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American Heart Month, 1985

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Despite progress in many areas, cardiovascular disease remains this Nation's number one cause of death. The sad fact is that more than 40 million Americans have one or more forms of heart or blood vessel disease. Strokes afflict almost two million people annually. As many as 1.5 million persons will have a heart attack this year, and approximately 550,000 of them will die. In all, diseases of the heart and blood vessels will take the lives of almost one million of our fellow citizens—some of whom may be our family members, our friends and our co-workers.

Almost as many people will die from cardiovascular disease during 1985 as from cancer, accidents, and all other causes combined. Economic losses will also run high. This Nation will spend an estimated \$72 billion in 1985 for medical treatment, lost salaries, rehiring and training, and insurance and disability claims resulting from heart and blood vessel disease.

The American Heart Association, a not-for-profit volunteer health agency, and the Federal government, primarily through the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, are providing hope. In 1948, those two organizations joined forces to seek ways to reduce early death and disability from heart disease, stroke, and related disorders. Since then, much has been accomplished through research, professional and public education, and community service programs.

We have learned, for example, that maintaining proper nutrition, not smoking, and controlling high blood pressure can make a significant difference in the rate of incidence of these diseases. As a result, the death rates for heart attacks and strokes are much lower today than they were in 1948.

Even more progress should result from efforts by the Federal government and the American Heart Association to make everyone more aware of the dangers of smoking. Tougher labeling laws for cigarette packaging and advertising enacted last year by Congress will help. Research projects, such as the Coronary Primary Prevention Trials concluded in 1984, have given new impetus to the American Heart Association's longstanding finding that control of blood cholesterol decreases risk for heart attacks and strokes. The American Heart Association has taken major steps to inform the public about the significance of those test results, to influence Americans to adopt a prudent diet, and to encourage the efforts of scientists who are unlocking the mysteries of heart and blood vessel diseases.

Recognizing the need for all Americans to help in the continuing battle against cardiovascular disease, 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 1985 as American Heart Month. I invite the Governors of the States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the officials of other areas subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, and the American people to join me in reaffirming our commitment to the resolution of the nationwide problem of cardiovascular disease.

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

Ronald Reagan