

ery 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

Proclamation 6981 of April 1, 1997

National Child Abuse Prevention Month, 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 the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 1997 as National Child Abuse Prevention Month. I call upon all Americans to observe this month by demonstrating our respect and gratitude for those who devotedly and unselfishly work to keep children safe, by learning how we can help keep children from harm's way, and by taking responsible actions to protect our precious children.

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