

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 22, 1976

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

CHILD HEALTH DAY, 1976

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BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

In this year of our Bicentennial we have in many ways expressed our pride in the heritage which our forebears have bequeathed to us. But we are not solely heirs to this great legacy; we are also trustees. Our responsibility is to protect, preserve, and enhance it in anticipation of the day when our children will assume responsibility for the perpetuation of the ideals which have sustained this republic for two centuries.

It is our task to insure that they are prepared for that day. To that end, our concern for their health and well-being cannot be overstated. Our concern is reflected in our continuing efforts to reduce infant mortality, eliminate childhood diseases and handicaps, and expand preventive health services. The challenges of poliomyelitis, measles, and rubella led to the development of vaccines. Our resolution has been tested by the challenges of birth abnormality, child abuse, and teenage alcoholism and drug abuse.

We have learned of steps prospective mothers can take during the prenatal period to lessen the likelihood their children will suffer from the tragedy of mental retardation, and we must assure that this vital information is available. We must continue to explore those avenues of basic and applied research necessary to assure that every child will be born with the physical and mental capacity to participate fully in our national life.

To encourage awareness of the fundamental necessity of a year-round program for the protection and development of the health of the Nation's children, the Congress, by joint resolution of May 18, 1928, as amended (36 U.S.C. 143), has requested the President to issue annually a proclamation designating the first Monday in October as Child Health Day and calling for its appropriate observance.

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NOW, THEREFORE, I, GERALD R. FORD, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim Monday, October 4, 1976, as Child Health Day and I invite all Americans, as well as all agencies and organizations dedicated to the well-being of children, to unite on that day in support of activities that will alert each of us to our separate and collective responsibilities to protect and enhance the health of America's children.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-second day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred seventy-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and first.

GERALD R. FORD

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