Fed up with the grossly defamatory and inaccurate media coverage of HIV and AIDS, on November 14, 1985, a group of journalists and writers met to form GLAAD. GLAAD would serve to hold the media accountable for their misrepresentations of those living with HIV, at the time predominantly gay men who were being disparaged and villanized in irresponsible and dangerous reporting.

Over thirty years later, GLAAD has transformed into a dynamic LGBTQ media advocacy organization with a critical and outsized role in accelerating acceptance for all members of the LGBTQ community and other marginalized groups. But, advocating for people living with HIV has never strayed from the core of GLAAD’s purpose. Fighting stigma and pushing for 100% acceptance for those living with HIV will always be a critical centerpiece of our work.

That’s why this year we launched the State of HIV Stigma Study, a national survey in partnership with the Gilead COMPASS Initiative, a more than $100 million program over 10 years working to address the HIV/AIDS in the Southern U.S. The survey measures American attitudes toward HIV/AIDS and people living with HIV.

The State of HIV Stigma Study found that only half of American adults feel knowledgeable about HIV and that high levels of perceived stigma around HIV still exist. We must change this.

At a time when people living with HIV lead long and healthy lives, and cannot transmit the virus when on effective medications, GLAAD is growing its efforts to increase the visibility of people living with HIV. Thanks to historic grants from Gilead, GLAAD is launching a targeted media advocacy program to center conversations about people living with HIV across mainstream media channels and within the entertainment industry. As LGBTQ activists, we know that seeing yourself represented in the media has an incredible power and purpose. Fighting stigma and pushing for 100% acceptance for those living with HIV will always be a critical centerpiece of our work.

Sarah Kate Ellis
President & CEO, GLAAD
GLAAD rewrites the script for LGBTQ acceptance. As a dynamic media force, GLAAD tackles tough issues to shape the narrative and provoke dialogue that leads to cultural change. GLAAD protects all that has been accomplished and creates a world where everyone can live the life they love.

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