

**[ PROCLAMATION NO. 540, January 20, 2004 ]**

**DECLARING THE 1ST WEEK OF OCTOBER OF EACH YEAR AS  
"NATIONAL NEWBORN SCREENING WEEK"**

**WHEREAS**, the Constitution of the Philippines provides that the "The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them;

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to the mandate, the "Early Childhood Care and Development Act" (ECCD), was enacted, declaring it to be the policy of the state to "promote the rights of children to survival, development and special protection with full recognition of the nature of childhood and its special needs".'

**WHEREAS**, ECCD aims to establish an efficient system for early identification, prevention, referral and intervention for developmental disorders and disabilities in early childhood;

**WHEREAS**, newborn screening is an essential public health strategy that enables the early detection of several inheritable conditions which, if untreated, could lead to mental retardation and even death;

**WHEREAS**, early diagnosis and treatment of these conditions can result in the normal growth and development of the affected individual;

**WHEREAS**, newborn screening, which has long been an integral part of routine newborn care in many countries, is currently being administered only to two percent (2%) of Filipino newborns;

**WHEREAS**, there is an urgent need to conduct a national information campaign in order to create public awareness on newborn screening and generate full support for it from both public and private sectors.

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO**, President of the Republic of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by law, do hereby declare the first Week of October of each year as the " National Newborn Screening Week" with the Department of Health (DOH) and the Institute of Human Genetics of the National Institutes of Health, University of the Philippines to serve as the national focal points of purposes of commemorating this event and ensuring that information about the availability and benefits of newborn screening is expeditiously and widely disseminated to the general public.

**Done** in the City of Manila, this 20thday of January, in the year of Our Lord, Two Thousand and Four.

**(Sgd.) GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO**