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Last Updated: 05/3/2023



National Reye's Syndrome Week, 1985

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

There is a potentially deadly disorder that affects our children called Reye's Syndrome. It is one of the top ten killers among all diseases affecting young people aged one to ten. Each year in the United States, a number of healthy children under age nineteen are afflicted with Reye's Syndrome, and many victims die or become crippled within several days.

We did not recognize Reye's Syndrome as a specific illness until 1963, and we still do not know what causes it or how to prevent it. Diligent research has identified its symptoms: severe vomiting, delirium, lethargy, unusual drowsiness, and belligerence. During last winter's flu season, only 171 cases of Reye's Syndrome were reported in the United States, down from the 422 cases reported as recently as 1980. A variety of factors have contributed to this sharp decline, which is an encouraging chapter in the annals of American medicine. Experience has taught us that quick medical intervention usually can avert death or disability.

But much remains to be learned. Federal scientists, supported by the National Institute of Neurological and Communicative Disorders and Stroke and other units of the National Institutes of Health such as the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, and the National Institute of Arthritis, Diabetes, and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, are untiring in their efforts to understand this lethal disorder. They are assisted in this endeavor by their Federal colleagues at the Food and Drug Administration and Centers for Disease Control, who monitor the occurrence of Reye's Syndrome throughout the country.

In recent years, the medical community and groups of concerned citizens have brought Reye's Syndrome into the public eye. Volunteer organizations such as the American Reye's Syndrome Association and the National Reye's Syndrome Foundation have launched effective public education campaigns. We must build upon these efforts to acquaint all parents and medical professionals with the dangers of this illness. We must stimulate further scientific investigation of the origin of this enigmatic killer in the biomedical research arena, where our greatest hope of conquering this disease lies.

To focus public and professional attention on the seriousness of Reye's Syndrome, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 29, has designated the week of November 11 through November 17, 1985, as "National Reye's Syndrome Week" and 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 November 11 through 17, 1985, as National Reye's Syndrome Week. I call upon all government agencies, health organizations, communications media, and people of the United States to observe that week with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 11th day of November, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and tenth.

Ronald Reagan