AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

Proclamation 6980—Cancer Control Month, 1997

April 1, 1997

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

In observing Cancer Control Month, we reaffirm our national commitment to fighting this deadly disease. Since the signing of the National Cancer Act in 1971, we as a Nation have made significant strides in combating many forms of cancer. In November 1996, the National Cancer Institute (NCI) announced that the cancer death rate in the United States fell by nearly 3 percent between 1991 and 1995, the first sustained decline since national record-keeping began in the 1930s. The declines in lung, colorectal, and prostate cancer deaths in men, and breast and gynecologic cancer deaths in women, reflect the progress we have made in prevention, early detection, and treatment. However, we recognize how much work must still be done to control and eliminate this disease.

Perhaps one of the most promising achievements of cancer research this past year is in our increased understanding of cancer genetics. We have learned that cancer is a disease of altered genes and altered gene function. Researchers are making great progress in identifying genes whose dysfunction leads to cancer. Our research into the relationship between genetics and cancer also is helping us to better understand the basis for many other diseases and will strengthen our ability to intervene against them. If we are to continue this remarkable progress, we must keep scientific research as a fundamental priority.

Research has already taught us that smoking directly causes lung cancer and markedly increases a person's risk of developing cancers of the pancreas, esophagus, uterus, cervix, mouth, throat, and bladder. We know that many of the deaths from these cancers are preventable. Over the last several years, positive trends have emerged: Business, industry, and all levels of government have established smoke-free policies, and per-capita cigarette consumption has declined by 37 percent over the past two decades.

Reasons for deep concern remain, however. More than 3,000 teenagers become regular smokers each day in the United States. We must do all we can to help our children understand the consequences of smoking, and we must set a good example ourselves by not smoking. Last year, in an important step forward, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) proposed restrictions on the advertising, marketing, and sales of cigarettes to minors. In February of this year, I was proud to announce that the first part of those rules went into effect.

We are also learning more about the relationship between diet and cancer risk, and we are gaining insight into the role of dietary supplements in reducing certain types of cancer. We know that by improving our diet—reducing fat and increasing the amount of fiber—we reduce our risk of cancer. The NCI, in collaboration with the food industry, sponsors the national 5-A-Day Program, which encourages Americans to eat five servings of fruit and vegetables each day.

We are taking other important steps, as well. Federal agencies are working together to ensure that potentially active drugs move quickly from discovery to clinical use. To reduce the number of cancer deaths and new cases, and to help cancer patients survive longer and live better lives, several Federal agencies are working with State and local health departments to develop and implement national plans for breast and cervical cancer screening and to promote cancer prevention. I was pleased to announce last week that my Administration is launching a major public education campaign to make sure that every woman and every health care professional in America is aware of the NCI's new recommendations that women between the ages of 40 and 49 should get a mammography examination for breast cancer every one or two years. The Medicare budget that I just submitted to the Congress will cover the expense of these annual exams, and we are urging State Medicaid directors to cover annual mammograms as well, with the assurance that the Federal Government will pay its matching share if they do so.

As we commemorate this special month, I ask health care professionals, private industry, community groups, insurance companies, and all other interested organizations and individual citizens to unite to publicly reaffirm our Nation's continuing commitment to controlling cancer. In 1938, the Congress of the United States passed a joint resolution requesting the President to issue an annual proclamation declaring April as ''Cancer Control Month.''

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim April 1997, as Cancer Control Month. I invite the Governors of the 50 States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Mayor of the District of Columbia, and the appropriate officials of all other areas under the American flag to issue similar proclamations.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., April 2, 1997]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on April 3.

Proclamation 6981—National Child Abuse Prevention Month, 1997

April 1, 1997

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

We live in a Nation blessed with liberty and prosperity. Yet, many of our children still suffer the horrors of child abuse and neglect, knowing no happiness, and sometimes even losing their lives. And, it is a problem that grows worse. Last year, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reported that an estimated 3 million American children were abused or neglected, twice as many as 5 years earlier. Almost half a million of our children were seriously injured because of this mistreatment, quadruple the number from the previous report. Tragically, more than 1,100 abused children died last year—an incomprehensible 80 percent of them at the hands of their own parents. We must not let this senseless suffering continue.

My Administration is continuing its efforts to make our children safer. Already, we have developed new family-based prevention services to work with families at risk, and we have said to those who would prey on our children in public housing that one conviction for drug dealing or a violent crime will result in expulsion from public housing. We are working to establish a national registry for sexual predators, and we have preserved the Federal investment in child protective services so States have the resources to help children in danger. We have taken guns off the street by banning 19 deadly assault weapons, and we are putting 100,000 more police officers on the streets to patrol our neighborhoods. And my Administration has developed a plan that aims, by the year 2002, to double the number of children placed in adoption or permanent placements from the public foster care system

During this month of April, we pause to recognize and praise the work of those parents and other caretakers who see that the physical, mental, emotional, educational, and medical needs of our children are adequately met. I commend the efforts of the dedicated and compassionate men and women who assist families in crisis and enable these families to prevent child abuse. Without the commitment, knowledge, and skill of these men and women, many more children would find themselves the victims of abuse and the lives of many children who are abused and neglected would never improve. With their involvement, the lives of our most vulnerable children are immeasurably enriched. This month reminds us that every child is entitled to live his or her life to its fullest, free from fear and want. As Thomas Jefferson stated so eloquently, ''The Giver of life gave it for happiness and not for wretchedness.'' We hold our children's future in trust. Let us not fail them.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by