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National Cystic Fibrosis Week, 1983

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Cystic fibrosis is one of the most common fatal genetic diseases among children in the United States. In spite of its prevalence, however, the disease remains a mystery in many ways. Its underlying cause is elusive, as is a method for identifying carriers who have no symptoms. Even in victims of cystic fibrosis, the disease manifests itself in many different ways, often masquerading as other conditions, and thus confounds diagnosis.

Through the combined efforts of the Federal government's National Institutes of Health, private voluntary agencies, and researchers at medical centers and universities across the country, we are making inroads toward explaining the mysteries of cystic fibrosis. While the disease once was almost invariably fatal in infancy and early childhood, innovations in diagnosis and treatment over the past 20 years have virtually doubled the average age of survival of its victims. For example, half of the children born with cystic fibrosis can now expect to live to age 21.

But this good news brings with it new hurdles. While people with cystic fibrosis are embarking on careers and assuming societal responsibilities to a greater extent than ever before, they do so in the shadow of a disease that remains progressively debilitating.

Therefore, the challenge remains to identify the cause of this disease and ultimately, we hope, to prevent it. Scientists are uncovering in greater and greater detail the metabolic defects involved in cystic fibrosis. By focusing on the unique physiology of people with the disease, researchers are getting closer to being able to identify its cause. In this effort, public awareness of the hallmarks and treatment of cystic fibrosis and of the importance of continuing scientific research are critical.

To enhance the public's awareness of this disease, the Congress of the United States, by Senate Joint Resolution 131, has designated the week of September 18 through September 24, 1983 as "National Cystic Fibrosis Week" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of that week.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week beginning September 18, 1983, as National Cystic Fibrosis Week, and I call upon the people of the United States to observe that week by focusing attention on cystic fibrosis and the continuing efforts to clarify the causes of the disease and improve the treatment of its victims.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 20th 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