



For Immediate Release

Contact:

Teri Wade, VP of Marketing and Communications
646-757-7705; twade@amidacareny.org

Amida Care Celebration Honors the AIDS Institute and Enlists Support for NY State's Blueprint to End the HIV/AIDS Epidemic

New York, NY (April 21, 2015) – Amida Care, a not-for-profit special needs health plan (SNP) that provides comprehensive medical, behavioral, and wellness services to people living with multiple chronic conditions such as HIV, severe mental illness, and substance use disorder, recognized its providers, sponsors, and members and honored the New York State AIDS Institute at “A Night of Stars” gala on April 16 that also rallied commitment to New York’s statewide initiative to End the HIV/AIDS Epidemic by 2020.

Doug Wirth, CEO of Amida Care, presented an Excellence in Innovation award to the NYS AIDS Institute in recognition of its development of the HIV Special Needs Plan (SNP) health care model. The SNP care model has contributed to impressive health outcomes for Amida Care members: 70 percent are virally suppressed and 94 percent are engaged in regular care.

“We recognize all our AIDS Institute colleagues, including former Director Humberto Cruz, for their courage and forward-thinking leadership,” said Wirth. “This evening we celebrate what we’ve been able to accomplish *together* as a community to combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic by providing a unique care model that responds to the specialized needs of New Yorkers living with HIV/AIDS.” The award was accepted by Ira Feldman, AIDS Institute Deputy Director, Office of Medicaid Policy and Program.

Cruz, a long-time AIDS activist, remarked on the many contributions of his former colleagues. “At the AIDS Institute, doing the impossible is nothing new, it’s simply business as usual,” he said. Cruz retired in 2013 as director of the institute, which is affiliated with the New York State Department of Health.

New York State Assistant Secretary of Health Tracie Gardner, a long-time community health advocate, made opening remarks and was praised for her career-long advocacy work to curtail the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The state’s Ending the Epidemic initiative aims to reduce the number of HIV infections to 750 per year by 2020. The full Blueprint for the ambitious plan, which has been cited as a national model for addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic, is expected to be released shortly. Wirth, a member of Governor Cuomo’s Ending the Epidemic Task Force, issued a call to action to the gala attendees, asking them to consider what more they can do to support the goals of the initiative.

More than 120 providers and members attended the gala and were recognized for their commitment to and support of Amida Care’s mission. The largest SNP in New York State, Amida Care was founded in 2006 by six community health center sponsors—Acacia Network (formerly Promesa/Basics), Brightpoint Health, Harlem United, Housing Works, St. Mary’s Center, and Village Care. The newest sponsor organization is Community Healthcare Network. Through its network of more than 200 health care providers throughout New York City, Amida Care has grown to provide comprehensive, coordinated care to more than 6,000 Medicaid recipients living with HIV/AIDS and HIV-negative homeless, as well as Medicare-eligible individuals with HIV and/or chronic illnesses. A Member Advisory Council works closely with Amida Care to provide feedback on the quality of care and ensure that members’ needs are being met. Plans are under way to expand into Westchester County in 2015 and parts of Long Island in 2016. More information about Amida Care is available at www.amidacareny.org.

###