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\$1.7 million Initiative to Bring Vulnerable People with HIV/AIDS into Care

New York, June 2—The New York City AIDS Fund in The New York Community has received a \$1.7 million, three-year grant to bring primary medical care to 1,650 New Yorkers living with HIV/AIDS who are not in treatment, and help HIV primary care providers retain them.

“Properly managed, people living with HIV/AIDS can now live healthy, productive lives, but lack of outreach, follow up, and care coordination means many vulnerable New Yorkers are not getting the treatment they need, and the results are often fatal,” said Len McNally, program director for health at The New York Community Trust and chairman of the NYC AIDS Fund.

The grant will support ACCESS NY, a new partnership of the NYC AIDS Fund; Amida Care, a nonprofit Medicaid HIV managed care plan; and the Primary Care Development Corporation (PCDC), which will provide management assistance to Amida Care and the local HIV service groups that founded it. These groups provide primary medical care and offer essential services, including housing help, meals, legal support, psychotherapy, and substance abuse treatment. The groups are Harlem United, Housing Works, Project Samaritan, Promesa, St. Mary’s Episcopal Center, and Village Care of New York. ACCESS NY is being funded by Bristol-Myers Squibb through the National AIDS Fund. New York is one of five regions in the U.S. to receive a grant.

“The most vulnerable HIV positive New Yorkers confront homelessness, poverty, mental illness, substance abuse, homophobia, and incarceration, all of which are barriers to getting or staying in care,” said Doug Wirth, president and CEO of Amida Care. “This effort will not only enable us to deal with the obstacles to getting treatment, but also to staying with it. If you live on the streets and you’re abusing drugs or alcohol, keeping appointments and sticking with a treatment regimen isn’t easy.”

“Before I joined Amida Care, I was alone and struggling,” said Lorenzo Murphy, Amida Care member and community health outreach worker. “Now, I have an HIV doctor that knows me and spends time with me. My health plan makes sure I get what I need. I’m healthy and doing

good things for myself and my community. More people would benefit from having a care team like I do,”

ACCESS NY will unite Amida Care’s experience in recruiting, enrolling, and maintaining new HIV+ patients, their extensive HIV primary care provider network, and PCDC’s experience in redesigning systems of care to focus on quality, continuity, and patient access.

PCDC’s work with primary care providers has resulted, on average, in a 70 percent decrease in missed appointments, appointment times reduced from more than three weeks to less than a week, and improved patient and staff satisfaction.

“People living with HIV/AIDS deserve quality, coordinated primary care and AIDS treatment, but unfortunately, this vulnerable population is often at the mercy of a health care system that is ill-equipped to handle their needs,” said Ronda Kotelchuck, PCDC’s executive director.”

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About Amida Care: Amida Care's mission is to provide access to comprehensive care and coordinated services that facilitate positive health outcomes and general well-being for our Members. It is a non-profit Medicaid HIV Special Needs Plan (SNP). Our health plan has nurse care coordinators, member service representatives, community case managers, and other plan staff available to assist our members, making it easier for them to get and stay in care. Comprehensive assistance for members and providers is just a phone call away, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

About Primary Care Development Corporation (PCDC): PCDC is a non-profit organization that expands access to timely, effective primary and preventive care by providing capital and performance improvement programs to primary care providers in underserved communities. Since 1993, PCDC has mobilized \$250 million for more than 75 health center projects, an investment that has generated more than 2,200 permanent jobs; built/renovated 630,000 square feet of space; and created the capacity to serve approximately 550,000 New Yorkers and provide 1.7 million medical visits annually. PCDC has also helped over 400 primary care teams increase productivity, effectively implement electronic medical records, and prepare for emergencies.

About The New York City AIDS Fund: Founded in 1989, the New York City AIDS Fund is one of several grantmakers’ groups in The New York Community Trust. It helps community groups provide vital programs and implement advocacy efforts that address the local HIV/AIDS epidemic. It also serves as a community partnership site of the National AIDS Fund. It is guided by an advisory committee representing grantmaking organizations, public agencies, human service organizations, and people living with AIDS to help set grantmaking priorities. Since inception, and with lead support from the Council of Fashion Designers of America & Vogue’s Seventh on Sale events, the AIDS Fund has awarded approximately \$17.3 million in grants to 170 nonprofits located throughout the City’s five boroughs.