

so much to strengthen families and communities not only in our own Nation, but also around the world.

These and so many other African American leaders have enriched our national life and shaped our national character. They have challenged us to recognize that America's racial, cultural, and ethnic diversity will be among our greatest strengths in the 21st century.

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 February 1999 as National African American History Month. I call upon public officials, educators, librarians, and all the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs that raise awareness and appreciation of African American history.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of February, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

**Proclamation 7166 of February 3, 1999**

**American Heart Month, 1999**

*By the President of the United States of America  
A Proclamation*

Thanks to the dedicated efforts of scientists and researchers and the strong support of the American public, today we stand at the threshold of a new frontier in the prevention and treatment of heart disease. And in coming years, Americans will reap even greater benefits from our ongoing commitment to heart research.

Already, research has profoundly altered scientists' understanding of heart disease, revealing that the likelihood of heart disease is increased by risk factors such as smoking, high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, diabetes, obesity, physical inactivity, and a family history of early heart disease. Armed with this knowledge, millions of Americans have been able to take steps to reduce their risk of illness. Thanks to scientific discoveries, those already afflicted with heart disease now have access to lifesaving therapies and procedures such as clot-dissolving drugs, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, defibrillation, and balloon angioplasty.

Even greater advances lie ahead. Fields on the verge of delivering major innovations include molecular genetics, gene therapy, biotechnology, immunology, and epidemiology. The next breakthroughs will include better noninvasive diagnostic tools that can help physicians examine the heart and blood vessels without surgery; an implantable mechanical device that can restore heart function to those suffering heart failure; and a drug that can promote the growth of new blood vessels to body tissues and organs with poor circulation.

But technology is not a panacea. Despite the great gains we have made, heart disease remains the leading cause of death in the United States, and millions of Americans have at least one risk factor for heart disease. Moreover, recent data have shown a slight rise in the death rate for stroke and a slowing in the decline of the death rate for coronary heart disease. Some cardiovascular conditions, such as heart failure, as well as two key heart disease risk factors, obesity and physical inactivity, are on the increase among Americans.

We must work together to make all Americans aware of the information science has given us regarding controllable risk factors for cardiovascular disease. It is particularly important that we reach out to African Americans, Hispanic Americans, other minority communities, and women, who often are at high risk for heart disease and stroke, and ensure that they have access to the resources and information they need to guard against these afflictions. We must also encourage families to teach their children the importance of adopting healthy lifestyle practices early and maintaining them into and throughout adulthood.

The Federal Government continues to play a vital role in improving the cardiovascular health of Americans by supporting research and public education through the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute of the National Institutes of Health. The American Heart Association, through its research and education programs and its broad network of dedicated volunteers, also plays a crucial part in bringing about much-needed advances.

As Americans look ahead to a new century and a new millennium, we should use the momentum of past heart research as a springboard to even greater gains. In recognition of the importance of the ongoing fight against cardiovascular disease, the Congress, by Joint Resolution approved December 30, 1963 (77 Stat. 843; 36 U.S.C. 169b), has requested that the President issue an annual proclamation designating February as "American Heart Month."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim February 1999 as American Heart Month. I invite the Governors of the States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, officials of other areas subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, and the American people to join me in reaffirming our commitment to combating cardiovascular disease and stroke.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this third day of February, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON