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National Respiratory Therapy Week, 1983

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Chronic lung diseases constitute an important health problem in the United States. They afflict nearly 18 million Americans and cause nearly 70,000 deaths each year, many of which are the direct result of cigarette smoking. Thousands of other persons annually suffer some degree of permanent disability as a result of these disorders. The economic cost of these diseases has been estimated to exceed \$16 billion annually.

For some of these diseases the cause is unknown, and for many there is no cure. The timely initiation of appropriate therapy, however, can usually slow their progress, relieve their symptoms, reduce the extent of permanent lung damage and respiratory disability, and avert or delay the onset of life-threatening complications. Although the lung damage already caused by these diseases cannot be undone, respiratory therapy may help preserve lung function that might otherwise be irretrievably lost and can also help the patient make the most effective use of that which remains.

Respiratory therapy may take many forms, including drugs to dilate open air passages or protect against respiratory infections; respiratory-assistance techniques to maintain adequate blood oxygen levels; and exercise programs to improve the efficiency of breathing and condition respiratory muscles to bear the increased burden imposed on them. Kicking the smoking habit is also important to all respiratory therapy.

In recognition that chronic lung diseases are an important cause of death, ill health, and disability and that respiratory therapy can do much to lessen their effects, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 67, has authorized and requested the President to proclaim the week of September 25, 1983, through October 1, 1983, as "National Respiratory Therapy Week."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week of September 25 through October 1, 1983, as National Respiratory Therapy Week. I call upon all interested organizations and persons to utilize this opportunity to focus public attention on the national health problem posed by chronic lung diseases and to reaffirm our commitment to bring these diseases under effective control.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 15th day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eighth.

Ronald Reagan