



National Alzheimer's Disease Month, 1983

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Alzheimer's disease, a devastating disease that affects the cells of the brain, is now regarded as the major form of old age "senility." While experts formerly believed that Alzheimer's occurred only in persons under 65, it now is recognized as the most common cause of severe intellectual impairment in older individuals. Presently, there is no established treatment that can cure, reverse or stop the progression of this disease, which is the cause of serious confusion and forgetfulness in about 1.5-2.5 million elderly persons in the United States.

Because there is an association of dementia with aging and because Americans are living longer, the numbers affected by this disease will continue to grow. As many as half of those in nursing homes suffer from this degenerative brain disease. Also, because of the decrease in life expectancy accompanying the illness, Alzheimer's is thought to be the fourth leading cause of death among adults of age 65 or more. Generally, from the time of onset, the disease reduces a person's remaining life expectancy by about one-half. It also deprives its victims of the opportunity to enjoy life and takes a serious toll on its victims' families and friends.

The emotional, financial and social consequences of Alzheimer's disease are so devastating that it deserves special attention. Science and clinical medicine are striving to improve our understanding of what causes Alzheimer's disease and how to treat it successfully. Right now, research is the only hope for victims and families.

To recognize that progress is being made against this disease and to show understanding and support for the individuals and the families and friends of those who are affected, the Congress of the United States, by Senate Joint Resolution 82, has authorized and requested the President to proclaim November 1983 as National Alzheimer's Disease Month.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the month of November 1983 as National Alzheimer's Disease Month. I call upon government agencies and the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of September, 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 eighth.

Ronald Reagan