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Last Updated: 05/23/2023



American Heart Month, 1987

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Cardiovascular diseases, including heart disease, stroke, and other vascular disorders, will claim the lives of nearly one million Americans this year. Cardiovascular disease is this Nation's number one health problem—causing more deaths than cancer, accidents, pneumonia, and influenza combined—and one-fifth of all people killed by cardiovascular disease are younger than 65.

More than 63 million of our citizens, more than one-fourth of our population, suffer from some form of cardiovascular disease. High blood pressure alone threatens the lives of more than 57 million Americans age 6 and older. Heart disease strikes regardless of age, race, or sex, and its toll in human suffering is incalculable.

The American Heart Association estimates the economic cost of cardiovascular diseases in 1987 will be more than \$85 billion in lost productivity and medical expenses.

But we are making progress against the Nation's number one killer. The American Heart Association, a not-for-profit volunteer health agency, and the Federal government, through the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, have been working together since 1948 to find better ways to prevent cardiovascular diseases and stroke and to inform the public and educate the medical community about the most effective techniques to treat the disease.

Medical advances such as new surgical techniques to repair heart defects, improved pharmacological therapies, emergency systems to prevent death, and knowledge to prevent heart disease from occurring have significantly reduced premature death and disability due to cardiovascular disease and stroke. From 1972 to 1984, the death rate has dropped 32.5 percent.

Cardiologists and other health professionals are seeking to reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, and atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries) by encouraging Americans to control high blood pressure, stop smoking, and reduce the amount of cholesterol, saturated fats, and sodium in their diets. The American Heart Association, working with two million volunteers, has contributed to this effort through its support of research and its commitment to educating Americans about the need to adopt a sound regimen of proper diet and exercise.

The Federal government, for its part, supports a wide array of cardiovascular research projects and encourages our people to reduce the risks of heart disease by maintaining good health habits.

Recognizing that Americans everywhere have a role to play in this continuing battle against a major killer, the Congress, by Joint Resolution approved December 30, 1963 (77 Stat. 843; 36 U.S.C. 169b), has requested the President to issue annually a proclamation designating February as American Heart Month.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the month of February 1987 as American Heart Month. I invite the Governors of the States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, officials of other areas subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, and the American people to join me in reaffirming our commitment to combatting cardiovascular diseases.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-eighth day of January, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eleventh.

Ronald Reagan