

# Presidential Documents

Title 3—

Proclamation 6959 of November 26, 1996

The President

World AIDS Day, 1996

By the President of the United States of America

## A Proclamation

We dedicate World AIDS Day to the memory of those we have lost to HIV and AIDS and to our quest to help those who are living with this disease. The theme of this ninth observance of World AIDS Day, “One World, One Hope,” reminds us that AIDS is a global pandemic and that HIV recognizes no geographic boundaries. Today, an estimated 21.8 million adults and children worldwide are living with HIV/AIDS, and we anticipate that as many as 3 million more will become infected with HIV in this year alone.

Of the almost 6 million men, women, and children around the world who have died of AIDS, more than 330,000 have been Americans. Each day, 100 of our fellow citizens lose their lives to this disease, and nearly 200 more are diagnosed with AIDS. The threat that HIV and AIDS pose to our Nation and the world has demanded a national response involving government, industry, communities, families, and individuals. We have put our best scientific minds to work on research, and our most talented public health professionals have strived to prevent the spread of this epidemic. Parents, teachers, clergy, and other civic leaders have worked together to educate and protect young people and other groups who are so vulnerable to—and devastated by—the scourge of HIV and AIDS.

At long last, this investment of our time, attention, and resources in science and public health has begun to pay dividends. The past 12 months have offered us reasons for real hope and optimism after so many years of sadness and despair. New treatments, approved in record time, are showing remarkable results in arresting the development of HIV disease and are beginning to improve the health of those who are living with the virus. We have worked hard to provide access to these promising treatments for as many people as possible. We have tripled funding for AIDS drug assistance programs, and we have increased support for the Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency Act by 30 percent during the past 12 months. We have also preserved the Medicaid program, which provides care to more than half of Americans living with AIDS, including more than 90 percent of the children with AIDS.

We are heartened by our success in reducing the risk of perinatal transmission of HIV from mother to child. For the first time since this epidemic began in 1981, we have seen an actual reduction in the number of infants born with HIV. It is within our grasp to virtually eradicate pediatric HIV disease by the end of this century. Our efforts to prevent other types of HIV transmission are also showing signs of progress. But we must remain vigilant to the continuing need for prevention, reducing the number of new infections year by year until the day when we can eliminate this disease.

As we move forward in this battle, we do so with renewed hope for the future. Let us observe World AIDS Day by intensifying our search for an end to the epidemic, for a cure for those who are living with HIV and AIDS, and for a vaccine to protect all citizens of the world from this relentless killer. And let us reaffirm our commitment to protecting the rights of all those who are living with HIV.

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 December 1, 1996, as World AIDS Day, and I invite the Governors of the States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, officials of other territories subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, and the American people to join me in reaffirming our commitment to combating HIV and AIDS and to reach out to those living with this disease.

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

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

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