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Mental Illness Awareness Week, 1988

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Mental Illness Awareness Week, 1988, offers all Americans a welcome and much-needed chance to expand their knowledge about the nature, causes, and treatments of mental illness and to grow in understanding concerning those afflicted; their families; and appropriate attitudes toward, and assistance for, victims of mental illness. This is an opportunity we surely should utilize, because it can do much good throughout our land.

The 20th century has seen more and more recognition of the role of disease processes in mental disorders. This message has reached millions, but pockets of misinformation, prejudice, and misunderstanding remain. Everyone should be aware that research has discovered many genetic, biochemical, and environmental causes of mental dysfunction. Further, changes in medicine and technology are taking place so rapidly that many citizens have not yet heard of vital recent advances that allow health professionals to diagnose and treat many forms of mental illness with increasing effectiveness.

We have also learned that people can take purposeful steps toward improving the lives of their loved ones, friends, and fellow citizens who are affected by mental illness—and that many of the burdens experienced by family members as they care for the mentally ill should and can be shared by the wider community. During Mental Illness Awareness Week and all year long, we can recall and be thankful for our continuing progress into diagnosis, treatment, assistance, and understanding for all those of every age and condition who cannot reach their potential or lead independent, fulfilling lives because of mental illness. Let us also resolve to put into practice, as individuals and in private and community efforts, all that we have learned and achieved regarding ways to help, encourage, and befriend mentally ill Americans and their families.

The Congress, by Public Law 100-390, has designated the week of October 2 through October 8, 1988, as "Mental Illness Awareness Week" and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in its observance.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week of October 2 through October 8, 1988, as Mental Illness Awareness Week. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this week with ceremonies and activities that will enhance the well-being of our Nation by increasing knowledge and understanding about mental illnesses and their treatments.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fifteenth day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirteenth.

Ronald Reagan