Live and Let Die?

June 1, 2005

HIVers were mulling medical proxies and end-of-life decisions long before the vicious family battle over Terri Schiavo's feeding-tube fate made living wills a national issue. POZ asked HIVers if the world would have been as caring if Schiavo had been a patient with HIV—and if the case had moved these HIVers to deal with the living-will decision. To download your own advance medical directive, visit **www.caringinfo.org** or call **800.658.8898.**

Brian DiCrocco, 37
Telemarketer, San Francisco
America would have been even more sympathetic if Terri had had HIV. It horrifies me that her feeding tube was taken out. I don't think that she left any clear instruction for that. I have a living will. There is life support I would want, like a feeding tube. I wouldn't want to be kept alive if brain-dead.

Dyane Haddock, 40
ASO President, Tampa
Florida Americans are uneducated about HIV, so Idon't think they would have been as sympathetic. Her tube should've been removed, but there must have been a better way to let her go. My kids understand why I wouldn't want to be kept alive. I recently pulled out a computer program that helps create living wills.

Lora Tucker, 45
Program Director, Howard Beach, NY If Terri had HIV, the case would not have gotten the same attention, due to stigma. Her husband was her legal caretaker, and his wishes should have been followed. Death is part of life—I wouldn't want my family or me to suffer by keeping me alive artificially. I have no living will—my health-care proxy died.

Jeff Hammond, 51
Reporter, Carrizozo, New Mexico
People would not have been as sympathetic if Terri had HIV. Everybody has the right to die with dignity, including Terri. I've been close to checking out without a living will, but I have one now. My wife died of AIDS while I was in prison, and our wishes were not followed. I don't want that to happen again.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.