



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AMIDA CARE OFFERS TESTIMONY TO NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HEALTH REGARDING THE PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT

NEW YORK, NY –January 5, 2012 Amida Care’s President and Chief Executive Officer, Doug Wirth, spoke before the New York State Assembly Committee on Health on December 19th as part of a public hearing to discuss the addition of the prescription drug benefit to the Medicaid managed care benefit package. Prior to October 1, 2011, the pharmacy benefit was covered through the Medicaid fee-for-service program.

Amida Care is an HIV Special Needs Health Plan serving approximately 5,000 members living with multiple, chronic, co-morbid conditions including HIV/AIDS, and often serious mental health issues and/or substance abuse histories. Mr. Wirth described the steps that Amida Care took in less than six months to ensure that its members would not experience disruptions in care. These included:

- Ensuring a 100% match between the pharmacies used by its members through the fee-for-service program and the Amida Care pharmacy network;
- Extensive upfront education via letters to members and providers, a special edition of the Plan’s Member Newsletter, and Town Hall meetings to discuss the change and to answer member and provider questions;
- Creation of easy to use features on the Amida Care website to locate a pharmacy and to access formulary information;
- Implementation of a dedicated customer service unit to triage pharmacy inquiries;
- Recruitment of a Plan Pharmacy Director and establishment of a Pharmacy and Therapeutics (P&T) Committee that includes network providers and Plan members.

Doug Wirth stated as part of his testimony, “All these activities have enhanced our ability to be proactive in the transition and implementation of the pharmacy benefit within our health plan. This successfully held member complaints and concerns to a minimum, while ensuring continued access to life saving medications.”

The smooth implementation of the pharmacy benefit within the Medicaid managed care benefit package was especially critical for Amida Care’s HIV members on antiretroviral therapy and individuals on psychotropics. Starting and stopping these medications has been proven to have a significant negative impact on the patient’s health.



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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.