

Presidential Documents

Proclamation 6854 of November 30, 1995

World AIDS Day, 1995

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Today the world pauses to remember the millions of men, women, and children who are living with HIV and AIDS and to honor the memory of those who have lost their lives to this insidious disease. We renew our commitment to searching for a cure to AIDS and a vaccine for HIV, rededicate ourselves to reducing the number of people who become infected with the virus, and devote our efforts to protecting the dignity and rights of all those affected by the AIDS epidemic.

The statistics are overwhelming. Around the world, more than 18 million people are believed to be infected with HIV. In America alone, over half a million people have been struck by AIDS, and more than 300,000 have already lost their lives. Nearly 80,000 of our fellow citizens are diagnosed with AIDS and more than 40,000 are dying of the disease each year—some 120 every day. In addition, there are an estimated 40,000 to 60,000 Americans who contract HIV annually. The impact of these numbers goes far beyond the individuals involved—each AIDS death devastates a family, weakens a community, and changes society as a whole. HIV and AIDS present extraordinary challenges to every nation and every person on our planet.

In the past year, there has been some encouraging progress. Researchers from many countries have combined their knowledge and skills to better understand the virus that causes AIDS and its effects on the human body; new AIDS drugs are being developed and approved faster than ever before; we are beginning to find ways to rebuild immune systems destroyed by HIV so that those infected can live longer, healthier lives; and we are aggressively confronting this crisis with prevention programs at the grassroots and national levels.

But there is still much work to do. Half of all new infections occur among people under the age of 25, and one-fourth occur among teenagers. We must protect the next generation by continuing to improve the availability of health care services for those with HIV and AIDS. Since 1990, the Ryan White CARE Act has offered help and hope to hundreds of thousands of people, and we are working with the Congress to extend this vital program for an additional 5 years. However, while the CARE Act is an essential element of the safety net that protects people with HIV and AIDS, it cannot do the job alone. We must also maintain our 30-year commitment to the Medicaid program, which provides services to nearly half of all Americans living with AIDS and more than 90 percent of children with AIDS. Without the protection that Medicaid affords, these individuals and their families would lose all access to health care.

Let us also continue to ensure that our Nation responds aggressively and humanely to the needs of people living with HIV and AIDS. Throughout this epidemic, community organizations have taken the lead in the struggle against the disease and in efforts to provide compassionate care to those in need. Across this country and around the globe, generous people perform miracles every day—holding a hand, cooling a fever, listening, and understanding. Let us further support their efforts to build a better world by

strengthening the partnership between communities and government in the work to stop AIDS.

The theme of this eighth observance of World AIDS Day, "Shared Rights, Shared Responsibilities," is a call to fight against discrimination as strongly as we fight for a cure. When one human being is persecuted because of his or her HIV status, we all suffer. Let us pledge to stand together, united against HIV and AIDS and committed to ending ignorance and prejudice.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim December 1, 1995, as World AIDS Day. I ask the American people to join me in reaffirming our commitment to combatting HIV and AIDS and in reaching out to all those whose lives have been affected by this disease.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of November, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twentieth.



[FR Doc. 95-29624
Filed 11-30-95; 4:41 pm]
Billing code 3195-01-P