



State of North Carolina

ROY COOPER
GOVERNOR

DEAF AWARENESS MONTH

2021

BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, in North Carolina, there is a projected 33 percent increase in adults with hearing loss of 1.2 million in 2015 to 1.65 million in 2030; and

WHEREAS, all of North Carolina's birthing and neonatal facilities offer initial new born hearing screening services prior to discharge; more than 99 percent of infants are screened for the presence of permanent hearing loss. More than 200 infants are diagnosed each year, with about the same number acquiring hearing loss by the time they enter school; and

WHEREAS, the Deaf population of North Carolina includes individuals born profoundly deaf and use American Sign Language (ASL) as a primary means of communication, to those with a range of hearing loss who use hearing aids, assistive listening devices or other forms of amplifications and communication modes; and

WHEREAS, American Sign Language (ASL) is a valid linguistic means of conveying thoughts, ideas, and emotions; it is a fully operating functional language with its own syntax, morphology, and structure; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the Deaf community, exacerbating and underscoring the barriers to communication equity, especially in healthcare where wearing masks is required. However, the pandemic has also provided opportunities for creative solutions such as wearing clear masks, using speech-to-text apps, and other communication aid resources; and

WHEREAS, to commemorate the first congress of the World Federation of the Deaf, which was held in September of 1951, North Carolina will join in recognizing the entire month of September as Deaf Awareness Month. The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, through the Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DSDHH) and their Regional Centers, provides services, including advocacy for communication access, consultation, Deaf culture and ASL awareness, information, and referral to people who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or Deaf-Blind, and their communities in this state;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ROY COOPER, Governor of the State of North Carolina, do hereby proclaim September 2021 as "DEAF AWARENESS 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 second day of September in the year of our Lord two thousand and twenty-one and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and forty-sixth.