**Sample Media Placement for a Coalition**

As patient advocates, our organizations help meet the needs of patients suffering from life-threatening diseases and requiring ongoing treatment and care during the Covid-19 pandemic. We provide education to communities at risk, we help patients navigate the health system to access needed care, and we continue to support patients with their emotional and mental health needs during these difficult times.

It is critically important that we not allow health misinformation to undercut all of these efforts with false promises, unproven treatments, and dangerous propositions. Patients are already at a disadvantage. Health misinformation in Covid-19 is harmful in the following ways:

1. Products not supported by science and medicine can cause harm when applied or ingested. For patients with weakened immune systems, this can be deadly;
2. False promises can lead to unhealthy behavior when consumers think they are protected but in fact remain at risk;
3. The promotion of unproven products can lead to irrational hoarding of certain medicines and supplies, which in turn means non Covid-19 patients who rely on these products have less to access;
4. Misinformation crowds-out good information. The investments we make—including those by our government—to produce and disseminate quality information become less effective when there are alternative explanations or false cures easily available and that quickly spread; and
5. Bad information slowly erodes public trust in science and medicine. This lack of confidence can then extend to our health system and public health leaders, which perpetuates a vicious cycle of even more bad information reaching patients and consumers.

It is equally important to maintain an open environment for freedom of speech. As much as we are concerned about bad information, it is usually not criminal in nature and should not be penalized as such. Overreach will only stifle freedom of expression and the free flow of information. Instead, we believe the better strategy is to refute or rebut misinformation with relevant facts and evidence.

We call on all stakeholders to work with civil society patient advocates and our organizations to find solutions. Together we can build mechanisms to resist misinformation by identifying harmful statements and reacting quickly to name it as such and to correct the record. As individuals, we all need to be more cautious about bad information that we may spread inadvertently. As a collective society, we need to stand together to make health misinformation unwelcome.

Patients deserve at least this. We hope you too will stand with us.