

Presidential Documents

Title 3—**Proclamation 7029 of October 1, 1997****The President****National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, 1997****By the President of the United States of America****A Proclamation**

Every year we dedicate the month of October to focus on breast cancer and to reaffirm our national commitment to eradicate it. But for thousands of American women and their families and friends, breast cancer is a devastating reality that casts a shadow over their lives every day. In this decade alone, nearly half a million women will die of breast cancer, and more than 1.5 million new cases of the disease will be diagnosed.

Our greatest weapon in the crusade against breast cancer is knowledge; knowledge of its causes and knowledge about prevention and treatment. My Administration has established a National Action Plan on Breast Cancer to unite organizations across the country in a collaborative effort to find out more about the disease and how best to respond to it.

The Department of Health and Human Services is taking the lead in this national effort, through education and research at the National Cancer Institute and the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research; through nationwide screening and detection programs at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; through certification of mammography facilities by the Food and Drug Administration; through prevention services and treatment by health benefit programs such as Medicare and Medicaid; and through increased access to clinical treatment trials for cancer patients who are beneficiaries in Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs programs. The Department of Defense has also initiated a breast cancer research program to reduce the incidence of breast cancer, increase survival rates, and improve the quality of life for women diagnosed with the disease.

We can be proud of the progress we have made. One of the most promising recent research achievements is our increased understanding of the role of genetics in the cancer process. We have learned that cancer is a disease of altered genes and altered gene function, and research into the relationship between breast cancer and genes is helping us to better understand the basis of the disease. However, we must ensure that progress in genetic information is used only to advance and to improve the Nation's health—not as a basis for discrimination. That is why this year I have urged the Congress to pass a law that prevents health insurance plans from discriminating against individuals on the basis of genetic information.

High-quality mammography has also proved to be a powerfully effective tool in the effort to detect breast cancer in its earliest, most treatable stage. The National Cancer Institute, the American Cancer Society, and many other professional organizations agree that women in their forties benefit from mammography screening, and earlier this year I was pleased to sign legislation that will help Medicare beneficiaries with cost-sharing for annual screening mammograms. The First Lady has also launched an annual campaign to encourage older women to use the Medicare mammography screening benefits.

We have real cause for celebration during National Breast Cancer Awareness Month this year: recent data show that the breast cancer rate for American women is declining. Heartened by this knowledge, let us reaffirm our commitment to the crusade against breast cancer. Let us ensure that all women know about the dangers of breast cancer, are informed about the lifesaving potential of early detection, receive recommended screening services, and have access to health care services and information. Let us continue to move research forward to improve treatments and find a cure for this disease. Working together, we can look forward to the day when our mothers, wives, daughters, sisters, and friends can live long, healthy lives, free from the specter of breast cancer.

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 October 1997 as National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. I call upon government officials, businesses, communities, health care professionals, educators, volunteers, and all the people of the United States to reflect on the progress we have made in advancing our knowledge about breast cancer and to publicly reaffirm our national commitment to controlling and curing this disease.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of October, 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-second.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "William J. Clinton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent "W" and "C".