

Title 3—

Proclamation 6768 of February 10, 1995

The President

American Heart Month, 1995

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Throughout history, the heart has been a symbol of health and well-being. Yet nothing now overshadows Americans' health as much as heart disease—the leading cause of death among men and women. Diseases of the heart and blood vessels kill nearly a million Americans each year, most from the effects of atherosclerosis, the narrowing and stiffening of blood vessels from the buildup of plaque that usually begins early in life.

Today, Americans are enjoying the rewards of the progress humanity has made in understanding and treating cardiovascular disease. Advances in diagnosis make it possible to see the heart beat without the use of invasive procedures. Thousands of heart attack victims are being saved by the rapid administration of drugs to dissolve blood clots. Soon, gene therapy may be able to prevent the smooth muscle cell multiplication that contributes to the narrowing of blood vessels. Perhaps most important, we have greater understanding of how to prevent the development of heart disease. By controlling blood pressure and blood cholesterol, being physically active, and not smoking cigarettes, more Americans can have the chance to lead long, healthy lives.

The Federal Government has contributed to these successes by supporting research and education through the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. Through its commitment to research, its programs to heighten public awareness, and its vital network of dedicated volunteers, the American Heart Association also has played a crucial role in bringing about these remarkable accomplishments.

Yet the heart has not revealed all of its mysteries. No one knows why heart disease begins. And, while it is known that heart disease develops differently in men and women, the reasons for those variations are still being studied. About 50 million Americans continue to suffer from hypertension, a major cause of stroke, and 1.25 million Americans have heart attacks every year.

Conquering these diseases requires unwavering national and personal commitment. On the national level, the Federal Government will continue to support research into the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of heart disease. On the personal level, Americans can take steps to prevent heart disease from striking their families, including teaching their children heart-healthy habits. Working together, we can make the tragedy of heart disease a nightmare of the past.

In recognition of the need for all Americans to become involved in the ongoing fight against cardiovascular disease, the Congress, by Joint Resolution approved December 30, 1963 (77 Stat. 843; 36 U.S.C. 169b), has requested that the President issue an annual proclamation designating February as "American Heart Month."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim February 1995 as American Heart Month. I invite the Governors of the States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, officials of other areas subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, and