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Amida Care Condemns Dr. Betty Price's Comments Promoting Misinformation and Stigma Around HIV

New York, NY – October 24, 2017 – Amida Care condemns the [questions posed](#) by Dr. Betty Price, Georgia state representative and physician, suggesting a “quarantine” for patients living with HIV as a solution to ending the HIV epidemic. As a physician, her comments are especially damaging to public health and underscore the widespread lack of knowledge and deeply ingrained stigma and bias about HIV that still exists today.

“It is unacceptable that someone trained and working in public health could be so uninformed and blatantly hateful. This type of ignorance undermines progress made over the past few decades to move toward ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic,” said Doug Wirth, President and CEO of Amida Care. “The suggestion that people living with HIV should be quarantined is appalling and harkens back to the days when people living with HIV/AIDS were stigmatized and left to die out of indifference and misplaced fear. Sadly, stigma still stops many people from accessing preventative treatment, HIV testing, and health care. An AIDS-free generation is within our reach, but it won’t happen unless we dispel the myths surrounding HIV/AIDS once and for all and focus on access to testing and treatment.”

Thanks to decades of advocacy and medical research, HIV is now a manageable chronic condition. With widespread testing, more people living with HIV know their status and are able to get the care needed to live long, healthy lives. Access to health care and adherence to treatment is critical for becoming virally suppressed. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently confirmed that a person with HIV who has an undetectable viral load cannot transmit the virus to others. We now know that undetectable equals untransmittable (U=U).

[Research](#) shows that stigma seriously undermines HIV prevention efforts. It prevents people from learning about HIV prevention tools like pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), delays the diagnosis of HIV, and discourages people from seeking treatment. Stigma and discrimination can also cause denial of treatment, even for those who do seek help. [One out of every eight](#) people living with HIV is denied health services due to stigma and discrimination, according to data from The People Living with HIV Stigma Index.

Amida Care urges Representative Price to make a full apology acknowledging that perpetuating stigma and violating HIV/AIDS patients’ civil rights by quarantining them is not the solution to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Amida Care joins organizations serving people living with HIV across the country to urge the Georgia House Study Committee to continue its conversation around modernizing HIV laws and ensuring access to care and treatment. We also call on Representative Price to consider the impact of her words moving forward and urge her to meet with constituents living with or affected by HIV and experts from

the state to fully understand this issue. Georgia's elected officials should look to medical science, rather than rhetoric, as the way forward in ending the epidemic.

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