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Amida Care Applauds American Medical Association’s Stand Against President Trump’s Discriminatory Ban on Military Service for Transgender People

New York, NY (April 6, 2018) –This week in a letter to Secretary of Defense James Mattis, American Medical Association (AMA) Executive Vice President and CEO James L. Madara, MD, expressed concern with the Trump Administration’s discriminatory ban on transgender Americans serving in the military, stating that there is “no medically valid reason...to exclude transgender individuals from military service.” Amida Care, the largest Medicaid Special Needs Health Plan (SNP) in New York State and advocate for transgender health, applauds the AMA for standing up for transgender Americans who wish to serve their country. Currently, 7% of Amida Care members identify as transgender.

“The Trump Administration’s discriminatory attempts to ban transgender Americans from serving in the military are an insult to the transgender Americans who have put their lives on the line in service to this country,” said Doug Wirth, President and CEO of Amida Care. “We applaud the AMA for speaking truth to power and standing up against discrimination.”

Currently, 15,000 transgender men and women serve in the military. [One in five transgender Americans](#) have served at some point in their life - double the percentage of the general U.S. population. [Existing evidence shows](#) that the inclusion of transgender individuals has no significant impact on military readiness and, in reality, benefits the military by creating an inclusive and diverse workforce.

On March 23, the White House issued a statement that included the following comments: “The accession or retention of individuals with a history or diagnosis of gender dysphoria — those who may require substantial medical treatment, including through medical drugs or surgery — presents considerable risk to military effectiveness and lethality.” Dr. Madara’s letter to Secretary Mattis points out that this is rejected “by a wide body of peer-reviewed research on the effectiveness of transgender medical care.”

President Trump has previously cited medical costs as one of the reasons behind this decision. However, a [2016 RAND study](#) found that the medical costs of transgender service members represented a very small portion of the military’s overall health care expenses. According to the study, care for transgender service members would represent between 0.005 to 0.017 percent of overall Department of Defense health care expenditures.

“Discrimination of any kind has no place in our military or our society,” Wirth added. “Despite what President Trump would have you believe, this attack on the transgender community isn’t based on financial or medical concerns at all - it’s just old-fashioned bigotry.”

About Amida Care

Amida Care Inc. is a not-for-profit health plan that specializes in providing comprehensive health coverage and coordinated care to New Yorkers with chronic conditions, including HIV and behavioral health disorders, and people who are of transgender experience or who are homeless (regardless of HIV status). Amida Care has a wide network of health care providers throughout New York City and is the largest Medicaid Special Needs Health Plan (SNP) in New York State. For more information, visit www.amidacareny.org.