



The AMIDACARE View

formerly VidaCare



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Dear Member,

Medicaid Reform - Medicaid Redesign? You've probably heard about the New York's plans to change its Medicaid program. Because the State has a big budget deficit (nearly \$10 billion), officials are trying to figure out how to save tax dollars and spend Medicaid money more efficiently while also achieving better health outcomes. Fortunately for all of us, Amida Care is a health plan model that does both.

No matter what changes are ahead, please know that we are doing everything we can - in both Albany and Washington DC - to advocate for you, our members. It's important and right that you should continue to have access to the quality healthcare you need and deserve. We believe that more supportive housing and expanded harm reduction approaches can help our members to stay in the community, be well and stay in care.

There will be changes to what Amida Care covers/pays for and we will be sending you updates and information as we receive it from the State. You will always be the most important participant in your own health - so be sure to review any information we send you. Remember, you can always call us toll-free at (800) 556-0689 if you have questions. We will be with you every step of the way through these changes and work hard to make sure you can get the care and services you need.



To celebrate life/wellness (and get some relief from all of this), Amida Care will host its first-ever Summer Barbeque & Life Celebration. Join us on Tuesday, July 19th from 4:00pm to 7:00pm at Rivington House located at 45 Rivington Street in lower Manhattan. I hope to see as many of you as possible as we eat good food, dance and celebrate together.

Lastly, I hope that you are enjoying our new Member Newsletter format. Please take the time to look over the articles that follow. I especially want to encourage members to consider the many mental health options we have for getting emotional support. Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. I urge you to take advantage of the wonderful services that can really help you to live your best life, feel good about yourself and build healthy and lasting relationships.

Yours in health,
Doug Wirth
 President & CEO

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you deserve to be healthy and *Happy!*

Amida Care members are entitled to counseling services.

Just because you are living with HIV, doesn't mean that it's normal for you to feel depressed or anxious. You deserve to feel as healthy as possible, both physically and mentally.



How do you know if you need help?

The following are some of the signs that you could benefit from mental health services:

- Loss of interest in activities or hobbies that you used to find pleasurable, including sex,
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions,
- Feeling tired all the time,
- Trouble falling asleep or excessive sleeping,
- Irritability, restlessness,
- Loss of appetite or overeating,
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, and/or helplessness,
- Pains, headaches, or stomach aches that do not improve with treatment, and/or
- Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" feelings.

Are alcohol or drugs making your life unmanageable?

Depression and use of alcohol and/or drugs often go together. Getting help for your depression may help with your alcohol and/or drug issues.

What can mental health counseling do for you?

Dealing with issues that are bothering you may improve the situation and make you feel less worried, anxious or upset. Counseling services are available to assist you with different types of problems.

A Therapist or Counselor will be able to help you:

- Clarify a problem – some situations are difficult, understanding the issues can help
- Make a Plan - action steps that can be taken to resolve the issue
- Handle a crisis – help you look at available choices and the one that's right for you

Many concerns can be resolved quickly in a few visits; for issues that are more difficult, a counselor can set up a special plan just for you and spend time to help you resolve the problem.

Amida Care Members are eligible to receive the care they need, included weekly therapy visits.

Why is it especially important for persons living with HIV to pay attention to their mental health?

Research suggests that treating mental distress can improve survival and slow the progression of HIV.

Where can you get help?

Some people may feel uneasy about seeing a Therapist or Counselor for personal problems. However, at some point in their lives, most people are faced with problems that they need help with. Having a personal problem does not mean "I am having a nervous breakdown" or "I am crazy" or "I'm a failure." **Getting help is a sign of strength.** You can call Amida Care

Behavioral Health Staff

at **1-646-786-8650**

and ask for assistance with finding an experienced professional. Our staff will help you find the provider that's right for you!

Sources: www.mayoclinic.com,
www.thebody.com, www.nmha.org,
www.who.int.



NEW OFFICE IN THE BRONX!!

Amida Care is excited to announce
a new branch office that opened July 1st at:
1171 Washington Avenue, Bronx, NY 10456
646-545-2584

Our new Bronx Borough Manager, Socrates Caba (formerly Director of the Bronx HIV Care Network) and his staff of member service representatives are now available to assist our Bronx members closer to home! If you want to meet with a member service representative, please call first (@ 646-545-2584) so we can have someone available for you!

Free and Confidential STD Clinics



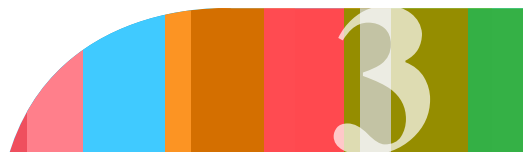
The New York City Health Dept. provides free and confidential clinics that test for HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.

New Service at the Manhattanville Renaissance STD Clinic:

“QUICK BIC” SYPHILIS Prevention Treatment for men who have sex with men. Ask at the Triage Desk for more information. Get a penicillin injection with BIC (Bicillin) that will treat syphilis before symptoms appear and receive a syphilis test.

What To Expect During a Visit to an HIV/STD Clinic

- Eat before your clinic visit. It is not necessary to fast before testing
- You will be asked to fill out a form with information about yourself and your reasons for coming to the clinic.
- Your medical records are confidential, meaning no one has access to them except authorized Health Department personnel.
- Your form will have a number and you will be called by that number throughout your clinic visit to ensure your confidentiality.
- During registration, you will be called and seen by clinicians. Please give all the information about your health and medical history so that we can provide you with the best medical and counseling services.
- During the medical exam, a clinician will take specimens, some of which will be tested at our on-site lab. A microbiologist will perform the lab tests and share the results with your doctor.
- If indicated by those results, you will receive medication before you depart the clinic.
- Some specimens though may be sent to an outside lab for testing. The clinic staff will let you know how and when to get those results so you can come in for additional treatment and follow-up if required.



For further information on obtaining Hepatitis Vaccinations please visit the NYC Department of Health's website at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/imm/immclin.shtml> or call 311 to find one located near you.

Scheduling Information

STD Clinics accept patients from 8:30am – 3:00pm. Patients are serviced on a first come, first served basis. No appointment is necessary. The number of patients admitted to each clinic depends on the number of clinician hours per day, which is different in each site each day. Thus, the STD clinic may at times, need to halt patient intake earlier than 3pm.

NOTE: Minors do NOT need parental consent for exams and treatment. For more information, call 311. These clinics are located in all five boroughs, with some having Saturday hours.

Source: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/std/std2.shtml>



Need Help from **AMIDACARE?**

If you need help from the Plan, the best thing to do is to call our toll free member services @ **1-800-556-0689**. Someone answers this number 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

But if you really need to talk to someone in person, please call us at **646-786-1800**, to make an appointment before coming to the Amida Care office. We want to be sure that we have the right person available to meet with you and help you. If you drop in, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to give you the time and attention that you may need. Thank you!



Injury Prevention for

CHILDREN AGES

Birth to Ten

Birth to 6 Months

Make certain that your baby's car safety seat is installed correctly. Read and follow the instructions that come with the car safety seat and the sections in the owners' manual of your car. Use the car safety seat EVERY time your child is in the car.

6 to 12 Months

Use gates on stairways and doors. Install operable window guards on all windows above the first floor. Do not use a baby walker. If your child has a serious fall or does not act normally after a fall, call your doctor.

1 to 2 Years

Children in homes where guns are present are in more danger of being shot by themselves, their friends, or family members than of being injured by an intruder. Ask if the homes where your child visits or is cared for have guns and how they are stored.

2 to 4 Years

Keep safety caps on at all times or find nontoxic substances to use. If your child does put something poisonous in his or her mouth, call the Poison Help Line immediately. Attach the Poison Help Line number (1-800-222-1222) to your phone

5 Years

At age 5, your child is learning to do many things that can cause serious injury... bike, street, fire, car, firearm, and water safety are key. Even if your child knows how to swim, never let him or her swim alone.

6 Years

At age 6, children aren't good at judging sound, distance, or the speed of a moving car. Teach your children to stop at the curb and to never cross the street without a grown-up. Make sure your child wears a helmet every time he or she rides a bike.

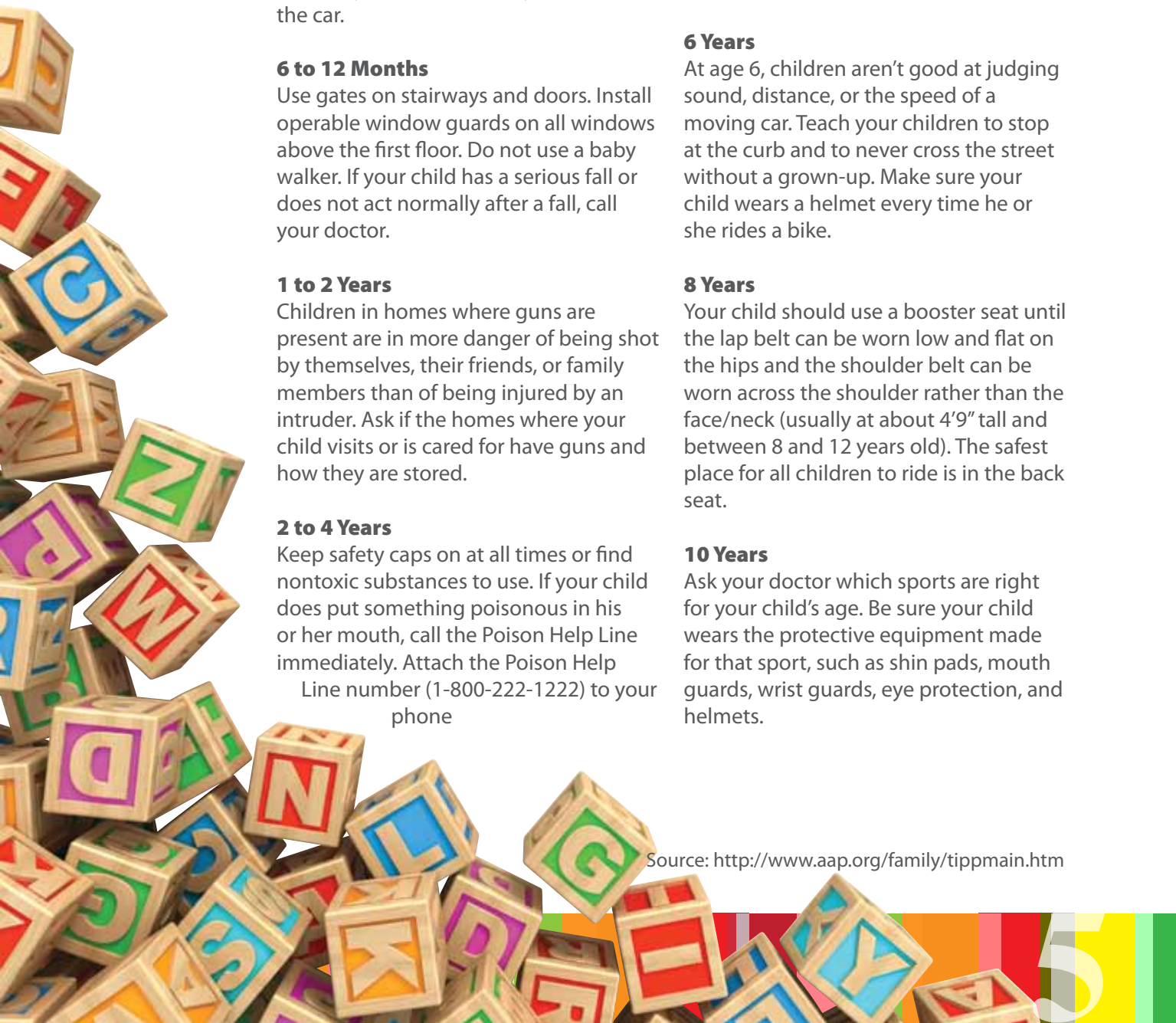
8 Years

Your child should use a booster seat until the lap belt can be worn low and flat on the hips and the shoulder belt can be worn across the shoulder rather than the face/neck (usually at about 4'9" tall and between 8 and 12 years old). The safest place for all children to ride is in the back seat.

10 Years

Ask your doctor which sports are right for your child's age. Be sure your child wears the protective equipment made for that sport, such as shin pads, mouth guards, wrist guards, eye protection, and helmets.

Source: <http://www.aap.org/family/tippmain.htm>



Why am I getting these phone calls and letters?



As soon as you join Amida Care, we must do several things to make sure that you have information about us, and we have information about you!

Telling you about us

New York Medicaid requires that we contact you to tell you how Amida Care works. This Plan orientation only takes about 10 minutes. We are required to try up to 6 times to reach you to get this done. So either a staff person from Amida Care or one of our affiliated agencies (BAS, BATF, ASC) staff will:

1. Call you; and/or
2. Send you a letter asking for a good time to call you; or if we cannot reach you by phone,
3. Come to your home to tell you about how the Plan works.

It is also very important that you take the time to learn about your Medicaid coverage under Amida Care and what special services are available to you. Understanding how Amida Care works will make it easier for you to get care. We want you to get all the health care and services that you need, so you can be as healthy as possible with the least amount of stress!

We don't recommend it, but you have the right to refuse this orientation. Remember if you don't answer our calls and don't respond to our letter, we are required to send an outreach worker to your home. The outreach worker will have photo ID and identify themselves as from "your health plan".

Telling us about you

The same agencies we work with to do the Plan orientation, may also be calling you to do a needs assessment. They will ask you about where you get care and if you are getting the case management services you need; for example, assistance with housing and entitlements.

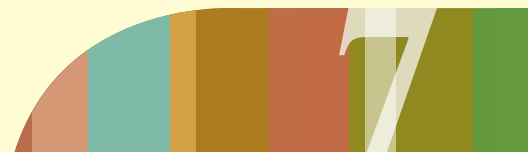
The caller will also offer you case management services if you do not already have this service or if you feel you need additional help. You do not need to switch case management providers from your current provider unless you want to.

Please take these phone calls or respond to the letters, or we will have to send an outreach worker to your home to try to complete the assessment. We are just trying to make sure that you are receiving all the services you are entitled to.

Please know that all of your personal information is kept strictly confidential by Amida Care and our affiliated agencies. Thank you for your cooperation.

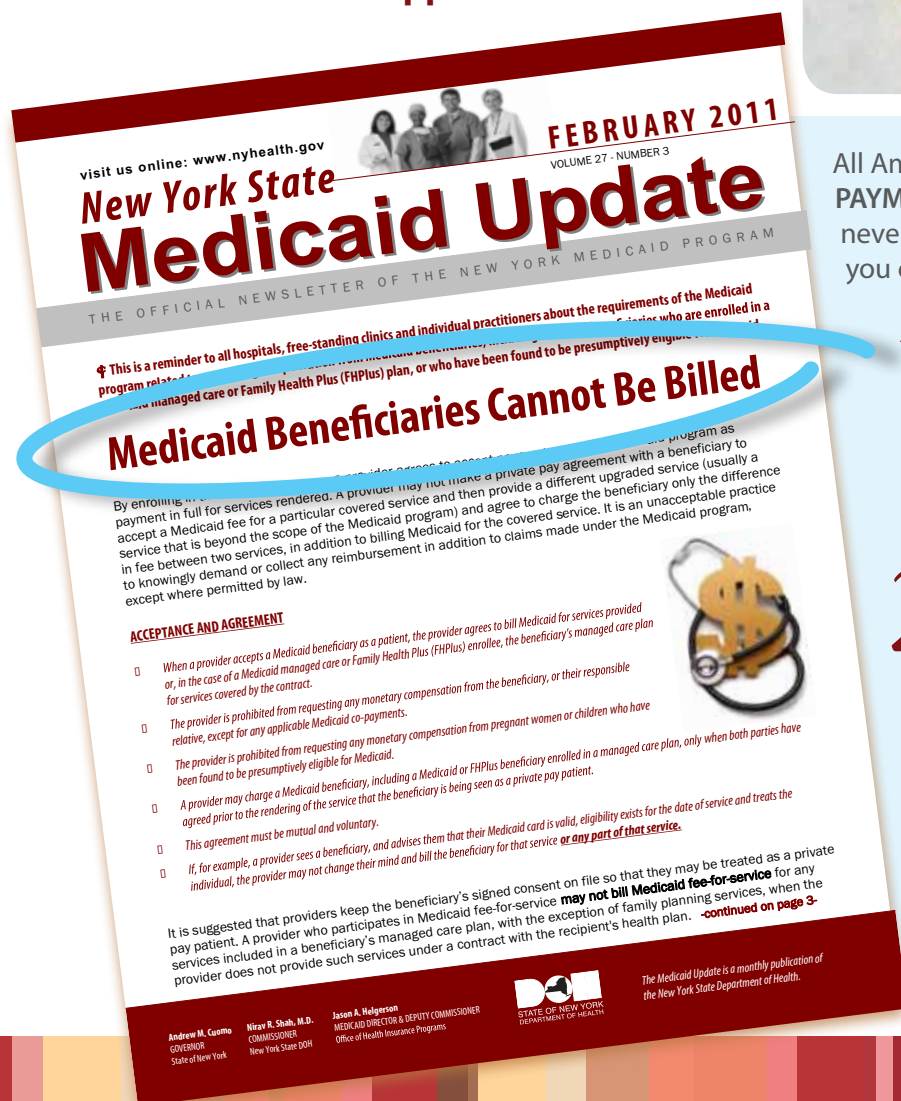
If you have any questions, please contact us at

1-800-556-0689



What should I do if I get a bill for medical or mental health services?

Providers are not supposed to bill NY Medicaid recipients. Providers were reminded of this in a recent edition of the NY Medicaid Update. However, we know it still happens.



All Amida Care Providers agree to accept **FULL PAYMENT** from us, and they also agree to never bill you. If a provider sends you a bill, you can either:

1 Call Member Services at 1-800-556-0689 and our staff will get the provider on the phone and tell them how to bill us and request they stop billing you; or

2 Fax or mail the bills to us and we will contact the provider.
• Our address is 248 West 35th St.
7th flr New York, NY 10001
• Our fax # is 1-646-786-1837

If you receive bills or letters, or you don't understand something, remember you can call us 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at 1-800-556-0689 to get the help that you need!

www.amidacareny.org

updates

As part of our ongoing efforts to better serve you, we added two new features to our website, www.amidacareny.org. The first one is our new provider search. Need to find a new primary care provider or specialist? No problem.. This online tool allows you to search by name (first or last) or by specialty and gives you the address and contact information of the provider.

We also added a video gallery that explains clearly and simply what Amida Care is, how the program works, and how to enroll, providing answers to FAQs and guidance to help you

benefit the most as an Amida Care Member. You can also hear from other plan members about their experience with Amida Care, its providers and life enhancing programs.

Each video is offered in English and Spanish. For your convenience, a video transcript can also be read and printed in English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Chinese, and Russian.

Visit www.amidaaareny.org and take advantage of these new features.



IMPORTANT!

Effective August 1, 2011, Amida Care will be providing the Personal Care/Home Attendant benefit

This service will be included as part of your HIV SNP benefit package. Your Personal Care/Home Attendant Benefit must be provided by an agency that has a contract with our plan.

Please note that Personal Care/Home Attendant Services

- Must be ordered by your Primary Care Provider (PCP).
- Must be medically necessary.
- Provide some or total assistance with personal hygiene, dressing and feeding, assisting in preparing meals and housekeeping.
- Services must be important to keeping you healthy and safe in your own home.

It's important to understand that there are two different types of home care service available to persons with Medicaid in New York City.

1 Personal Care Services, also known as the Home Attendant program. This type of home care provides unskilled, custodial care in the home. It is for people with physical or mental impairments that interfere with their ability to independently perform activities of daily living, such as walking or bathing. Home attendant services may be provided for an extended period of time if the member meets certain qualifications. Amida Care will begin paying for this service on August 1, 2011.

In addition, if you should ever need a higher level care, Amida Care also covers skilled home care.

2 Skilled Home Care Services from a Certified Home Health Agency (CHHA), provides Home Health Aide and/skilled care from a nurse or therapist. This kind of home care is generally provided for a short or limited amount of time while someone is recovering from an illness or injury. Amida Care has always covered this service for eligible members.

If you have any questions about this benefit, you can call the Amida Care Member Services Department at 1-800-556-0689.

Sources: New York State Department of Health, http://www.nyc.gov/html/hra/html/directory/personal_care.shtml, <http://wnylc.com/health/entry/7/>



Healthy Member Rewards Program

Eligibility: Member may receive up to \$75 per year for attending their initial and HIV monitoring visits (Section II), annual reproductive health visit (Section III) and case management assessment (Section IV).

Please complete the below information, including PCP, Specialist or Case Manager signature (Section IV and return to Amida Care via fax (646-786-1837) or mail (248 West 35th Street, 7th flr., New York, NY 10001).

Section I Member Information

Name: _____ CIN#: _____
Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Primary Phone: (____) _____ Other Phone: (____) _____

Section II Primary Care Provider Initial Assessment (\$10) /Viral Monitoring Visit Information (\$10/quarter)

PCP Name: _____ Site/Facility: _____
Phone: (____) _____ Fax: (____) _____
Date of visit: _____

Please check all completed activities below.

- ☐ CD4 Result _____ ☐ Viral Load Result _____
☐ Mental Health Screen _____ ☐ Substance Abuse Screen _____

F/U PCP visit scheduled for _____

Section III Annual Health Screening Visit Information (\$25 /year)

Provider Name: _____ Site/Facility: _____
Phone: (____) _____ Fax: (____) _____
☐ GYN Exam done Date: _____ ☐ PAP smear (anal) done Date: _____
☐ STD Screening done Date: _____ ☐ Safety/Prevention Issues, including safe sex, discussed
☐ PAP smear (cervical) done Date: _____ ☐ Mammogram done Date: _____

Section IV Case Management Assessment (\$10/ year)

☐ Assessment done Date: _____ Agency _____

Section V The above mentioned patient has completed their visit as described

Provider Name (Print): _____

Provider Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please mail or fax (646-786-1837) this form to:

Amida Care Member Services @ 248 West 35th St. 7th flr. New York, NY 10001

Assurance Wireless Offers Free Wireless Phone Service



New York residents may qualify if they participate in eligible government programs

Assurance Wireless is part of Lifeline Assistance program, which offers discounted telephone service to eligible participants across the USA. The program offers eligible customers a FREE wireless phone and 250 FREE minutes of nationwide wireless voice service each month. The service includes free voicemail account, call waiting and caller id.

The 250 FREE minutes each month are for local and domestic long-distance calling only. There are no bills, long-term contracts, activation fees, recurring fees, or surcharges for Assurance Wireless customers. Lifeline Assistance is only available on one phone line per household.

New York residents may qualify for Assurance Wireless if they participate in any of the following government programs:

- Medicaid
- Food Stamps/SNAP
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance (FPHA) or Section 8

- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- National School Lunch Program's Free Lunch Program

You may also qualify based on household income.

You can also choose to increase the number of minutes and the services available to you by paying a monthly fee. For \$5 a month you get 250 extra minutes, for a total of 500 minutes of voice service a month. Assurance Wireless also have a \$20 monthly plan that offers a total of 1000 minutes and 1000 text messages a month. You can pay with a credit card, debit card, PayPal account, or a Virgin Mobile Top-Up card that you can buy at stores across the country.

For more information, to see if you qualify or to apply please call Assurance Wireless at 1-888-898-4888 and an advisor will be happy to assist you.

Source: www.assurancewireless.com

Mental Health Care

a roundtable discussion



In mid-June, we had the opportunity to come together with a group of Amida Care members to discuss mental health care, its importance and the stigma associated with it that still exists. The conversation was enlightened, passionate and on many occasions full of joy and laughter. Thanks so very much to Jimmy, Melvelyn, Luis, Mary, Clinton and Allen for your openness, generosity and the courage to share your experiences with us.

Melvelyn

Member since 2008

Melvelyn has been receiving therapy for about 5 years. It has made a great difference in her life. She suffered from severe depression for many years, and although she was aware of it, she was reluctant to seek help. The stigma associated with mental health services, the label “crazy” that so many people associate with therapy, stopped her from reaching out. When her physician recommended that she make an appointment with a social worker or psychiatrist, she decided to look for the help she knew she needed.



Jimmy

Member since 2004

For Jimmy, his experience with mental health has been somewhat different. For years he has been part of support groups, recovery programs and

other therapeutic environments, but he never had one-on-one therapy with a mental health provider. Usually he is a person who handles his own problems, he is his own therapist and life is generally good and balanced. But last year, life presented him with many challenges at the same time. He was having problems with his housing, and needed to move, his mother was very ill and needed to be moved from her nursing home, and he was also facing an emotionally draining court case. Jimmy was going through a medical malpractice trial that revealed to him for the first time the extent of the damage and neglect caused to him by a surgeon, which left him with the loss of a leg. “I know there was malpractice, but I was not aware of the extent of the harm that has been done to me,” said Jimmy. “It was a very trying time.”

His case manager suggested that he see a therapist to help him in this particularly difficult time. He saw his therapist three times, which helped him release the emotional pressure that was building up inside of him.



Luis

Member since 2008

After finding out that he was HIV positive, Luis became very depressed. He suffered from severe mood swings. The situation became more stressful after he started taking HIV medication. The stress became panic spells and anxiety. He sees his therapist once a week.

"I am very happy I am in therapy," Luis shared with us. He was diagnosed with manic depression, panic attacks and anxiety. After trying a few medications with a doctor's supervision he found a regimen that successfully helps him manage his mental health issues. He has been in treatment for 5 years now.

The stigma of seeking mental health services stopped him in the beginning. Like many of us, Luis said to himself - "I do not need a therapist... I am OK... I am not crazy... I can do it alone." He then realized that living in NYC in itself could be very stressful, and that every one would benefit from some kind of mental health strategy to release stress from their busy daily lives.



Mary

Member since 2005

"I have been seeing a therapist since I was a child," Mary started telling us. Her parents deserted her and at 13 she decided to go on her own. When she found out in her 50's that she has HIV, she started seeing a therapist at Promesa, an HIV services provider in NYC.

Mary fully understands and embraces the importance of her mental health when managing her HIV and her life. Her big challenge now is to start anew with a new therapist, since the departure of her therapist from Promesa. She had been seeing this therapist for about 5 years. She is optimistic about starting with a new provider but also very open with her feelings of stress about the change. She said, "I know that change is a good thing in life but I just hate having to change doctors my providers and having to start over again." She is aware of the stress, but luckily she had learned to cope with it, and she also has other healthy strategies to manage it.



"When you use drugs your feelings are all inside," added Mary. "Your only concern is your next hit. I have been clean for 15 years, a long time, but I still have a lot of feelings inside that need to come out. Therapy does help, because it could give me an answer that will help me understand."

For Mary mental health treatment has been a positive force in her life. "I did not have a child's life, a teen's life, I did not have an adult's life, now I am turning 62, and now I am having a good life."

Allen

Member since 2003

Allen is a member of a day treatment program at Village Care. There he has access to meals, treatment, groups and workshops, recreation activities, trips, movies, etc. They have care plans, where the clients and the providers come together to create a strategy to respond proactively to each client's needs. One of the services they provide is therapy, which was recommended to him when creating his own personal care plan. "I live a full life. I am a community organizer, a member of Amida Care's MAC (Member Advisory Committee) and Village Care CAB (Client Advisory Board). I am also a basketball and baseball sport official," stated Allen. At the time when he started therapy he was in the process of bringing his 15-year-old daughter to New York from the South. Life was hectic and stressful. Like many of us, he always tries to work things out on his own. "In my work as a community organizer, I saw the advantage of not trying to do everything on your own, and getting support from others," he added. "I saw this as an opportunity to get some support." He told us that he tends to stay in his head and considers therapy a wonderful environment to not only to get out of one's head but also to open up. "As men we tend to suppress our emotions so it seems like another opportunity to practice more emotional development."

One thing that helped Allen considerably to get

therapy was the fact that it was very accessible, since it was provided on-site by his day treatment program. "For middle class and upper middle class, it seems easier to access therapy but for us it seems a little more difficult. Accessibility is an issue, it could cost a lot of money if it is not part of a program."





Clinton

Member since 2006

Clinton is a survivor of the World Trade Center attack. This tragedy deeply affected him, more than he realized. He always saw himself as a tough guy that could handle anything. He learned he was not that tough. He could not sleep, could not sit still. Life was becoming a nightmare. He thought he was losing his mind. Like many men, it was difficult for him to ask for help. As a young kid his dad used to tell him that a man does not need anyone; that a man can take care of himself. "It's a lot of garbage but I believed that," he explained.

As a direct result of the emotional trauma of 9/11 he started doing drugs. He told us about an incident that made him realize he needed help. "It's a funny story," he said with a smile. "I was at home watching TV with a lady-friend. I was looking at Miss Piggy, the muppet, on a TV program, with a beautiful woman next to me. I kept staring at Miss Piggy and having these crazy thoughts. That's a very beautiful pig! That's when I realized that I have a big problem!" he said laughing. "I sent the lady home. I went to Montefiore Hospital and sat there until someone would talk to me." He waited

there all night. Finally, a gentleman came to talk to Clinton but it did not work out well. Fortunately, a nurse from the same hospital recommended that he call HELP/PSI, a non-for-profit organization providing treatment and health services to people living with HIV. He made an appointment and has been receiving services there ever since.

The many sides of mental health

For many of us the phrase "mental health" invokes images of a long couch where we lay down and talk about our problems to a quiet, listening professional with glasses, notepad and pen, scribbling observations as we relay our story; or of a desperate patient battling multiple personalities. Although that may describe the reality for some of us, these days mental health services cover a variety of practices and therapeutic environments that can help us better cope with life, our experiences and our challenges. This became evident when we discussed the individual strategies employed to maintain an optimum and balanced mental, emotional and spiritual health.

Although his experience with one-on-one therapy is limited, Jimmy shared with us that he goes daily to some kind of therapeutic group, either at his day treatment program or a recovery meeting, and that is a very important part of his healthy life strategy.

"My dog Bandit is part of my therapy," continued Mary. She has had Bandit since he was six weeks old. When life gets stressful it fills her with joy to know that her beloved Bandit will be waiting for her at home. "He jumps on me, so happy, licking me - that to me is therapy. He takes my stress away." She wants to enroll Bandit in service dog training, so that she can share the joy that gentle, loving animals can bring to others. She has witnessed that at Promesa. On the occasions when she brought her Shih Tzu to the facility, many thanked her for the moment of joy and release that her little dog brought them.



Mary also reminded us of the importance of community and social interaction for our mental health. She makes the point of knowing, interacting with and helping her neighbors, at times assuming the role of “auntie” for the young ones on her street.

New technology can also help us stay in touch and strengthen the human bond. Mary has a friend who sends her inspirational messages everyday. Today she sent Mary a beautiful image of a rose with a simple but warm “Good Morning” for a message. It brightened her day, and she knew that it would make others feel better also, so she forwarded it to her friends. Knowing that others care is very healing.

For Luis, a multi-approach strategy works best: one-on-one therapy on a regular basis, prescribed medication to control his anxiety, regular visits to his day treatment program and drug recovery groups. “For me, it’s about finding yourself and how to change. It’s not just about talking. One can talk, talk, talk ..., but one also has to do the work and learn to cope and manage one’s life,” he added.

“I also have a dog, she is my life,” he continued. “I go to the park and play with all the dogs. They call me the ‘Dog Whisperer of the East Village.’ The dogs cry for me when they see me. That makes me feel good. If I am stressed, I know that I have to take my dog Harlow to the park, and that makes me release the stress immediately.” Luis also finds joy and connection in talking to all the dog owners at the park.

For Allen, therapy comes in many forms. He mentioned that shopping is therapeutic for some, we all agreed with a big laugh, but we also agreed that this strategy could cost us economical problems when not handled with control! After the laughs, he shared his more important aim when accessing mental health services. He strives for mental and emotional growth. Personal development is very important to him. “The society we live in is very stressful,” added Allen. “I will go as far as to say that is very oppressive, and that it destroys lives.” He believes that many people are

just surviving. He wants to do better than survive, for him surviving is not living. He wants to live with quality of life.

He plays basketball to help release stress, and enjoys group therapy, which he considers a good alternative to one-on-one therapy. Another type of therapy that he has found helpful is known as postmodern therapy, which he considers less restrictive than conventional therapy. (*See sidebar*).

Cooking is a form of therapy for Clinton. Nature also plays an important role in his strategy. He grew up in the Caribbean, on the side of a mountain. Getting lost in the forest is a very joyful way to relax, a very powerful form of therapy for him. His adventurous spirit inspires him to confront his fears, like when he parachuted from an airplane. He found the experience liberating, energetic and very therapeutic.

“Meditation, prayer, yoga, deep breathing, all these things help me come back to self,” added Melvelyn. “They give me a chance to look back on all the things I have accomplished.” Her day treatment program offers a variety of therapeutic services including art therapy, which she enjoys immensely. She also likes to write about her feelings and the challenges she is going through at the moment. This practice is known as journaling and it could be a very powerful tool for self-healing. “Today is my eighth month of being clean,” she added. While before she will use drugs when stressed, now she feels she has healthier options to deal with it, along with one-on-one therapy and medication. “When I start getting stressed I look for other things to do, like draw it out, write about it and read it later, and pray for strengths because I know I can’t do it by myself.”

Helping others is therapeutic for Jimmy, “A way of therapy for me is to give “therapy” to others, to listen to others.” While helping and listening to others he has discovered that he is also helping himself. In addition, he credits his spirituality for helping him keep a healthy attitude.



Spirituality

Faith and positive beliefs can give us strength, perspective and clarity in our day to day lives and when facing life's challenges.

For Melvyn, just having faith, believing that there is something bigger than her, makes a positive difference. "I can talk, talk, talk, until I am blue in the face but when I sit by myself, I am just quiet, and just listen, I am open to some kind of input from the energy of the earth. Sometimes I get stressed for the silliest things, like when a bus driver just closed the door and drives off." In moments like this she reminds herself that another bus is coming. She stops, relaxes, takes a deep breath, and knows that everything will be OK.

Forgiveness is important for Jimmy. He strives not to harbor hard feelings and to forgive others. His spirituality plays a very important role in accomplishing that.

"I say my prayers, and talk to God like I am talking to you," added Luis. He used to complain about life and its challenges but now he believes that complaining will not solve anything. That is why he keeps a gratitude list - to learn to be more grateful for what he has. Luis also gave up putting super human expectations on himself. "I do not have to be perfect, I do not need to have all the answers. I have Google if I need an answer," he stated while laughing.

"I am very spiritual, I believe in God in my own way," said Mary. "I know that there is a God out there. When you do good things for others, you always get rewarded. To me God is good, and It's all the time."

Allen believes that many equate spirituality with religion. "I am very spiritual but I am not very religious. I feel there is more than the self, that more is manifested in the human spirit." For him spirituality is the special feeling that you get when giving, or that gratitude we experience for

Postmodern Therapy

The word postmodern implies "deconstruction" or reinterpretation of the existing mold. Postmodern therapy is a new look at the field of psychology. In postmodern therapy the therapist tries to create a treatment plan more personalized to the needs and realities of the client. Conventional therapy tends to follow the methods and practices of a particular psychological school more strictly. The practitioners of postmodern therapy attempt to decrease authority, while forming a less strict relationship between the patient and therapist. There are three separate styles of postmodern therapy: narrative therapy, solution-focused therapy, collaborative language system.

1. Narrative Therapy: This form of postmodern therapy is based on two principles; "that we give meaning and significance to life experiences based on the culture we grew up with or live in" and that "our view of the world is shaped through... the process of interpreting (our life's) experiences."

2. Solution Focused Therapy: Solution Focused Therapy encourages the patient to transform his/her problems into solutions. This unconventional method believes that whatever has worked for the patient in the past, will work now.

3. Collaborative Language System: This form of therapy is very similar to the more common in-office practice. The therapist and the patient attempt to "take apart" problems and issues through conversations. This laid back approach, allows the patient to feel more comfortable and open up.

Source: www.counselor.org/postmodern.html

what we do for others that is so very gratifying. He continued, "I committed my life to doing that, because that is what Jesus did. He was a great organizer; his organizing still goes on today." With that aim he tries to give tools to others that will help them to grow and develop so that they can have a good life. He added, "In our culture some are rewarded for stepping on other people. I share tactics with others to improve their lives."

"I have always been a spiritual person, I know that there is something more powerful than me. I was into drugs for two years, nine months, three weeks and two days, and I consumed enough cocaine to kill five people. When I think about that, I get on my knees and thank God that I am still in one piece," stated Clinton.

He is at the point in his life where he knows himself better. "I've gotten to know what I want, and how not to do the things that I should not be doing." His work allows him to extend a helping hand to others. "They actually call later and say thank you. That makes me feel really, really good. I look forward to coming here and reaching these people." Clinton takes pride in his accomplishments, in the challenges he has overcome. "There is no better feeling than feeling and living like a human being," he concluded.

Stigma

For Mary, a therapist helps her heal her heart, mind, body and soul, which leads to a great sense of wellbeing. She recommends to others to get therapy besides getting medical treatment, because it makes a big difference. "You do not have to be crazy, life is crazy by itself. Everybody needs help."

For Luis, stigma is losing its grip. Now we have lots of commercials about depression, anxiety and other aspects of mental health, which raises awareness. He feels that makes it easier for people to ask for the help they need.

For Jimmy, people should experience stigma for their self-destructive behaviors like continuing smoking although it's expensive and very harmful to our health, or drinking to the point of drunkenness and sickness and then repeating the behavior a few days later. "To say 'I feel nervous, and stressed, I need help ...'; that is not stigma, that is being wise," stated Jimmy.

Clinton feels similar to Jimmy, for him the stigma is not asking for help. "If you have a problem, and you want help, you should ask for it. It took me three years to ask for help, knowing all along that I needed it. When I did - look at me now! I am about to graduate from NYU, I am employed at Amida Care, I am part of the Bronx AIDS Network. I am having a hell of a good time, because I needed help and I asked for it."

"Stigma is powerful and strong, and it's out there," Allen began telling us. He invites us to think differently about what mental health is. "Don't look at it as getting help because you are crazy, but getting the kind of support that you need to grow mentally and emotionally so that you can have more in your life."

We know the power that stigma could have on us. We all have been affected negatively by worrying about what others may think. We need to overcome giving power to others over our lives and wellbeing. As Melvyn put it very profoundly, "Those who judge do not matter, and those that matter don't judge."



Summer Celebration Party!

Thursday, August 11, 2011

4:00pm – 7:00pm

Rivington House

ROOF TOP GARDEN

45 Rivington Street

New York, NY 10002

Seats are limited

RSVP Required

Call

1-800-556-0689

Members Only

**Live DJ, Gift Bags,
Raffles, MetroCards,
Superb Summer Food
and Drinks.**

**Fun Stuff For The
Young At Heart**

**You do not
want
to miss
this one!**

directions

Take the F train and get off at 2nd Avenue. Exit near intersection of ALLEN St. and E HOUSTON St. Start out going West on E HOUSTON ST towards ELDRIDGE St. Turn left onto ELDRIDGE St. Turn right onto RIVINGTON St. Arrive at 45 RIVINGTON St.

With An Incredible View Of The Manhattan Skyline!

Upcoming Amida Care Live Your Life Events

SALSA!

Tuesday, July 26th

3:00 - 5:00 pm

El Faro East

179 East 116th St, 3rd Floor, NY, NY 10035

AMIDA CARE SUMMER CELEBRATION!

(see inside back cover for all the details)

Thursday, August 11th

4:00 - 7:00 pm

For members only

THE ARTIST IN YOU!

**Just in time for our annual art
contest/member calendar!**

Wednesday, September 14th

3:00 - 5:00 pm

Housing Works East New York

2640 Pitkin Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11208

Wednesday, September 21st

3:00 - 5:00 pm

Project Samaritan

1545 Inwood Avenue, Bronx, NY 10452



**Please call
Member Services
at 1-800-556-0689
for information about
these or future events.**