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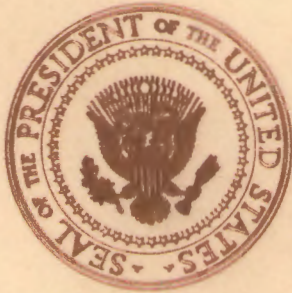
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## Benign Essential Blepharospasm Awareness Week, 1987

*By the President of the United States of America*

### A Proclamation

A little-known but debilitating neuromuscular disease produces functional blindness in thousands of Americans. The disorder, benign essential blepharospasm, causes involuntary and usually uncontrollable spasms of the muscles around the eyes that force the eyelids shut. As the disease progresses, the spasms become almost continuous.

Approximately 30,000 Americans suffer from benign essential blepharospasm. Most of them first experience symptoms in their fifth or sixth decade, although younger people are also affected. In the early stages of the disease, when the patient experiences an occasional extra wink or blink, there is only a slight impact on the quality of life. But when the spasms are more frequent, the patient cannot perform simple tasks such as reading or cooking, and ordinary activities such as driving a car become dangerous.

Treatment with drugs or surgery can temporarily relieve the symptoms of benign essential blepharospasm, but as yet there is no cure. Scientists are attempting to find improved treatments and to learn more about the causes of this condition. Three biomedical research agencies—the National Institute of Neurological and Communicative Disorders and Stroke, the National Eye Institute, and the National Institute of Mental Health—lead the Federal research attack. Support for research is also provided by the Benign Essential Blepharospasm Research Foundation, Inc., a voluntary agency known for its efforts to assist patients and their families.

To increase public awareness of benign essential blepharospasm, the Congress, by House Joint Resolution 224, has designated the week of October 18 through October 24, 1987, as "Benign Essential Blepharospasm Awareness Week" and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of that week.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week beginning October 18, 1987, as Benign Essential Blepharospasm Awareness Week, and I call upon the people of the United States to observe that week with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fifth day of October, 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 twelfth.

*Ronald Reagan*