



STATE OF ARKANSAS

City of Brookland

2017 Prematurity Awareness Month Proclamation

WHEREAS, the March of Dimes Foundation is a pioneer in improving the health of infants and women of childbearing age by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality, and

WHEREAS, premature birth is the leading cause of death in newborn babies. Prematurity is defined as birth before 37 completed weeks of gestation. Premature babies who survive may suffer immediate complications and often face lifelong health problems, such as learning disabilities, vision and hearing impairment, and cerebral palsy, and

WHEREAS, the March of Dimes has set a national goal of reducing preterm birth to 5.5 percent in every state by 2030, which will result in a healthier start in life for tens of thousands of infants, and

WHEREAS, there were 38,800 live births in Arkansas in 2014, and of those 4,202 babies were born preterm, representing 10.8 percent of all state births, that's 1 in 9 babies born too soon, and

WHEREAS, in Arkansas, preventing premature births could mean an annual savings of up to \$217 million, and

WHEREAS, prematurity and birth defects are the leading causes of infant mortality in Arkansas. Birth defects accounted for 1,101 of all infant deaths in Arkansas in 2012.

WHEREAS, Arkansas receives a grade of D on the March of Dimes 2017 (2016 data) Premature Birth Report Card representing 10.8 percent of all state births that are preterm, and

WHEREAS, the March of Dimes in Arkansas has worked extensively to promote access to health services and health coverage that help to reduce premature birth and promote health equity, and

WHEREAS, the March of Dimes in Arkansas looks forward to partnering with Mayor Kenneth D. Jones and the City of Brookland in response to the continued crisis of premature birth, and

WHEREAS, the month of November is recognized as World Prematurity Awareness Month to bring about recognition of this global health crisis, and November 17 is recognized as Prematurity Awareness Day across the United States, and

WHEREAS, the March of Dimes and its volunteers continue to advocate for national and state health policies and programs that affect women of childbearing age, infants, children, and families, and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Mayor Kenneth D. Jones of Brookland, Arkansas, do hereby extend special recognition to the March of Dimes in Arkansas and declare **November 17, 2017 as Prematurity Awareness Day.**

IN WITNESS THEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 13th day of November, 2017.




Kenneth D. Jones, Mayor