

State of North Carolina

ROY COOPER
GOVERNOR

BETTER HEARING AND SPEECH MONTH

2017

BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the economic costs due to unemployment and lost work productivity for an estimated 48 million Americans with hearing loss, speech and language impairment, and similar communication barriers are more than \$186 billion for the nation and \$12 billion for the state of North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, in North Carolina, there is a projected 33 percent increase in both adults with hearing loss (1.2 million in 2015 to 1.65 million in 2030)—persons aged 65 and older make up one percent of the general population but account for 44 percent of adults with hearing loss—and veterans with hearing loss (121,569 in 2014 to 161,636); and

WHEREAS, hearing loss is one of the most frequently occurring congenital conditions with a national prevalence rate of 1.6 per 1000 babies screened; and

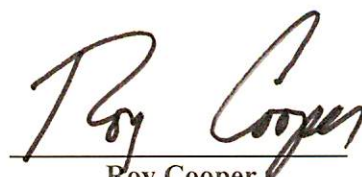
WHEREAS, each of North Carolina's 90 birthing/neonatal facilities offers initial newborn hearing screening services prior to discharge—over 99 percent of infants are screened for the presence of permanent hearing loss—resulting in more than 200 infants being diagnosed each year (with about the same number acquiring hearing loss by the time they enter school); and

WHEREAS, effective communication impacts learning, socialization, and emotional development and is therefore an important factor in reaching individual potential: the ability to clearly communicate and understand others is critical to securing employment, establishing and maintaining relationships, and living a fulfilling and enjoyable life; and

WHEREAS, all people with hearing loss and speech and language impairments should be ensured access to the services of the many dedicated specialists available in North Carolina—including hearing health care providers, hearing loss service specialists, hospital screening personnel, early interventionists, speech-language pathologists, and audiologists—all of whom should be commended for their outstanding work and selfless efforts to facilitate greater awareness of the communication barriers described herein;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ROY COOPER, Governor of the State of North Carolina, do hereby proclaim May, 2017, as "**BETTER HEARING AND SPEECH MONTH**" in North Carolina, and commend its observance to all citizens.




Roy Cooper
Governor

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the Great Seal of the State of North Carolina at the Capitol in Raleigh this twentieth day of April in the year of our Lord two-thousand and seventeen and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and forty-first.