

For Immediate Release

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Senator Hoylman-Sigal and Assemblymember Rosenthal Join Amida Care and Ryan Chelsea-Clinton for Celebration of Pride Month and National HIV Testing Day

One in eight people living with HIV do not know they have a positive diagnosis

*Elected officials, advocates join together to raise awareness and encourage New
Yorkers to get tested for HIV*

Click [here](#) to see photos from the event

(New York, N.Y.) – On Thursday, NYS Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal and NYS Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal joined Amida Care, a not-for-profit New York community health plan, and Ryan Chelsea-Clinton, a community health center, along with advocates and members of the community for a press conference and special event ahead of National HIV Testing Day. The elected officials and advocates encouraged New Yorkers to get tested for HIV, know their status, and get linked to care and treatment.

The press conference was part of an all-day event hosted by Amida Care at Ryan Chelsea-Clinton featuring free and confidential HIV testing, free home HIV testing kits, LGBTQ+ health resources, a presentation on the importance of getting tested, and information about PrEP—a game-changing treatment that has proven to reduce the risk of getting HIV from sex by about 99 percent.

There are more than 1.2 million people in the United States living with HIV. The goal is zero new infections. To get there, everyone should get tested and know their status. HIV testing, PEP treatment (post-exposure medication taken to prevent HIV) and PrEP usage are critical to ending the epidemic in New York, especially among populations most deeply affected by HIV—particularly communities of color and LGBTQ communities, including communities of color and transgender women.

State Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal said, “This Pride, we are fighting back against the rising bigotry in our nation by celebrating, louder than ever, the beauty and diversity of the LGBTQ community. There have been 525 anti-LGBTQ bills introduced in legislatures across the country

just this year. We must work to protect each other. In this legislative session, the New York State legislature acted to protect LGBTQ elders, to protect trans youth and their physicians from bigoted laws in other states, and to ensure access to medications for New Yorkers living with or seeking to prevent HIV/AIDS. Amida Care and Ryan Health are protecting our community by providing free HIV testing and other health resources. All of these efforts make New York the beacon for LGTBQ rights it is today.”

Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal said, “For decades, there was stigma, shame, and bigotry for how Americans viewed the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and while a lot of that is past history, it’s still present. People need to be accepted for who they are, no matter how they identify or who they love. We need to be as vigilant as ever, and just as you don’t want to get the flu or COVID, get tested for HIV and get treatment.”

“Ryan Chelsea-Clinton has been at the forefront of preventing and treating HIV and AIDS since we opened our doors in 2001. As the number of new infections rise in New York City, it is vitally important that people know their HIV status, get treated if they are positive, and access PrEP and PEP if they are not to prevent infection,” said **Daniel Pichinson**, Executive Director of Ryan Chelsea-Clinton. “We are grateful to partner with Amida Care, Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal, and Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal to raise awareness of the importance of getting tested for HIV in observance of National HIV Testing Day and during Pride Month.”

“Pride Month is a time to celebrate the LGBTQ+ community, and we’re here today to recognize National HIV Testing Day—a day to encourage people to get tested for HIV, know their status, and get linked to care and treatment. Getting tested for HIV to know your status is the first step to wellness,” said **Sandrine Blake**, Assistant Director of Member Events at Amida Care.

“Amida Care is proud to connect New Yorkers impacted by HIV with quality, whole person care so they can live healthy and fulfilled lives, and we can end the epidemic in New York once and for all.”

“I am a proud gay man who has lived with HIV for over a decade. Talking about my HIV status is important to break down stigma and help others like me who were once scared to have hope for the future. Getting tested to know your HIV status gives you the power to take control of your health and live your best life.” said Jeffrey Feliz-Ybes, an Amida Care member and Community Health Outreach Worker.

New York State has made enormous strides toward ending the HIV epidemic. But progress has been uneven, with LGBTQ+ communities and communities of color disproportionately impacted by the epidemic. According to data released in 2021 by the New York State AIDS Institute, more than 75% of New Yorkers living with HIV are people of color – nearly half of New Yorkers living with HIV are Black, and one-third are Latinx.

HIV testing in New York City slowed during the pandemic. In 2020, only 46% of New Yorkers had gotten tested, compared with 53% in 2019. While testing is increasing again, it is important to continue to engage communities most impacted by HIV, particularly communities of color and LGBTQ+ communities, and encourage people to know their status.

Amida Care Inc. is a not-for-profit health plan that specializes in providing comprehensive health coverage and coordinated care to New Yorkers with complex conditions, including HIV and behavioral health disorders, and people who are of transgender experience or homeless (regardless of HIV status). Amida Care has a wide network of healthcare 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.

Ryan Health is a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) based in Manhattan that has been providing high-quality, comprehensive and affordable primary and specialty care to New York's diverse and underserved communities since 1967. For more information, visit <https://ryanhealth.org>.

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