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WASHINGTON, D.C., Dec. 2, 1971 ---- U.S. Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kans.) cosponsored in the Senate today a joint resolution proclaiming the month of May "National Arthritis Month." Dole, who is active in the area of legislation for the handicapped, and who serves on the Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs, said the measure serves as an attempt "to call the nation's attention to the grave human and economic waste resulting from arthritis."

Dole explained that arthritis and rheumatic diseases fail to receive the attention given to some other serious national health problems, "yet after heart disease, it is the most widespread chronic illness in the United States." He noted that the Arthritis Foundation estimates that 50 million Americans have some form of arthritis and that 17 million if these citizens are afflicted seriously enough to require medical care. "More than three million," Dole said, "are disabled or limited in their normal activity by the disease."

The Kansas Senator, who hosted a breakfast Tuesday at the Capitol for some 50 Kansans attending this week the White House Conference on the Aging, pointed out that the most common form of arthritis mainly strikes older citizens. Speaking with some of the conference delegates, Dole said that he is urging all Americans to make the effort to understand and deal with the problems of the elderly as a matter of concern for our fellow Americans and in order that "society can better utilize the contributions than older citizens can make to our social and economic life." "Improved treatments for arthritis and related diseases," Dole said, "would be an important step in this direction." He said:

If those of all ages who presently suffer from arthritis could avail themselves of more effective treatment, important human resources would be released to our society in terms of greater worker productivity.