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National Skin Cancer Prevention and Detection Week, 1985

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States. It accounts for between 30 and 40 percent of all cancers and is increasing at a significant rate. Approximately 18,000 Americans will develop a primary melanoma and over 500,000 Americans will develop nonmelanoma skin cancer this year. Epidemiological studies show that the incidence of melanoma has doubled every decade since the 1930s and is now increasing at a faster rate than any other cancer, except lung cancer in women.

Melanoma has a mortality rate of 25 percent and causes 5,000 deaths per year, and nonmelanoma skin cancer causes another 2,000 deaths per year. The 1983 National Institutes of Health Consensus Conference on Precursors to Malignant Melanoma found that the incidence of melanoma and the number of deaths from melanoma are increasing in many areas of the world and found evidence that early recognition and surgical removal of melanoma make it a highly curable cancer.

Patients with increased risk of developing melanoma and nonmelanoma skin cancers can be identified, and early treatment of melanoma and nonmelanoma skin cancers results in high cure rates.

Sun exposure is an undisputed cause of nonmelanoma skin cancer and is an important factor in the development of melanoma. The number of skin cancers can be reduced through sun protection measures such as the use of sunscreens and simple changes in lifestyle. The American Academy of Dermatology and State and local dermatologic organizations are committed to heightening the awareness and understanding of melanoma and nonmelanoma skin cancers among members of the general public and the health care community.

The first Melanoma and Skin Cancer Prevention and Detection Program, a coordinated national voluntary effort of professional dermatological organizations to reduce the increasing incidence of melanoma and nonmelanoma skin cancers and to better control such cancers, will be conducted in March 1985.

The Congress, by House Joint Resolution 85, has designated the week of March 24, 1985, through March 30, 1985, as "National Skin Cancer Prevention and Detection Week" and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this event.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week of March 24, 1985, through March 30, 1985, as National Skin Cancer Prevention and Detection Week, and I urge health care professionals and all other interested persons and groups to assist efforts to advance the prevention and detection of skin 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