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National Reye's Syndrome Week, 1987

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Reye's Syndrome is a deadly disease that can strike a child or teenager during recovery from a relatively innocuous viral illness—from the flu, for example, or from chicken pox. Suddenly, instead of continuing to gain strength and health, the child becomes lethargic or disoriented, unusually excitable, hyperactive, irritable, or even combative. A frequent symptom is uncontrollable vomiting, and violent headaches and delirium may occur. Tragically, 30 percent of the victims of Reye's Syndrome die; another 15 to 25 percent are left with brain damage.

Any child can develop Reye's Syndrome, but research strongly indicates that children given aspirin as treatment for the flu or chicken pox may be particularly vulnerable. To protect their children, parents must learn to "think Reye's": *do not* use aspirin to treat children with chicken pox or influenza-like illness; *do* recognize the early symptoms of Reye's Syndrome; and *do* seek medical attention for a child immediately at the first sign of those symptoms.

Over the past several years, the United States Department of Health and Human Services, the National Reye's Syndrome Foundation, the American Reye's Syndrome Foundation, and other professional and voluntary health agencies have alerted American families to the dangers of Reye's Syndrome. They have stressed the need to avoid the use of aspirin to treat flu-like illness and chicken pox. The result has been a marked decline in the annual incidence of the disorder. According to a report published last year, the average annual incidence of Reye's Syndrome from 1981 to 1984 was lower than that of the previous five years, with the decrease identified among children younger than 10 years of age. The incidence in 1985 was much lower than during any previous year since surveillance of Reye's Syndrome was initiated in the 1970's.

All Americans welcome such encouraging news. We look for further advances to come from the scientific studies of Reye's Syndrome being supported by the Federal government's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, and Centers for Disease Control.

To enhance public awareness of Reye's Syndrome, the Congress, by House Joint Resolution 335, has designated the week of September 13 through September 19, 1987, 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 September 13 through September 19, 1987, as National Reye's Syndrome Week, and I call upon the people of the United States to observe that week with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

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