



# MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Coleen Boyle, PhD, MS (Hyg)  
Director

I am pleased to present the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities' (NCBDDD) Report for 2018: Making a Difference Across the Lifespan. As an organization, we strive to put our best foot forward

every day to serve the public in the most efficient and effective ways possible. In this year's Report, we are highlighting many, though certainly not all, of the Center's accomplishments and activities to advance our vision ensuring babies are born healthy, children reach their potential, and everyone thrives.

The past year, 2018, proved to be another eventful year for our Center. Most notably, Zika continued to dominate the headlines, with NCBDDD working extensively to respond to this emerging disease threat. We worked closely with our partners in Washington and members of Congress to support our first budget initiative in several years: Emerging Threats to Mothers and Babies. The Zika virus response brought stark attention to the threat public health emergencies pose to pregnant women and their infants, and this successfully funded budget initiative allows us to continue supporting state and local capacity to identify and track health outcomes due to the virus. Additionally, we have been working with jurisdictions most heavily impacted by the opioid epidemic to learn more about potential birth defects and other poor newborn outcomes linked to opioid use in pregnancy, as well as understand the long-term developmental outcomes that may be associated with this exposure. Building on our Zika surveillance program, we will support the foundation for a national system to rapidly identify potential threats to infant health, support care providers and families by improving our understanding of adverse outcomes, and tailor interventions that help children thrive.

This increase to our Center's budget would not have happened without the support of our partners across the public health community, and we will continue to work together to ensure this investment improves the lives of millions of babies and children. We remain committed to fighting on the frontlines protecting moms and babies from all emerging health threats.

I hope you enjoy reading this Report and that it gives you further insight into the work that we do and the progress we have made as an organization in partnership with others during 2018. Our staff are our greatest resource, and I'm proud to say we have a team committed to working together for the success of our Center. As we enter 2019, I would like to take a moment to thank retiring staff Julie Bolen, PhD, and J. Michael Soucie, PhD, for their incredible contributions to this Center and public health (rare disorders and bleeding disorders, respectively). I thank them for their service and tenacity and their dedication throughout the years. Lastly, I would like to thank all of our partners for their dedication and commitment to NCBDDD.

In 2020, we will be celebrating NCBDDD's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a Center, focusing on all the incredible work we've done for the past 20 years. I invite our partners to join us in 2020 for this special celebration.

On behalf of NCBDDD,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Coleen Boyle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Coleen Boyle, PhD, MS (Hyg)  
Director