



For Immediate Release

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\$5M From NYC FY2016 Budget Allocated to End the AIDS Epidemic in New York

Amida Care Receives City Council Funding for Community Health and Wellness Programs

New York, NY (July 3, 2015) – The New York City Council voted last week to adopt the City’s Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 budget comprising \$78 billion in total funding. Included is \$3.9 million in City Council funding to End the AIDS Epidemic (EtE) in New York by 2020, as well as an additional \$1.1 million committed by Mayor Bill de Blasio.

Amida Care applauds Mayor de Blasio, Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, Council Health Committee Chair Corey Johnson, and the entire City Council for its leadership in advancing support of New York State’s EtE Blueprint. Amida Care served on the Task Force that designed the Blueprint and is one of 60 organizations that are part of the END AIDS NY 2020 Coalition, which is advocating for \$10 million in EtE support targeted specifically for New York City programs—80% of people living with HIV/AIDS in the state reside in New York City. We urge city leaders to apply the approved funding toward initiatives outlined in the Coalition request and find ways to fund the full \$10 million to have a greater impact on the epidemic in the city.

“We commend our local government leaders for recognizing the critical need for this funding,” said Doug Wirth, President and CEO of Amida Care, the largest Medicaid special-needs health plan in New York State. “This additional support will enable community health agencies to help many thousands of people and make progress toward the goal of ending HIV and AIDS in New York.”

EtE funding will support programs to reduce the spread of HIV infection in local communities and provide people living with HIV with access to care, medications that make viral loads undetectable, and other treatment supports. The goal of the plan is to decrease new HIV infections in New York State from approximately 3,000 per year to fewer than 750.

The budget also restores \$100,000 in City Council Speaker funding for Amida Care’s Mobile Engagement Teams (METs), a collaborative program between Amida Care and three subcontracted providers: Brightpoint Health in the Bronx, Harlem United in Manhattan, and Housing Works in Brooklyn. The teams target intensive outreach and engagement services to connect individuals living with HIV/AIDS and a severe mental illness or substance use disorder to their health care and benefits. The teams are trained to address the many barriers that can prevent people living with multiple chronic conditions from accessing care and life-saving medications, including housing instability, unemployment, food insecurity, criminal justice issues, stigma, addiction, and mental health concerns.

The METs also encourage members to participate in Amida Care's Live Your Life wellness programs—free, socially-based events that build skills and include healthy cooking and eating, African and Latin dance, yoga, art therapy, and Town Hall meetings.

Through the METs, Live Your Life, and other innovative programs that work closely with members to address their health care needs, Amida Care has generated many impressive health outcomes that save lives and money, including:

- Over 93% member engagement in care and 97% member retention;
- A 35% reduction in overall medical expenses (2008-11);
- A 74% decrease in hospital admissions/readmissions (2008-11);
- A 63% drop in emergency room/emergency department visits (2008-11);
- A 93% success rate in getting members on anti-retroviral medications; and
- A 70% viral load suppression rate among our members.

“Amida Care thanks the Council Speaker and Council Members Laurie Cumbo, Robert Cornegy, and Ritchie Torres for their generous support of our wellness programs in the FY2016 budget,” said Wirth. “We look forward to offering more Live Your Life events in their districts.”

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. Through our wide network of top health care providers in the five boroughs of New York City, we deliver a special-needs health plan (SNP) to Medicaid recipients who are living with HIV/AIDS or who are homeless (regardless of HIV status), as well as Medicare recipients with HIV/AIDS and/or chronic conditions. For more information, visit www.amidacareny.org.