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National Alzheimer's Disease Month, 1985

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

For more than two million Americans with Alzheimer's disease, each day is fraught with fear and frustration. Fear of getting lost in one's own neighborhood; of not recognizing members of one's immediate family; of not being able to perform simple, familiar chores. For the victims of this disease, tying shoes or setting a table can be overwhelming tasks. As our elderly population grows, more and more people will be affected by this malady.

Alzheimer's disease is the major cause of the confusion, erratic behavior, and forgetfulness once believed to be a "normal" part of old age. This "senility" is actually the result of the destruction of certain brain cells.

As the afflicted person loses the ability to function intellectually, the family faces growing emotional, physical, and financial burdens. Eventually, many victims require specialized professional care. Fifty percent of all nursing home residents in America suffer from Alzheimer's disease or other serious, irreversible forms of dementia.

The medical research community is focusing special attention on Alzheimer's disease in an effort to discover its causes and develop effective treatments. Recently, a Department of Health and Human Services task force defined the current state of medical knowledge of Alzheimer's disease and recommended future research directions. Organizations leading this research include the National Institute of Neurological and Communicative Disorders and Stroke; the National Institute on Aging; the National Institute of Mental Health; and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. For Alzheimer's patients and their families, this intensive research is the greatest source of hope.

But until a way to prevent Alzheimer's disease is found, these families need our support and understanding. I commend the superb services provided by voluntary health organizations, notably the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Association.

To enhance public awareness of Alzheimer's disease, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 65, has designated the month of November 1985 as "National Alzheimer's Disease Month" and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this month.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the month of November 1985 as National Alzheimer's Disease Month, and I call upon the people of the United States to observe that month with appropriate observances and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 8th day of Nov, 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 tenth.

Ronald Reagan