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Myasthenia Gravis Awareness Week, 1983

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Americans with myasthenia gravis cannot move about freely, as most of us can. This chronic neuromuscular disease, which has no known cause, produces progressive muscular weakness and abnormally rapid fatigue of the voluntary muscles. Myasthenia gravis can also result in a life-threatening medical crisis, particularly when a patient's throat muscles are affected.

Myasthenia gravis can strike any person, at any age, at any time. At least 100,000 people have been diagnosed as having this disorder, and scientists estimate that another 100,000 persons with myasthenia gravis have not yet been diagnosed.

In the past, myasthenia gravis patients died or were severely incapacitated by their weakened muscles. Several forms of treatment developed by scientists in private and Federal research institutions have led to improved management of the disease. Research supported by the Myasthenia Gravis Foundation, Inc., in collaboration with the Neurological Institute of the National Institutes of Health, has made important contributions to the management of this neurological disorder. Today, myasthenia gravis patients can expect to lead nearly normal lives.

Although much has been learned about myasthenia gravis, we still do not have the means to prevent this crippling disease. In order that the public should be made aware of the suffering endured by those who have the disease, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 140, has authorized and requested the President to proclaim the week of October 2 through October 8, 1983, as "Myasthenia Gravis Awareness Week."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week beginning October 2, 1983, as Myasthenia Gravis Awareness Week. I call upon all government agencies, health organizations, and the people of the United States to observe this week with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 5th day of October, 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