



MEDIA STATEMENT

Date

For immediate use

8 July 2020

-- Action for AIDS repudiates MediaCorp Channel 8 'My Guardian Angels' portrayal of the LGBT community

On 29 June 2020, an episode of My Guardian Angels broadcast on Channel 8 depicted a character as gay, a paedophile and STD-positive was aired.

In the following days, some members of the LGBT community in Singapore led by business owner Teo Yu Sheng, pushed back on this highly negative portrayal of a community that is already heavily stigmatised and marginalised by the legal system, media, and larger community over the years.

We call on MediaCorp to end these homophobic portrayals in its productions immediately. Propagating distorted stories over the most popular free-to-air channels is unbecoming and highly irresponsible and further deepens discrimination and stigma against LGBT people.

- Stop negative portrayal of communities -

Throughout history, minority groups have often been stereotyped as representing a danger to others in society, this includes the portrayal of homosexual men as paedophiles. Scientific evidence does not support this. To our knowledge there is no evidence that homosexual males have a greater propensity to offend against children than heterosexual males. The portrayal of gay men as paedophiles further perpetuates falsehoods that create further suffering among an already marginalised and stigmatised population.

- STDs can affect anyone -

Sexually transmitted diseases can affect anyone and are not confined to any gender identity, sexual orientation or behaviour.

Certain STDs may disproportionately affect sexual minorities more so than their heterosexual counterparts; however, such patterns often reflect a higher prevalence of STD in such communities that are the result of gaps in sexual healthcare engagement and access. Very often these are the result of stigmatisation and criminalisation of such persons.

Research in Singapore has shown that perpetuating negative stereotypes discourages

sexual health-seeking behaviours of gay men, as it deepens their fear of stigma associated with disclosing their sexual orientation or being seen at sexual health settings.

Ultimately, such negative representations of gay men serve as fundamental drivers for the spread of STD, and are counterproductive to public health efforts to control HIV and other STD in Singapore.

- HIV/AIDS continues to be a concern in Singapore -

HIV remains a challenging issue for Singapore and especially those living with it.

Action for AIDS has been campaigning to promote the internationally held position that those who are on treatment with undetectable HIV viral loads are not infectious to their sexual partners. These facts have been proven in several large-scale clinical studies and has been endorsed by the top international medical and scientific agencies and authorities.

Action for AIDS continues its call to destigmatise HIV infection and people living with HIV. Authorities need to adopt measures, including laws to protect all Singaporeans against acts of discrimination in accessing medical care, education, jobs, health and life insurance.

Notes to editors:

Please read more about the work undertaken by Action for AIDS at www.afa.org.sg and the Community Blueprint to end-HIV by 2030 at <https://afa.org.sg/whatwedo/advocate/endinghiv/>

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