

the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and seventh.

RONALD REAGAN

Proclamation 5019 of February 3, 1983

American Heart Month, 1983

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

Diseases of the heart and blood vessels are our Nation's most pressing health problem. Over sixty million Americans are afflicted by one or another of this family of diseases, which cause nearly a million deaths annually, disable many millions of others, and cost the Nation more than \$60 billion each year. The leading killers among the cardiovascular diseases are coronary heart disease and stroke.

In 1948 a newly created Federal agency—now the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute—and a private health organization, the American Heart Association, joined hands to combat the cardiovascular diseases. Their combined efforts were directed toward the conquest of these diseases through prevention, diagnosis, and treatment; through the training of new research workers and clinicians in the cardiovascular field; and through support for community service programs.

Until the mid-1960s, mortality from coronary heart disease had continued to increase despite our best efforts; however, in 1965 mortality from heart disease began a steady decline that continues to the present. From 1972 to 1980, mortality rates from coronary heart disease declined by 22.5 percent, and mortality rates from stroke declined by 36.5 percent.

Advances in diagnosis and treatment have been major factors in these reductions. But perhaps equally important, large numbers of Americans have voluntarily modified their habits and lifestyles: many have quit or cut down on cigarette smoking, are watching their weight and blood cholesterol levels, exercising more, and seeking the help of a physician in the control of treatable conditions which increase the risk of premature arteriosclerosis and its consequences.

Though we have made considerable progress in reducing the toll in illness, disability, and death caused by cardiovascular diseases, these diseases continue to be a serious threat to the health and well-being of our citizens. To encourage continued application of what is known about the prevention and relief of cardiovascular diseases and to stimulate the development of new knowledge and techniques that may bring about their ultimate conquest, the Congress has requested that the President annually proclaim February as American Heart Month.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the month of February 1983 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 3rd day of Feb., in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and seventh.

RONALD REAGAN

Proclamation 5020 of February 10, 1983

Save Your Vision Week, 1983

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

Good vision is a priceless gift. Yet each year many Americans needlessly lose vision as a result of diseases and accidents whose sight-destroying effects could have been prevented.

Regular eye examinations by an eyecare professional can often avert the tragedy of visual loss. While a checkup will usually show that our eyes are healthy, we may also receive early warning of a serious eye disease requiring treatment. Diabetic eye disease, for example, is a leading cause of visual impairment. Through examination it can be detected and treated. If all diabetics were aware of the need for routine eye checkups, many more cases of blindness could be avoided.

The elderly and the young have a special need for periodic eye examinations. A number of blinding diseases strike more often in later years. With early warning of eye disease and proper treatment, older people could be spared visual handicaps which threaten their independence and limit their enjoyment of life. For children, a routine checkup may reveal an eye problem that can hamper the child in school or at play. Some disorders must be treated during childhood or permanent visual loss will result.

Accidents are a common cause of vision loss or impairment. Tragically, many accidents could have been avoided by the use of such simple precautions as wearing safety glasses, goggles, or face shields while involved in hazardous work or sporting activities.

We can help others in our community to prevent or overcome visual impairment by supporting organizations committed to sight conservation. These organizations campaign for eye safety and the use of protective eye wear in sports and on the job. They provide aids and professional low vision services to improve the quality of life for those who are vision impaired, and they encourage us to donate our eyes after death for biomedical research and for sight-restoring corneal transplant surgery.

To encourage Americans to safeguard their eyesight and reduce the national toll of visual disability, the Congress, by joint resolution approved December 30, 1963 (77 Stat. 629, 36 U.S.C. 169a), has requested the President to proclaim the first week in March of each year as Save Your Vision Week.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate the week beginning March 6, 1983, as Save Your Vision Week. I urge all citizens to join in this observance by taking steps to preserve vision and prevent eye injury at home, at work, and at play. I call upon eyecare professionals, the media, educators, and all individuals and public and private organizations concerned with sight conser-