, approximately 30 percent of pregnancies in Utah are unplanned, and, consequently, the expectant mother may not receive prenatal care during the crucial first weeks of a fetus' development;*

*Whereas, early identification of a child with a birth defect and early intervention services improve the child's chances of survival and quality of life;*

*Whereas, the good health and well-being of parents and children in Utah are enhanced by the support of a national effort to educate the public about the importance of optimizing health before conceiving a child and about strategies to decrease the risk of birth defects, including proper prenatal care during the first trimester; and*

*Whereas, the Utah Department of Health's Birth Defects Program joins the March of Dimes, the National Birth Defects Prevention Network, parent groups, and healthcare professionals and volunteers in this awareness campaign;*

*Now, therefore, I, Gary R. Herbert, governor of the state of Utah, do hereby declare January 2016 as*

# Birth Defects Prevention Month

Gary R. Herbert

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