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National Lupus Awareness Month, 1987

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Systemic lupus erythematosus or lupus is often called "the great impersonator" because it can mimic so many other diseases. A disorder of the body's immune system, lupus may affect the joints, the skin, and one or more internal organs (such as the kidneys, heart, and brain) in varying combinations. As many as 500,000 Americans—mostly women in their childbearing years—may suffer from this autoimmune disorder.

Normally, an individual's immune system protects him or her from infection by producing antibodies that react with and eliminate foreign substances. In autoimmune diseases such as lupus, however, the immune system can harm the individual by making antibodies that react against the person's own tissues.

Scientists are not yet sure why the body's antibody-producing system behaves this way, but they are conducting extensive research seeking the cause of the disease. Their research studies include: investigations on genes that underlie the development of the disease; research on a wide variety of immune system components and chemical messengers; research on initiation of abnormal immune reactivity; and hormonal studies. Such fundamental studies will lead to the design of improved treatments that alleviate the symptoms of lupus, or even better, attack the disease itself.

Thanks to recent research progress, lupus has become more a chronic disease than the acute and often fatal disorder it was decades ago. Nevertheless, deaths do occur, and new research findings and new approaches to diagnosis and treatment are needed to eliminate lupus. A concerted Federal-private research effort is working to ultimately uncover the cause and cure for this distressing disease.

The Congress, by Public Law 100-106, has designated the month of October 1987 as "Lupus Awareness Month" 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 month of October 1987 as Lupus Awareness Month. I urge the people of the United States and educational, philanthropic, scientific, medical, and health care organizations and professionals to observe this month with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-ninth day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twelfth.

Ronald Reagan