

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAY 17, 1976

Office of the White House Press Secretary

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THE WHITE HOUSE

TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES:

I am transmitting herewith the Third Annual Report of the Director of the National Heart and Lung Institute, as required by the National Heart, Blood Vessel, Lung, and Blood Act of 1972. This report, which contains a program plan for the next five years, was prepared in consultation with the National Heart and Lung Advisory Council.

The report proposes two levels of expenditures for fiscal years 1977 through 1981, both of which are in excess of the dollar amounts requested in the FY 1977 budget. The report states, however, that these projected expenditures are based on scientific judgment relating only to this research field. Moreover, the plan correctly recognizes that the allocation of national resources for the program must be determined in relationship to other competing national needs within total available Federal resources.

The Report focuses on the new initiatives undertaken since enactment of the 1972 Act, and it provides examples of encouraging progress in the fight against heart, blood vessel, lung, and blood diseases. These diseases, in 1972, led to an estimated national economic loss of more than \$57 billion annually. Deaths from coronary heart disease, the number one killer of the American people, continue to decline as do deaths from stroke and hypertension. The Institute's efforts also appear to be bearing fruit in the area of high blood pressure control. A national survey of physicians indicated that in calendar year 1974 the total number of patient visits for treatment of high blood pressure increased by 41.6 percent over 1971, the base year. In comparison, the total number of medical visits for all causes increased by only 16 percent over the same period. Furthermore, since the base year, the number of patients whose high blood pressure is under control has doubled.

The Administration recognizes the accomplishments as outlined in the Report, and continues to view the heart, blood vessel, lung, and blood program as an area of high priority.

GERALD R. FORD

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