

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

NATIONAL ARTHRITIS MONTH, 1975

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BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

Arthritis, the oldest known chronic disease, is still the Nation's greatestcrippler. This disease and related rheumatic disorders afflict more than 20 million people in the United States, at an annual cost of about \$4 billion, and are exceeded only by heart disease as the most common chronic illness in the country today.

Recognition of this major public health problem and determination to combat it effectively have been demonstrated through the passage of the National Arthritis Act of 1974 by the United States Congress, which I was pleased to sign earlier this year. As this legislation makes plain, the total cost of arthritis must be counted not only in terms of dollars, but of human suffering and disability. Uncontrolled arthritis significantly decreases the quality of American life and has a negative economic, social, and psychological impact on the families of those afflicted.

We have learned a great deal through governmentally and privately supported research. Yet this disorder is not fully understood and it is not adequately controllable. We must meet the critical need for new research ideas and studies upon which advances in the area of arthritis treatment and prevention can be based. Our goal continues to be the eventual elimination of arthritis as a cause of human suffering and dire expense to our Nation.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GERALD R. FORD, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the month of May, 1975, as National Arthritis Month. I urge the people of the United States and educational, philanthropic, scientific, medical and health care organizations and professionals to advance the programs of our national effort to discover the cause and cures of arthritis and other rheumatic diseases and to alleviate the suffering of victims of these disorders.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this seventh day of May in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred seventy-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America, the one hundred ninety-ninth.

GERALD R. FORD

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