

## Summary of the Case – Christina’s Story<sup>i</sup>

When 13-year-old Christina Corrigan died of congestive heart failure in her El Cerrito living room she weighed 680 pounds. Her thighs were 54 inches in circumference, her calves 45 inches. It was reported she was covered in bedsores.

Christina’s body would not fit on the coroner’s stretcher. It took two deputy coroners and four fire fighters to roll her body onto a large canvas and drag it to the coroner’s van.

At the time of her death, it was reported that Christina had not been outside her home for 2 months. She had not seen a doctor for over 4 years.

The Police Chief explained that the case was a “real nightmare for investigators” and that there were hundreds of people who could have helped if only the authorities had known of Christina’s situation. Instead, the Contra Costa County prosecutor charged Mrs. Corrigan with Penal Code 273 felony child endangerment. He explained that the charges were not about Christina’s size, rather Mrs. Corrigan’s failure to notice and provide appropriate care for Christina’s condition.

- 1) What question do you have about this case?

Once you have identified your question, sit with a group and discuss the following:

- 2) What would you have liked to see for Christina when she was three-years-old and weighed 100 pounds?
- 3) If you worked in a primary care clinic, how would you have ensured Christina would have reasonable accommodation when she weighed 500 pounds?
- 4) If Christina had arrived to the ED 3 weeks before her death, what would you want in place to care for Christina and her family?

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<sup>i</sup> Gallagher SM. *A Tragic Case of Childhood Obesity*. UMI Press. 2000.