

Proclamation 5183 of April 16, 1984

Older Americans Month, 1984

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

As our Nation prepares to celebrate Older Americans Month, we can take heart from several significant and encouraging developments.

Americans are living longer than ever before. Today, record numbers of men and women are living full and productive lives well into their seventies, eighties, and nineties. Indeed, some 32,000 Americans have celebrated their one hundredth birthdays.

Lengthened life spans are tributes to the achievements of modern science and medical progress and reflect the positive individual lifestyles that can help to maintain and improve health.

But such progress is far from universal. Too many older Americans still suffer from health problems that are attributed, mistakenly, to the process of aging. Far from being "normal" aspects of aging, many health problems can be prevented.

Regular medical examinations can prevent serious illnesses by discovering problems when they are small. Physical exercise is also good preventive health care. If done on a regular basis, exercise aids the body's ability to maintain, repair, and improve itself at any age.

Preventive health care also includes eating a proper diet, paying special attention to safety in the home, being careful with drugs, and avoiding extreme heat and cold.

While recognizing the importance of prevention for the maintenance of good health, we also acknowledge that some illnesses are associated with advancing age.

Prolonging health throughout life takes many kinds of efforts. While science continues its search for better ways to prevent and treat health problems associated with aging, we can increase our own efforts to maintain our health and prolong our lives.

As we acknowledge the theme for this year's Older Americans Month—"Health: Make It Last a Lifetime"—I urge all Americans, regardless of age, to resolve to follow good health practices so that still greater numbers of us can enjoy our older years.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the month of May 1984 as Older Americans Month. I ask public officials at all levels, community agencies, educators, the clergy, the communications media, and the American people to take this opportunity to honor older Americans and to encourage them to do everything they can to make their health last a lifetime.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 16th day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eighth.

RONALD REAGAN