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Cancer Control Month, 1986

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

This Nation's investment in basic cancer research has led us to an unprecedented understanding of the cancer cell. With this new knowledge, we are undertaking major efforts to prevent cancer; to reverse the process once it starts; to find ways to activate the body's own immune system; and to treat the disease and its symptoms more effectively.

Our scientists are giving us an abundance of new information about behavior and precautions we can take to help protect us against cancer.

Much evidence suggests that diets high in fiber and low in fat may reduce cancer risk. We can adopt a daily diet high in fiber by choosing plenty of fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole-grain breads and cereals. We can reduce animal fat intake by choosing low-fat and lean foods, and by using low-fat cooking methods.

Smoking-related cancers are the most preventable. This past year, new data showed that the incidence of lung cancer in white men decreased significantly for the first time in at least half a century. This decrease comes 20 years after men began to stop smoking in substantial numbers. This proves that individuals can successfully reduce their cancer risk by not smoking.

This message is especially important for women, whose rates of lung cancer show no signs of leveling off or decreasing. In fact, lung cancer is expected to surpass breast cancer this year as the leading cause of cancer deaths among women. Rates of lung cancer are also high for black men.

The growing popularity of smokeless tobacco products among our youth, particularly teenage boys, is of great concern. Early this year, medical experts concluded that there is strong evidence that such forms of tobacco cause cancer of the mouth.

Some promising findings this year give new hope to cancer patients. Scientists reported a totally new approach to cancer treatment, an approach that activates the immune system to destroy cancer cells in some patients. Extensive studies are underway to refine and perfect the treatment so that it can become widely available as soon as possible.

We have set as a national goal reduction of the national cancer death rate by one-half of its 1980 level by the year 2000. This can be achieved through the active involvement of all Americans.

In 1938, the Congress of the United States passed a joint resolution (52 Stat. 148; 36 U.S.C. 150) requesting the President to issue an annual proclamation declaring April to be Cancer Control Month.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the month of April 1986 as Cancer Control Month. I invite the Governors of the fifty States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the appropriate officials of all other areas under the United States flag, to issue similar proclamations. I also ask the health care professionals, communications industry, food industry, community groups, women's organizations, and all other interested persons and groups to unite during this appointed time to reaffirm publicly our Nation's continuing commitment to control cancer.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this seventh day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and tenth.

Ronald Reagan