

# The State of Washington



## Proclamation

**WHEREAS**, Usher Syndrome is a relatively rare genetic disorder caused by a mutation in any one of at least 11 genes resulting in a combination of hearing loss and visual impairment, and is a leading cause of combined deafness and blindness; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the National Institute for Health, Usher Syndrome affects approximately 4 to 17 per 100,000 people; and

**WHEREAS**, Usher syndrome, which is incurable presently, impacts three major senses in the body:

- Vision: Vision loss in Usher Syndrome is caused by a progressive vision disorder known as retinitis pigmentosa (RP). RP causes the light-sensing cells in the retina to gradually deteriorate, initially resulting in night blindness, followed by a narrowing of the visual field, commonly known as tunnel vision.
- Hearing: Children with Usher syndrome are born with or develop hearing loss. It is estimated that 3 to 6 percent of children who are deaf have Usher Syndrome.
- Balance: Balance is achieved and maintained through input from your eyes, the vestibular organs in the inner ear and the sensory systems of the body, such as the skin, muscles and joints. Thus, people with Usher Syndrome suffer from severe balance issues due to vestibular dysfunction; and

**WHEREAS**, there are three clinical types: Type 1, Type 2 and Type 3, which are distinguished by the severity and age when the signs and symptoms appear. In the United States, Type 1 and Type 2 are most common; and

**WHEREAS**, those affected with Usher Syndrome may suffer from depression, anxiety, isolation, loss of independence; and

**WHEREAS**, the Usher Syndrome community is uniting around the world to spread public awareness but especially to be recognized annually the 3rd Saturday of September;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Jay Inslee, Governor of the State of Washington, do hereby designate September 16, 2023 as

### *Usher Syndrome Awareness Day*

in Washington, and I urge all people in our state to join me in this special observance.

Signed this 15<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2023

Governor Jay Inslee

