



Contact:

Shakira Croce, Communications Manager
646-757-7052; scroce@amidacareny.org

Amida Care Condemns Tax Reform Bill That Would Undermine Access to Health Care

New York, New York – December 5, 2017 – Amida Care strongly opposes continued actions by Congress and President Trump’s administration to undermine America’s safety net programs and access to health care. The recently passed H.R.1 in the U.S. Senate and the House tax bill will cut taxes for large corporations and the extremely wealthy at the expense of hard-working Americans, raising taxes for the middle class and low-income Americans, increasing health insurance costs, and taking health care away from millions of people.

“The tax reform bill is just another way to strip away health care access from millions of Americans in order to cut taxes for the wealthy,” said Doug Wirth, President and CEO of Amida Care. “Paying for this massive transfer of funds by cutting safety net programs will hurt those most in need, like the 74 million hard-working Americans, including veterans, women, seniors, and people with chronic conditions like HIV and diabetes, who count on Medicaid for health insurance. We are deeply troubled by the repeal of the individual mandate, which will lead to sky-high premiums.”

The bill limits deductions for medical expenses, removes tax exemptions that help hospitals and nonprofit organizations, and includes a provision that would repeal the individual mandate that requires all individuals to purchase insurance. By ensuring that healthy people join the insurance pool, the mandate is essential to keeping health care affordable for everyone, and particularly those who depend on insurance the most, such as people with chronic medical conditions or serious illnesses. Without the mandate, health care premiums will skyrocket and an estimated 13 million people will lose coverage.

The tax bill also threatens critical safety net programs such as Medicaid and Medicare and other life-saving discretionary programs, including HIV and STD prevention, care, and treatment. The massive tax cuts for corporations will add \$1.5 trillion to the federal deficit, which will likely be offset with massive cuts to Medicaid and Medicare. Any cuts to Medicaid will hurt those most in need. Medicaid is not welfare. It helps keep workers healthy and lowers costs for small businesses; 60 percent of Medicaid recipients are working. Without access to Medicaid, many people have no choice but to visit the emergency room more frequently, are hospitalized more often, require costly nursing homes, rack up higher medical bills, and get pushed into poverty. Those higher costs are ultimately passed on to the government, insurers, and taxpayers – meaning that these short-sighted tax cuts would add an even greater tax burden down the road.

This will be a major setback in the fight against HIV. With access to treatment, HIV is now a manageable chronic condition. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has confirmed that a person living with HIV who has an undetectable viral load cannot transmit the virus to others. We now know that [Undetectable equals Untransmittable \(U=U\)](#). In New York City, through increased linkage to testing and treatment, the number of new HIV infections has reached a historic low, from 5,902 in 2001 to 2,279 in

2016. As a result of the ACA and Medicaid expansion, Medicaid coverage for people living with HIV [rose](#) from 36 percent in 2012 to 42 percent in 2014, meaning that they can now access affordable, high-quality care to help them get and stay well. Cutting Medicaid funding will eliminate their access to critical care.

The tax bill's efforts to undermine health coverage are just one part of the latest round of attacks on health care. President Trump recently decided to withdraw federal assistance to purchase health insurance, and the administration has implemented regulations that decrease patient protections and make getting and keeping health insurance more difficult.

Amida Care urges Congress to reconsider their actions, defeat this bill in conference, and work together to find meaningful bipartisan solutions.

###