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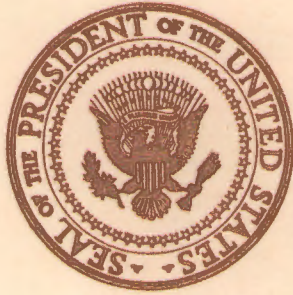
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National Spina Bifida Month, 1985

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Spina bifida is one of the most common birth defects. It affects between one and two of every 1,000 babies born in the United States. Infants with spina bifida may have partially developed spinal cords and often suffer nerve damage, muscle paralysis, and spine and limb deformities. Most develop hydrocephalus—a potentially dangerous buildup of fluid and pressure within the brain.

A generation ago, the majority of children with spina bifida died. Today, their survival rate and long-term outlook have improved dramatically. Carefully planned programs of biomedical research have led to advances in neurosurgery that help alleviate some physical problems. Through research, physicians now are able to control brain and bladder infections more effectively. Scientists have also developed lighter braces and splints to give patients greater mobility.

Further improvements in treating this crippling birth defect can be expected to result from research supported by the Federal government's National Institute of Neurological and Communicative Disorders and Stroke and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. Achieving the long-sought goal of prevention now appears more likely. Collaborating in this vital effort are a number of private, voluntary health agencies including the Spina Bifida Association of America, the March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation, and the National Easter Seal Society. The combined energies of these Federal and private agencies assure the Nation of continued progress toward the conquest of spina bifida.

So that we as a Nation may increase our sensitivity to the needs of spina bifida children and the difficulties faced by their parents, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 111, has designated October 1985 as "National Spina Bifida Month" and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this month.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 1985 as National Spina Bifida Month, and I call upon all government agencies, health organizations, 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 ninth day of October, 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