Name

Company

Address

City, State, Zip

Subject: Media Coverage of Elisha Henson Murder

Dear **Insert Reporter Name Here**,

The purpose of this correspondence is to respond to your article entitled **insert title here** published on **insert date here** in **insert publication here**. We represent a consortium of individuals and families living with or affected by HIV located in the greater Houston area, and we wish to thank you for covering this story in a tasteful and respectful manner. As a reporter, it is important to provide a balanced, fact-based perspective. There are a lot of unknown factors surrounding Elisha’s tragic death, but you have worked diligently to avoid alarmist rhetoric surrounding Elisha’s HIV diagnosis. We further appreciate that your coverage has not taken on the tenor of a type of “blame the victim” reporting that can happen when an HIV positive victim is involved.

Despite over thirty years since the first cases of HIV were reported, unfortunately HIV stigma is still alive and well. A consistent theme in all accounts of Elisha’s murder is that is that ignorance, misinformation, and fear related to HIV transmission played a large role in her alleged killer’s motivation and actions. Such stigma can be exacerbated when the media and other sources focus more on HIV diagnoses than on the facts, fueling unnecessary fears without pointing out how HIV is actually transmitted or that HIV is now a manageable chronic illness and not the perceived “death sentence” of years past.

We hope that any future coverage of this story as it progresses will be in the same vein as your original coverage. We applaud your ethics and professionalism as a journalist. Please note that there are several easy-to-digest HIV information resources that may prove helpful in any future stories related to HIV that you may write; the new research findings regarding HIV transmission rates of “undetectable” HIV+ individuals may be of particular interest. If you wish to be provided with some of these resources or have further questions, please send an email to: JusticeForElisha@gmail.com

Respectfully,