

must carry forward what is good and reach out and embrace what is best, and we must do the hard work of freedom. You see, I know you have. And I know you will. Through you, our country can become an America whole and good.

For that, our country is grateful. And because of that, our country—the greatest and freest on the face of the Earth—will prevail.

Thank you all very, very much.

Note: The President spoke at 8:02 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Carroll Campbell of South Carolina; Gov. Michael N. Cas-

tle of Delaware; Richard C. Hackett, mayor of Memphis, TN; Sue Myrick, mayor of Charlotte, NC; Ann Klinger, county supervisor for Merced County, CA, and former president of the National Association of Counties; Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Jack Kemp; and Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander. The audience of invitees, composed of elected officials, service organization representatives, and Point of Light award recipients, sang a chorus of "Happy Birthday" to the President when he appeared on the South Lawn. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on Childhood Immunization

June 13, 1991

The President. Let me just say at the outset of these remarks how proud I am of our Secretary, who is taking the lead in matters like immunization, the subject at hand today, and so many others, going across this country, the message of hope, recognizing our shortcomings, but also outlining programs that are essential to the health of this nation.

I'm delighted to see Chairman Whitten here, long interested in the health of our children, and Congressman Norm Lent and three Senators whose passion is this kind of caring for others. And I'm talking about Senator Bumpers, Senator Hatch, and Senator Chafee, all with us here today.

And I also want to just second the motion as to what Lou said about Assistant Secretary Mason and Surgeon General Novello and, of course, our old associate here who now heads the Center for Disease Control, Bill Roper. Welcome back, Bill. Glad to have you here.

And let me also salute, because this is vital to success of a program like this, the State and local health officials. And I'd be remiss if I didn't signal out this dressy bunch of kids here in the front row. They look great, and there's a certain symbolism of having them with us today. And thank you—their teachers and their families—for

bringing them our way. To them I say, I'll try to be brief. [Laughter] As with immunization, this will only hurt a little. [Laughter]

When we announced our national education goals, the very first was that by the year 2000 all children in America will start school ready to learn. And that's one reason we put such emphasis on our Healthy Start initiative. Every child deserves a chance. And in the 1990's, no child in America should be at risk to deadly diseases like diphtheria and polio or the one that Lou was stressing here today, measles.

A decade ago, we hoped to eradicate these threats. And thanks to those of you here today and many others across our country, we have made remarkable progress. And on behalf of a grateful nation then, let me thank all of you and others like you for what you have done by being in the leadership role in these important questions.

I urge you to get on now with the job at hand because, despite our successes, 1990 brought the largest number of measles cases since 1977—1977—a 50-percent increase over '89. And that's why I again commend the Secretary of HHS Dr. Sullivan, and Dr. Mason, Surgeon General Novello, and Mr. Roper and others for performing their HHS SWAT team to visit six major cities—Lou

gave you the names—work with State and local officials, some of you here today.

And they want to learn why kids aren't getting immunized. And they want to get every community mobilized. And out of this testing they'll come forward with ideas that I hope will help this nation's health.

We've got to find out what works and make sure the word spreads so that the disease does not. By getting to kids at an earlier age, by educating parents and finding creative ways to get them into the clinics, we can see that no child is left vulnerable without a vaccine for preventable childhood diseases.

My budget for '92 calls for an additional \$40 million for the CDC immunization program, targeted especially to communities where the need is the greatest. Overall, Federal funding for immunizations has more than doubled since '88. But a problem like this one won't be solved by directives out of the White House or out of HHS or out of NIH or wherever. We've got to assault it from all angles and levels with public health efforts, with creative partnerships between the nonprofits and the private sector, with conscientious action on the part of parents, teachers, and citizens.

And we have plenty of vaccines. But we must do the hard work of logistics, of planning, of coordination to get the medicine to kids who need it, especially in the urban neighborhoods.

So, let me thank all of you here today, singling out a few Points of Light in this effort: the Junior Leagues, the Children's Action Network, and many other organizations and individuals who have been committed to childhood immunization programs for years. You've been doing the Lord's work for years, long before we've got the proper focus on it here at the Federal Government. Your remarkable work to build awareness will get results. And I'm certain of that.

Throughout our health policy programs, we're putting new emphasis on prevention. America's a humane and caring society that cannot condone unnecessary suffering. And what's more, to remain a vital society, we can't afford to waste human resources either. Disease prevention represents our best opportunity to reduce the ever-increas-

ing portion of our resources that we now spend to treat preventable illnesses.

For the sake of children who need protection from childhood diseases, we need to try creative ideas like "one-stop shopping" for health care, and escorted referral for "express lane" immunization at clinics. By encouraging all health care professionals never to miss a chance to give a shot, we'll have a fighting chance to get ahead of these diseases.

Along with all who serve in health care, today I call on every parent everywhere in America: Don't take a chance. The facilities are there. The vaccines are available. Call your local public health official or your own physician. Please, make sure your child is immunized.

A deadly plague called polio threatened my generation, darkened the fun of summers and crippled and killed kids. But American ingenuity, fantastic research, stopped that killer. And while some say each generation repeats the mistakes of the last, no generation in America should suffer the plagues of the past.

American decency demands that we not let complacency lead to contagion, and never let apathy lead to epidemic. So, with the efforts of people like you, with the help from these five Congressmen and many Members of Congress and many others—Chairman Whitten, Norm Lent, Senator Bumpers, Senator Hatch, and Senator Chafee—the help of these leads—who else did I miss? Where is Arlen? Now, Senator Specter has done something he normally doesn't do, he's blended in with the crowd back there. *[Laughter]* But you should be sitting up here so I could finger you. But stand up, because I want these other—or you could come up with us. But Senator Specter has been a leader in this whole quest for helping kids.

So, it's a cooperative effort. And I'm going to approach it that way as we—I hope our Department is. I know Lou Sullivan is. And it's not just the Members of Congress, nor the President of the United States; it's all of you. Many of you have been out front long before we have. But I thank you. I salute you. And now let's go out and get the job done. And thanks for coming to the

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White House on this beautiful day.

And Arlen, if you all would come up, let me just get one quick picture with our health professionals here.

Thank you all very, very much.

Q. Mr. President, who will submit your health package to Congress? Who will submit it, sir?

The President. —piece by piece. You're hearing a very important part of it right now.

Note: The President spoke at 9:26 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Health and Human Services Louis W. Sullivan; Representatives Jamie L. Whitten, chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, and Norman F. Lent; Senators Dale Bumpers, Orrin G. Hatch, John H. Chafee, and Arlen Specter; James O. Mason, Assistant Secretary for Health; Antonia C. Novello, Surgeon General of the Public Health Service; and William L. Roper, Director of the Centers for Disease Control.

Remarks at the Groundbreaking Ceremony for the Hospital for Sick Children

June 13, 1991

Thank you all very, very much. We got a tent, we have clowns. What else is there? [Laughter] This is wonderful.

Listen, thanks for that warm welcome. And Barbara and I have been looking forward to this. And I want to acknowledge a special friend of yours, a friend of medicine's who came out with me here today, our Secretary of HHS, Dr. Lou Sullivan. We just came from the Rose Garden where we talked about the importance of childhood immunization. And I want to tell you, the more I see and listen to our Secretary, whom we've known before he became Secretary—Morehouse School of Medicine, where he was a head—the more I respect his work for this country, particularly for the children of this country.

We're also honored to have with us today, resplendent in uniform, Dr. Antonia Novello, who with such a poignant firsthand knowledge she has of the critical need for this kind of hospital of compassion. And a special greeting to Dr. Constance Battle who I met, the hospital CEO, medical director, and guiding spirit.

And to Stephen Montgomery, the introducer, the chairman of this hospital's board, a person who epitomizes what we refer to as the Points of Light. Let me say to you and all the other volunteers and all the others that give their lives to helping others

here, we are very, very grateful to you.

And to the representatives of the District that are with us today, may I salute you. And welcome also to the doctors, the nurses, the therapists, the aides, the volunteers who fill these halls with life and love. A special welcome—a special welcome to the parents who are here, but even more than that, most of all to the kids themselves right over here.

Barbara and I are thrilled to be here. She heard that 62 years ago, the First Lady, Mrs. Herbert Hoover, laid the cornerstone of the main building here. And so, she and I are both thrilled that we'll get to do this job today. She talked with me about her very moving visits here, and she speaks for the mothers' special love for those most in need.

Some of you kids have been to our house, the White House, the people's house, when you've come for Christmas tours. But I wanted to see this place for myself. And you know something, I'm sure that Barbara's stories even didn't prepare me for the majesty of this place. I expected to feel sadness when I got out of the car, and I felt a sense of joy and real hope projected by those who have committed a lot of their lives to helping others here. As parents, we desperately want to protect our kids; we want to spare them pain or fear. And that's