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National Burn Awareness Week, 1987

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Burns continue to be one of the leading causes of accidental death and injury in our Nation. Each year, burns kill approximately 12,000 Americans and injure more than two million, of whom 70,000 need hospitalization. Tragically, children, the elderly, and the disabled are especially vulnerable to burn injuries, and almost one-third of all burn victims are under age 15. Further, survivors may experience serious scarring, loss of muscle tissue over joints, and accompanying physical disabilities and adjustment difficulties.

Thankfully, significant research advances have improved burn surgery and treatment, aided rehabilitation, shortened hospital stays, and much increased the burn survival rate. Among the most important therapeutic advances are techniques for early burn excision and wound closure, the development of artificial skin to cover large burn areas, better ways to prevent and control infection, and improved ways to restore fluid balance and provide adequate nutrition.

Much remains to be learned, however, about the body's underlying responses to burn injury—for instance, the body's infection-fighting system, factors leading to tissue breakdown and energy loss, hormonal changes, and the life-threatening effects of shock.

The best approach to burn injury, of course, is prevention. Because a great number of burns could be prevented, there is a great need for national attention to all aspects of burn prevention.

We can all be truly grateful to the many Americans who devote themselves to treating, caring for, and rehabilitating burn victims; to all those involved in the vital work of burn research; to the dedicated fire fighters who risk their own lives daily to protect others; and to everyone who promotes burn awareness and prevention.

The Congress, by Public Law 99-538, has designated the week of February 9 through February 15, 1987, as "National Burn Awareness Week" and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this event.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week of February 9 through February 15, 1987, as National Burn Awareness Week. I call upon all government agencies, health organizations, communications media, 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 eighteenth day of December, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eleventh.

Ronald Reagan