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National Digestive Diseases Awareness Week, 1986

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Digestive diseases rank third in the total economic burden of illness in the United States. More important, in terms of human discomfort, pain, and mortality, they constitute one of our most serious national health problems.

Digestive diseases are a major cause of hospitalization and surgery in this country. Each day some 200,000 people miss work because of them. Twenty million Americans are treated for some type of chronic digestive disorder each year, and almost half of our population suffers an occasional digestive disorder, creating a yearly expenditure of approximately \$17 billion in direct health care costs, and a total estimated economic burden of \$50 billion.

Research into the causes, cures, prevention, and clinical treatment of digestive diseases and related nutrition problems continues with the support of public and private institutions at all levels. This year marks the third anniversary of the initiation of a national digestive diseases education program. Its goals are to involve all those concerned with the problem—including the Digestive Diseases National Coalition, the National Digestive Diseases Advisory Board, the National Digestive Diseases Education and Information Clearinghouse, and the National Institute of Arthritis, Diabetes, and Digestive and Kidney Diseases—in educating the public as well as medical practitioners, dieticians, and nutrition experts on the seriousness of these diseases and the most advanced methods available to prevent, treat, and control them.

In recognition of the importance of efforts to combat digestive diseases, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 324, has designated the week beginning May 18, 1986, as "National Digestive Diseases Awareness Week" and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this week.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week beginning May 18, 1986, as National Digestive Diseases Awareness Week. I urge the people of the United States and educational, philanthropic, scientific, medical, and health care organizations and professionals to participate in appropriate activities to encourage further research into the causes and cures of all types of digestive disorders.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this seventeenth day of May, 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