



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **AMIDA CARE FEATURED IN AIDS UNITED “MAKE IT GROW” CAMPAIGN**

**NEW YORK, NY – December 15, 2011** – AIDS United has released a powerful new video, “Make It Grow”, showcasing the compelling programs supported by its Access to Care (A2C) initiative. The video highlights the efforts that Amida Care, a not-for-profit Medicaid special needs HMO, is making to increase access to care for people living with HIV and AIDS.

The AIDS United “Make It Grow” campaign is focused on helping people living with HIV/AIDS receive the life-saving medical care and social support services they need and deserve. In the last year, 12 corporations, foundations, and individuals committed more than \$2.5 million dollars to AIDS United’s A2C initiative, matching an initial investment from the federal Corporation for National and Community Service’s Social Innovation Fund (SIF).

Amida Care, serving very low income persons in New York City was selected by AIDS United along with nine other programs across the country with the goal of funding local initiatives that will link people to and keep them in care. The “Make It Grow” video shows Amida Care staff, providers and members discussing the positive impact that these grant dollars have had in breaking down barriers to obtaining health care. “AIDS United is proud to be supporting the work of Amida Care with this SIF grant,” said Mark Ishaug, AIDS United President and CEO. “Amida Care is a leading innovator in this field, and its work demonstrates how important the SIF grant is to the HIV/AIDS community.”

Amida Care’s grant from AIDS United supported the development of Mobile Engagement Teams. These teams are designed to reach the most complex, chronically ill HIV-positive New Yorkers through street-based outreach and a full spectrum of supportive services, including psychiatric and housing support. Amida Care has also joined with six community health centers to achieve patient-centered medical homes that are designed to help members stay in care. Doug Wirth, the President and Chief Executive Officer of Amida Care, who was featured in the video said, “Some people delay getting into care because of high levels of fear, stigma, depression, substance abuse, or they’re homeless. So you can’t wait for these people to come to us. Our Teams go out into the streets, bodegas, mealprograms, neighborhood hang-outs, and parks to find and help people deal with these issues so they can get into life-saving medical and mental health care.”





Currently, there are more than 1.1 million people living with HIV/AIDS in America, and over 85,000 individuals living with HIV/AIDS in New York City. More than 50 percent do not have consistent access to care, and the people most affected are communities of color and those in extreme poverty. AIDS United A2C Initiative was developed to create lasting and systemic changes in local communities by strengthening local service systems and connecting individuals living with HIV to quality supportive services. Dr. Jerry Ernst, the Chief Medical Officer of Amida Care, stated, "Doctors are good at treating patients who show up for care. The problem is that so many people can't navigate the complex health system on their own and, because the way the system is designed, they fail to connect. We are working to change the system to insure it is more responsive to patients' needs."

To view the "Make It Grow" video and learn more about Amida Care's participation, visit [www.amidacareny.org/innovation](http://www.amidacareny.org/innovation).



#### **ABOUT AMIDA CARE**

Amida Care is a not-for-profit Medicaid HIV Special Needs Health Plan (SNP). Our mission is to provide access to comprehensive care and coordinated services that facilitate positive health outcomes and general well being for our members. Amida Care 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, regular care. Comprehensive assistance for members and providers is available, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

To learn more about the "Make It Grow" campaign, visit [www.aidsunited.org/makeitgrow](http://www.aidsunited.org/makeitgrow).

#### **ABOUT AIDS UNITED**

The mission of AIDS United is to end the AIDS epidemic in the United States. We will achieve this goal through national, regional and local policy/advocacy, strategic grant making, and organizational capacity building. With partners throughout the country, we will work to ensure that people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS have access to the prevention and care services they need and deserve. The creation of AIDS United combines private-sector fundraising, philanthropy, coalition building, public policy expertise, and advocacy — as well as a network of passionate local and state partners — to most effectively and efficiently respond to the disease in the communities most impacted by it.