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Parkinson's Disease Awareness Week, 1984

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

For most of us, movement is part of our lives which, though essential, we often take for granted. But for nearly half a million Americans, every step, every gesture is fraught with apprehension. These people suffer from Parkinson's disease, a movement disorder that affects people as they grow older.

We now know that the tremor and rigidity characteristic of Parkinson's disease are caused by a chemical deficiency in the part of the brain that controls movement. Through research, scientists have discovered that certain drugs can help overcome this deficiency. Many Americans with Parkinson's disease have found that with medication, physical therapy, and emotional support from families and friends, they can lead normal and productive lives.

Superbly trained scientists are hard at work trying to solve the problems caused by Parkinson's disease. Many of these scientists are supported by the Federal government's National Institute of Neurological and Communicative Disorders and Stroke and by four national voluntary health organizations: the American Parkinson Disease Association, the National Parkinson Foundation, Inc., the Parkinson's Disease Foundation, and the United Parkinson Foundation.

While these medical advances are encouraging, it is important that there be greater public awareness of what it means to have Parkinson's disease. We must let people with Parkinson's disease know that we understand when they have trouble walking through a doorway or when the disorder causes their hands or their heads to shake uncontrollably. A smile may be all the encouragement they need to relax enough to resume normal movement. I commend the courage of Americans who refuse to be vanquished by Parkinson's disease. And I applaud the resourcefulness of the families and friends who provide them with sustained affection and encouragement.

The Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 263, has designated the week of April 8-14, 1984, as "Parkinson's Disease Awareness Week" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of that week.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week of April 8-14, 1984, as "Parkinson's Disease Awareness Week," and I call upon Government agencies and the people of the United States to observe this week with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this ninth 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