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American Heart Month, 1983

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Diseases of the heart and blood vessels are our Nation's most pressing health problem. Over sixty million Americans are afflicted by one or another of this family of diseases, which cause nearly a million deaths annually, disable many millions of others, and cost the Nation more than \$60 billion each year. The leading killers among the cardiovascular diseases are coronary heart disease and stroke.

In 1948 a newly created Federal agency—now the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute—and a private health organization, the American Heart Association, joined hands to combat the cardiovascular diseases. Their combined efforts were directed toward the conquest of these diseases through prevention, diagnosis, and treatment; through the training of new research workers and clinicians in the cardiovascular field; and through support for community service programs.

Until the mid-1960s, mortality from coronary heart disease had continued to increase despite our best efforts; however, in 1965 mortality from heart disease began a steady decline that continues to the present. From 1972 to 1980, mortality rates from coronary heart disease declined by 22.5 percent, and mortality rates from stroke declined by 36.5 percent.

Advances in diagnosis and treatment have been major factors in these reductions. But perhaps equally important, large numbers of Americans have voluntarily modified their habits and lifestyles: many have quit or cut down on cigarette smoking, are watching their weight and blood cholesterol levels, exercising more, and seeking the help of a physician in the control of treatable conditions which increase the risk of premature arteriosclerosis and its consequences.

Though we have made considerable progress in reducing the toll in illness, disability, and death caused by cardiovascular diseases, these diseases continue to be a serious threat to the health and well-being of our citizens. To encourage continued application of what is known about the prevention and relief of cardiovascular diseases and to stimulate the development of new knowledge and techniques that may bring about their ultimate conquest, the Congress has requested that the President annually proclaim February as American Heart Month.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the month of February 1983 as American Heart Month. I invite the Governors of the States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the officials of other areas subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, and the American people, to join me in reaffirming our commitment to the resolution of the nationwide problem of cardiovascular disease.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 3rd day of Feb., 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 seventh.

Ronald Reagan