



Brachial Plexus Injury Awareness

PROCLAMATION PROCEDURE, SAMPLE & LETTER TO OFFICIAL

PROCLAMATION PROCEDURES

In an effort to have Brachial Plexus Injury Awareness Week officially proclaimed in as many states and cities as possible, the Awareness Committee will be registering individuals and/or groups willing to commit to contacting the Governor of their state and/or the Mayor or other Municipal Leader (referred to as Official in this document) to request an *Official Proclamation*. We have provided a sample proclamation to accompany your letter of request.

- Register your name and contact information along with your Official's name(s) and contact information with Nancy Birk at nancy@ubpn.org or UBPN, Inc., 1610 Kent St, Kent, Ohio 44240. By registering your information we will insure that no more than one official request for a proclamation is submitted to each Official.
- Phone your Official's office and determine if there are procedures in place for requesting *Official Proclamations*. Prepare and send a packet to the Official containing a letter of request, the sample proclamation (see reverse), an Official Press Release and any other information you feel would support your request or that meets their specific requirements.
- Follow-up on your request with a phone call to secure his/her willingness to participate in the proclamation program. If they are willing to participate, arrange a date, time and place for an official presentation of the proclamation, and indicate to whom the presentation will be made. (You may wish to have your local support group leader, a volunteer, an individual affected by a brachial plexus injury or a medical professional accept the presentation.) Arrange to have as many people as possible on hand for the presentation ceremony, including families and children.
- When details of the presentation have been finalized, contact the local media and provide them with the *Official Press Release* and personally invite the media to attend the presentation.
- Please follow-up with thank you letters to all major participants (including media) and don't forget to provide the Awareness Committee with the details photographs and press coverage related to your event! (See the *Wrapping Up Awareness* sheet for more information.)
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**BRACHIAL PLEXUS INJURY AWARENESS WEEK
SAMPLE PROCLAMATION**

WHEREAS brachial plexus injuries affect the network of nerves that control the muscles of the shoulder, arm, elbow, wrist, hand and fingers and can result in full to partial paralysis of one or both arms;

WHEREAS brachial plexus injuries can occur as a result of trauma such as automobile; motorcycle or boating accidents; sports injuries ("burners" or "stingers"); animal bites; gunshot or puncture wounds; as a result of specific medical treatments / procedures / and surgeries or due to viral diseases;

WHEREAS brachial plexus injuries occur often during the birthing process;

WHEREAS approximately 2-5 per 1000 newborns are affected by brachial plexus injuries;

WHEREAS careful monitoring of pregnant women exhibiting any or all of the documented risk factors associated with shoulder dystocia and brachial plexus birth injuries; and the proper use of recommended maneuvers during delivery of a shoulder dystocia baby can help prevent the occurrence of these injuries;

WHEREAS persons affected by brachial plexus injuries experience pain in muscle, joints and ligaments; weakness, atrophy and numbness of the affected limb; and sometimes respiratory difficulties as well;

WHEREAS persons affected by brachial plexus injuries can experience secondary issues which may include low tone (hypotonia), developmental delays, speech dysfunction, chronic ear infections on the affected side, possible hearing loss, nail bed dysfunction, weakness of the foot on the affected side, postural issues that may eventually lead to scoliosis and other secondary health issues.

WHEREAS brachial plexus injuries present unique challenges for all those affected, including challenges related to having the full use of only one arm as well as the challenges associated with having a disability of any kind in our contemporary society;

WHEREAS those affected by brachial plexus injuries often experience delayed diagnosis and lack of access to information related to current and ground-breaking treatment options, including surgical procedures available that could enhance function of the affected limb;

WHEREAS early intervention by specialized physicians and experienced occupational and physical therapists is essential for optimum functional improvement related to a brachial plexus injury;

WHEREAS lack of information related to current treatment protocol and outcome expectations for brachial plexus injuries hinders government agencies in their efforts to provide appropriate benefits and services to those in serious need;

WHEREAS the brachial plexus injury community, the Awareness Committee and the United Brachial Plexus Network, Inc. are promoting Brachial Plexus Awareness Week to inform and educate the general public, the medical community, individuals with brachial plexus injuries and their families;

WHEREAS increased understanding and awareness of brachial plexus injuries will ensure hope of a better future for people affected, as well as possibly prevent this injury from occurring;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that I, _____ (Governor/Municipal leader) of

_____ (State or City), do hereby proclaim [insert date here] to be Brachial Plexus Injury Awareness Week.

_____ (Signature of Governor/Municipal leader)

SAMPLE LETTER TO YOUR STATE'S GOVERNOR FOR PROCLAMATION

[your name]
[name of support group]
[address]
[city, state, zip]
[phone number]
[email address]

[Official's Title & Name]
[address]
[city, state, zip]

[Date]

Dear [Official's Title & Name]:

I am writing to request that you proclaim the week of [date] as Brachial Plexus Awareness Week in the [city][state] of [name of city or name of state]. Your proclamation would be in conjunction with other cities, states and countries around the world to promote awareness of brachial plexus injuries.

Brachial plexus injuries often occur during the birthing process (Obstetrical Brachial Plexus Injury or OBPI). Availability of brachial plexus statistics vary widely, but where figures are available the general consensus is that brachial plexus injuries occur in 2-5 out of 1000 births. More children suffer from brachial plexus injuries sustained at birth than Down Syndrome or Muscular Dystrophy, yet information on this disability is not so readily obtained. Other causes of brachial plexus injuries include: automobile, motorcycle or boating accidents; sports injuries ("burners" or "stingers"); animal bites; gunshot or puncture wounds; as a result of specific medical treatments / procedures / and surgeries or due to viral diseases. Adults who incur traumatic brachial plexus injuries often suffer from severe and chronic pain and struggle to find support, information and adequate medical care.

My child, [name of child], suffered a brachial plexus injury at birth that resulted in paralysis of [arm and hand, both arms and hands]. She [he] underwent nerve grafting surgery at [name of hospital] in [City, State] and has physical and occupational therapy [daily, weekly, 3 X per week, monthly] at [name of therapy group] here in [city]. There are many other children like my child throughout this [city or state] in the world who will participate in awareness activities the week of [date].

The [name of bpi support group] is planning various activities across [name of city or state] to promote awareness of these injuries during Awareness Week. We will celebrate that week by [discuss groups plans here].

Thank you for your attention in this matter, [Official Title & Name]. We would be honored to have your support.

Sincerely,
[insert name & title (if any) here]