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## American Heart Month, 1982

*By the President of the United States of America*

### A Proclamation

Diseases of the heart and circulatory system remain our nation's most serious health problem. These diseases affect at least 40 million Americans, many of whom have been seriously and often permanently disabled. Heart disease causes one million deaths each year and costs the nation more than \$60 billion a year in lost wages, productivity, and medical expenses.

However, progress has been made in recent years to substantially reduce illness, disability, and death from heart disease. For most heart and blood vessel diseases, death rates have been declining slowly but steadily since 1950. Over the past decade, death rates have declined in all cardiovascular-disease categories and at a pace double that of the death rate for all other causes.

In human terms, we know that 300,000 Americans who would have died from cardiovascular disease during 1981 are still alive today. This development has been a major contributing factor to the three-year increase in the life expectancy of Americans in the past decade.

We have learned much about averting the onset of cardiovascular disease. Americans are increasingly aware of the crucial role lifestyles play in affecting their risk of these diseases. By recognizing the importance of proper nutrition, reduced smoking, exercise, and prevention of high blood pressure, our citizens are making a major contribution to the fight against heart disease. The role of prevention in cardiovascular diseases is especially vital because the initial symptoms are so frequently lethal or permanently disabling.

While we have made significant progress in the treatment of this group of diseases, they still take an appallingly high toll on our people. Cardiovascular diseases still account for more than 50 percent of the deaths in America; coronary heart disease is the primary cause of death.

Clearly, we must continue our vigorous efforts to stem the great amount of death and disability cardiovascular diseases cause in our nation. To this end, the Congress 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, 1982, 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 with 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 third day of February, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and sixth.

*Ronald Reagan*