

Saturday, March 30, 1996. I also direct that the flag shall be flown at half-staff on that day at all United States embassies, legations, consular offices, and other facilities abroad, including all military facilities and naval vessels and stations.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-seventh day of March, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twentieth.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 6875 of March 29, 1996

Cancer Control Month, 1996

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Research and the prompt application of research results have proved to be the strongest weapons we have against cancer. And we are making great strides in the study of this deadly disease. Indeed, the understanding of the processes by which a normal cell is transformed into a cancer cell is one of the great achievements of cancer research. Genetic studies are leading to better understanding of many cancers and improving our ability to intervene and stop their spread. While the implications of some findings are still unclear, we know that further progress hinges on continued scientific inquiry, and we understand that basic research must remain a national priority. In addition, all of us can act on information already at hand to make lifestyle choices that reduce the risk of developing cancer.

Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States and contributed to nearly one-third of all cancer deaths in our Nation last year. In addition to causing 400,000 deaths, smoking left others living with cancer, respiratory illness, heart disease, and other illnesses. Despite the clear link between smoking and these illnesses and deaths, each day 3,000 young Americans begin to smoke—a habit that will shorten the lives of 1,000 of them. We must address this problem. That is why the Food and Drug Administration proposed ways to limit young people's access to tobacco, as well as ways to limit the advertising that is so appealing to our youth. That is also why this Administration published the Synar regulation—to ensure that States have and enforce laws prohibiting sales of tobacco to young people.

Scientific evidence has also led to an increased understanding of the links between the foods we eat and certain types of cancer. By reducing dietary fat, increasing fiber intake, consuming a variety of fruits and vegetables, and avoiding obesity, every American can take steps to reduce the risk of cancer. The National Cancer Institute, in collaboration with the food industry, sponsors "5 A Day For Better Health," a national program that encourages people to eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily. And researchers continue to investigate nutrition programs that may have the potential to prevent cancer.

Mammography is another resource that can make a vital contribution to cancer control efforts, helping doctors detect breast tumors at an

early, more treatable stage. Indeed, 93 percent of all women diagnosed with early breast cancer this year will live 5 years or longer. Recognizing the importance of this diagnostic tool, third-party reimbursement for mammograms is on the rise, and Medicare covers most of the cost of screening mammography for women over the age of 65. I encourage State governments, insurance providers, medical facilities, and employers to develop policies that improve women's access to this life-saving, affordable procedure.

In another step forward, the Food and Drug Administration has proposed changing its review process for new cancer therapies. This new approach will shorten development time by several years, and the FDA is also cutting its own review time in half—from a year to about 6 months. All of these changes mean new therapies will be available sooner and will be accessible to more of our Nation's cancer patients. The FDA's initiative could immediately affect at least 100 drugs now being studied—with dozens of them getting to the market sooner—and improve the lives of millions of Americans who can take advantage of those therapies.

To publicize these advances and options, the National Cancer Institute's Cancer Information Service helps patients, health professionals, and the public in all 50 States and Puerto Rico. Toll-free telephone service provides accurate, up-to-date information about prevention and detection methods, diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation, and research. In addition, the CIS' outreach system has developed partnerships with other cancer organizations and Federal, State, and local health agencies to promote cancer education initiatives aimed at medically underserved and other special populations.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the National Cancer Act, which expanded and intensified America's efforts to stop cancer. We can take pride in the gains that have been made toward this goal during the past quarter-century, but we must also remember the essential work that remains. As we observe Cancer Control Month, let us renew and strengthen our abiding commitment to controlling and eliminating this disease so that our children and grandchildren can lead longer, healthier lives.

In 1938, the Congress of the United States passed a joint resolution requesting the President to issue an annual proclamation declaring April as "Cancer Control Month."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim April 1996, as Cancer Control Month. I invite the Governors of the 50 States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Mayor of the District of Columbia, and the appropriate officials of all other areas under the American Flag to issue similar proclamations. I also call upon health care professionals, private industry, community groups, insurance companies, and all interested organizations and individuals to unite in support of our Nation's determined efforts to control cancer.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twentieth day of March, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twentieth.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON