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Cancer Control Month, 1985

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The past year has witnessed steady, encouraging progress against cancer. The latest data show that 49 percent of all patients diagnosed with cancer survive five years or more. This compares with 48 percent last year and 46 percent the year before. And because of the lag time in collecting data, we believe the true five-year survival rate is better than 50 percent. For some of the major cancers, more than two-thirds of patients will survive beyond this five-year mark.

In addition, we are seeing steady gains in survival for patients with a number of specific cancers: melanoma, Hodgkin's disease and cancers of the lung, colon, prostate, and testis. For children under age 15 who develop cancer, the five-year survival rate has risen to 60 percent, up from 53 percent last year.

This record of continuing, steady gains assures us that we can meet our national goal for the year 2000: to reduce the 1980 cancer death rate in this country by one-half.

This is a realistic and achievable goal, built on the deeper understanding of cancer that we have derived from our research over the past decade and a half. We now have evidence, for example, that an individual can reduce personal cancer risk by a number of lifestyle choices. Quitting smoking is the single most important step an individual can take to reduce cancer risk. There are also a number of choices we can make in our daily diets that may help to reduce cancer risk, such as increasing the amount of fiber-rich foods, including fruits, vegetables, peas and beans, and whole-grain cereals. Another is to reduce the amount of fat in our diet.

Research designed to answer questions about ways to halt or prevent cancer is ongoing, including twenty-five studies concerning diet interventions. New community cancer programs have been formed to bring the latest in cancer care to patients in their own communities. A new computerized data base for physicians provides the latest information on cancer treatment. Trials of new therapies continue to seek better ways to help the cancer patient, and research to understand the nature of cancer at the cellular level continues to break new ground. We can look into the future with hope and optimism.

In 1938, the Congress of the United States passed a joint resolution (52 Stat. 148; 36 U.S.C. 150) requesting the President to issue an annual proclamation setting aside the month of April as "Cancer Control Month."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the month of April 1985 as Cancer Control Month. I invite the Governors of the fifty States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the appropriate officials of all other areas under the United States flag, to issue similar proclamations. I also ask health care professionals, the communications industry, and all other interested persons and groups to reaffirm our Nation's continuing commitment to control cancer.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 22nd day of March, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and ninth.

Ronald Reagan