

**STATE OF ARKANSAS**  
**EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT**

**PROCLAMATION**

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS COME – GREETINGS:

WHEREAS: Breastfeeding is one of the most highly effective preventive measures a mother can take to protect the health of her infant and helps to promote growth and development, reduce the incidence and severity of diseases, increase immunity, and reduce the risk of allergies, asthma, and obesity; and

WHEREAS: Breast milk is recommended as the ideal food for infants by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the United States Surgeon General, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and the Arkansas Department of Health. Exclusive breastfeeding of infants for the first six months of life is recommended for optimal growth, development, and health; and

WHEREAS: Breastfeeding is a preventive health measure for mothers, reducing the risk of Type 2 diabetes, ovarian, uterine, and breast cancers, osteoporosis, and high blood pressure; and

WHEREAS: Arkansas's rate of Sudden Unexplained Infant Death Syndrome (SUIDS) is higher than the national average, and breastfeeding has been shown to reduce the risk of SUIDS; and

WHEREAS: For 2015 in the U.S., Arkansas had the 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest rate of exclusive breastfeeding at 3 months and 6 months, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest rate of any breastfeeding at 12 months; and

WHEREAS: The 24-hour free live Breastfeeding Support Helpline created by the Arkansas Department of Health and Baptist Health Medical Center Little Rock has been in operation for 2 years and receives over 200 calls per month, providing breastfeeding support and promotion to new mothers across Arkansas, no matter what county they live in or what hospital they delivered their baby in; and

WHEREAS: Breastfeeding is one of the 9 priority areas of the Healthy Active Arkansas initiative, the Governor-endorsed 10-year plan for the state to increase the number of Arkansans who are at a healthy weight; and

WHEREAS: A key strategy of Healthy Active Arkansas is to increase the number of hospitals that are designated as Baby-Friendly in order to promote and support breastfeeding throughout the state. Two hospitals achieved baby-friendly status in 2016 with several more poised to do so in the near future, and all Arkansas hospitals are encouraged to pursue this designation; and

WHEREAS: Act 680 of the 2007 Regular session was passed to protect women who breast-feed children and to create a cause of action to prevent interference with the breastfeeding of a child; and

WHEREAS: The Arkansas Department of Health, the Arkansas Breastfeeding Coalition, Healthy Active Arkansas, communities, worksites, families, and many other partners are working to promote and ensure breastfeeding success as an important component of healthy communities for the overall health of our state;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ASA HUTCHINSON, Governor of the State of Arkansas, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the laws of the State of Arkansas, do hereby proclaim March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017 as

BREASTFEEDING AWARENESS DAY IN ARKANSAS

across the State, and I encourage our citizens to learn more about the benefits of breastfeeding.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Arkansas to be affixed this 1<sup>st</sup> day of March, in the year of our Lord 2017.



Asa Hutchinson, Governor



Attest:



Mark Martin, Secretary Of State