



Public Policy & Government Relations Update

April 2025

Volume 1: Issue 2

Summary

The Public Policy and Government Relations (PPGR) department remains actively engaged in efforts to advance Amida Care’s policy priorities. We are doing our part in a national effort to push back against an increasingly uncertain federal landscape. This update provides an overview of challenges, progress and opportunities for action to protect Medicaid, gender affirming care (GAC) and federal funding that supports the HIV care delivery system. As you read this update, we invite you to join us in taking sustained action.

Priorities

PPGR’s overriding priority continues to be protecting access to care for our members. The ongoing federal attacks on public health, gender-affirming care and Medicaid are of utmost concern. Since our last report, the federal public health infrastructure is facing increasing attacks including efforts to restructure the Department of Health and Human Services in ways that jeopardize staffing and funding that supports efforts to address HIV including prevention, treatment and research.

The PPGR team is leveraging our membership in national and state level coalitions to push back by calling on the Trump administration and Congress to stop the cuts, and for our state leaders to plan ahead to preserve access to the HIV care delivery system.

PPGR was engaged in strategy meetings, a panel discussion at AIDS United AIDS Watch and congressional meetings in Washington D.C. from March 31 – April 1st. We also continue to participate in rallies and meetings with our state legislators. We have also been engaged with Communications so that the plan is voicing concerns directly in the media.

Amida Care in National Coalitions

Association for Community Affiliated Plans (ACAP) (Focus - Protecting Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act)

Federal AIDS Policy Partnership (FAPP) & AIDS United Public Policy Council (PPC) (Focus - Protecting HIV Care Delivery System)

Amida Care in New York State

HIV Medicaid Coalition (Focus - Informing Providers about Threats and Opportunities for the HIV Care Delivery System)

End the HIV Epidemic (ETE) – (Focus -Ending the HIV epidemic)

NYS Public Health Plan Association (PHP) – (Focus on protecting Medicaid and health care access)

New York State Budget

The New York State budget was due on April 1, 2025. The budget is delayed because the Governor and the legislature do not agree on four policy items. The Governor would like to address these priorities before discussing the budget. A budget is not expected until later this month.

The Governor's four policy priorities are: changing New York's discover laws (state laws that prevent against wrongful convictions); changing involuntary confinement laws to allow authorities to commit mentally ill people to hospital without their consent; implement a cellphone ban in schools; and implement a ban on wearing masks in public.

The Governor and Legislature are expected to discuss a budget that does not take into consideration Federal cuts caused by the federal funding changes, which we will describe below. Our understanding is that they are waiting for a clearer picture of the scope of federal cuts before reconvening to address them.

The budget delay, while distressing, allows more time for us to advocate for our priorities. PPGR is advocating for action now instead of waiting. As previously shared, there is clear direction from the federal government that gender Affirming Care and Public Health funding, including funding for the HIV care delivery system are under threat. At the time of writing, NYS has been notified about some public health cuts. These are outlined in the sidebar.

PPGR New York State Budget

- Create a \$50 Million statewide gender affirming care contingency fund
- Strengthen NY Shield Laws to protect NY patients and providers from malicious prosecution in other states
- Increase funding for Transgender Wellness and Equity Fund

New York Public Health Funding Cuts

- Over \$300 Million in Cuts to Department of Health Programs Across the State for Vital Public Health Programming
- \$40 Million in Lost Funding for the Office of Addiction Services and Supports, Impacting Recovery Programs and Treatment for Individuals Struggling with Substance Abuse
- \$27 Million in Cuts to the Office of Mental Health's Crucial Work in Supporting New Yorkers with Mental Illness

Federal Funding Changes Could Upend HIV Care Delivery System

New York's success at addressing the HIV epidemic is largely because it built a carefully calibrated HIV care delivery system. New York is an example of how states can [weave together](#) a diverse set of funding mechanisms to maximize access to care and HIV prevention.

Medicaid, Medicare, Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program (RWHAP) grants, HIV Prevention, Ending the HIV Epidemic in the U.S. (EHE) funding, private insurance, and local and state funds work together to provide a more holistic approach to HIV care.

HIV and Public Health Funding - HHS Reorganization and cuts to HIV prevention-

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is the federal department that oversees multiple health related agencies that oversee public health programs including Medicaid, Medicare and HIV related services like Ryan White. Agencies include, among others, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Human Resources Services Administration (HRSA), Substance Use and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMSHA) and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

The Trump administration is undertaking reorganization of HHS. Changes will have major implications for public health funding that supports the HIV Care delivery system. With the reorganization, thousands of critical staff with roles in HIV prevention and managing contracts will lose their jobs. This includes a 20% reduction in CDC staff, elimination of HIV Research staff and staff who support the federal Ending the HIV Epidemic Initiative (ETE) - the ETE was initiated by the first Trump administration. In addition, billions of dollars that support public health grants are targeted for elimination.

Impacts on HIV are summarized in this [report](#) from KFF. The report consolidates information on recent HHS staff reductions, office closures, and other restructuring initiatives. It also examines how these changes could affect the nation's HIV response.

NYS Attorney General Leading Fight Against Cuts

On April 1, 2025 NYS Attorney General Leticia James and a coalition of 22 other states and the District of Columbia sued the Trump administration for the termination of \$11 Billion in federal funding, for public health, mental health and addiction initiatives – including almost \$400 million for New York.

This lawsuit is one of several led by New York's Attorney General including one pausing the GAC executive orders and cuts to research funding through the National Institute of Health.

In all cases judges have paused the Trump Administration from implementing the actions as the lawsuits make their way through the courts.

PPGR Response

Engaged in national advocacy and by meeting directly with federal legislators.

Signed onto a FAPP [letter](#) of opposition.

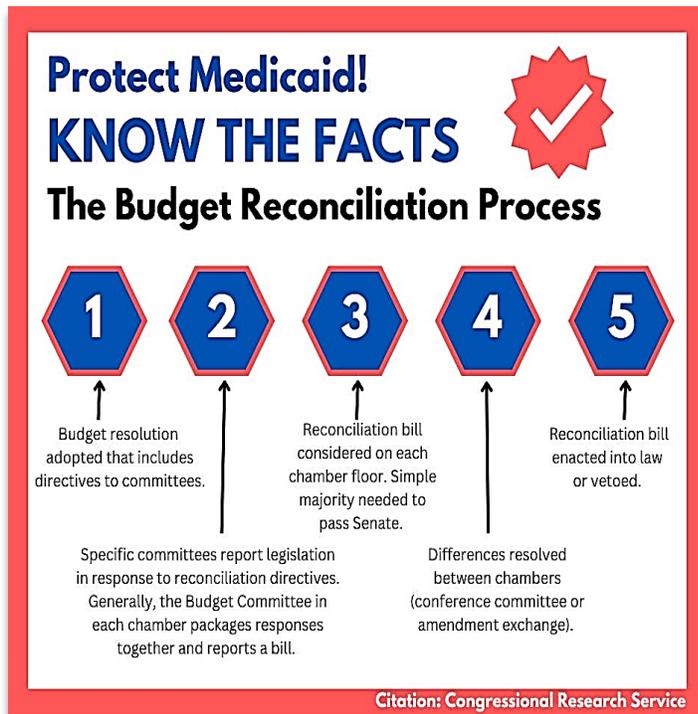
Bi-partisan Opposition to HIV Prevention cuts

Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA-43) and Rep Mike Lawler (R-NY-17) sent separate letters to HHS Secretary Kenedy urging the Administration to continue supporting the CDC's HIV prevention work as an essential part of our nation's efforts to end the HIV epidemic in this country

Gender Affirming Care (GAC)

As outlined in our March issue, the Trump administration has issued direction (executive orders) to Federal agencies to effectively eliminate federal access to and funding for Gender Affirming Care. CMS has issued memos to providers that it may take steps in the future to implement the policy. For now, GAC remains covered and thanks to leadership from New York State Attorney General Letitia James implementation of the GAC Executive Orders has been stopped by the Federal Courts.

Reconciliation Process - Still time to Prevent 880B in Cuts to Medicaid



Congress is at the very beginning of the multi-step process that must occur before cuts to Medicaid are included in the federal budget. This means we still have time to influence the outcome. The Senate and the House have agreed on the first step in the process.

The Republican controlled Congress will use a budgetary process called 'reconciliation' to enact budgetary changes, without support from Democratic members of Congress.

The reconciliation process allows passage of a budget without following the regular rules of the Senate. That said, there are strict rules for what can be included in the budget and there is a specific process that must be followed.

Headwinds against efforts to cut Medicaid

We need to sustain our efforts to push back against cuts to Medicaid. Your advocacy efforts along with Amida Care and advocates across the United States is having an impact.

Republican members of Congress we met with at AIDS Watch are hearing from constituents that Medicaid is important to them.

PPGR is joining national advocates to educate policy makers that [a cut to Medicaid is a cut to Medicare](#). 68 million older adults and people with disabilities rely on Medicare for health coverage. But for over 12 million of them, Medicaid is essential to fill coverage gaps and make Medicare affordable.

Cutting Medicaid is Increasingly Unpopular

Pollsters used by President Trump during his campaign, have issued new polls. These polls show that opposition to cutting Medicaid runs deep across the electorate, especially because of the impact on Seniors. 40% of Trump voters had a personal connection to Medicaid and 74% of all voters, including 61% of Trump voters had a favorable view of the program. Cutting the program to pay for tax cuts, as proposed by Republicans in Congress, is deeply unpopular across the political spectrum.

<https://www.politico.com/live->

Advocacy Actions - Presentations, Rallies and Other Engagement

New Pride Agenda Rally in Albany



Lyndel joined the [New Pride Agenda rally](#) at the New York State Capitol Building, on Tuesday March 25. Over 30 participants and leaders in the New York State legislature called for concrete action to protect trans health by increasing the Trans Wellness and Equity Fund, creating the gender affirming care contingency fund and passing laws to protect providers and patients against malicious prosecution. Senate Health Committee Chair Gustavo Rivera along with the following elected officials spoke strongly in support of these requests: Senators Brad Hoylman-Sigal and Jabari Brisport; Assembly Members Dr. Anna Kelles, Carlina Rivera, Jessica Gonzalez Rojas, Harvey Epstein, Harry Bronson, Linda Rosenthal and Tony Simone

The Rally received Media Coverage

in the following outlets:

- [News10 on FOX23 / News10 ABC](#)
- [Spectrum News Capital Region](#)
- [WNYT Newschannel 13](#)
- [Gay City News](#)

LGBTQ Wellness Fair

Saturday March 22, the Amida Care PPGR team participated in Hispanic Federation's LGBTQ Health Fair at the LGBT Center.

PPGR (Lyndel) joined the Amida Care GIST team (Zyrie and Em) for a presentation about access to gender affirming care.

Members Services, Health Services and PPGR provided information at the Wellness Fair



AIDS Watch Rally & Meetings in D.C.



From March 31 to April 2, the PPGR team participated in a national advocacy opportunity called AIDS Watch. We engaged in organizing discussions and met with New York’s Congressional Delegation to stop cuts to Medicaid and the HIV care delivery system.

Lyndel Urbano presented on the AIDS Watch planetary panel on Medicaid and HIV.

Garett Simmons (Health Services), Joe Pressley and Lyndel Urbano met with the offices of several members of the NYS Congressional Delegation including two members of the majority party in Congress Rep. Caludia Tenny (NY-24) and Andrew Garbarino (NY-24). We also met with Congresswoman Sarah McBride, the first openly transgender member of Congress. These were critical meetings because of the close margins of control in Congress (The majority party can only afford to lose a few votes from their ranks to pass legislation on their own).

PPGR shared data about the impact of Medicaid on the districts and the local impacts of cuts to the program. Staff listened closely and took notes when we spoke about how [a cut to Medicaid is a cut to Medicare](#) and how federal cuts would get passed down to the state and county levels. In



each of these districts close to 30% of residents depend on Medicaid and cuts would impact access to safety net-hospitals, potentially county level costs and costs thousands access to care. PPGR followed up with each office with detailed information about their respective districts.

You can use [this resource](#) from Medicaid Matters

to learn more about how Medicaid impacts the New York congressional district where you live. If you live outside of New York you can use [this KFF interactive map](#). Please use this information in your advocacy.



Take Action (Keep PPGR Informed)

Keep Telling Congress to Oppose HIV Prevention Funding Cuts

Below are some facts that will help you when speaking to your representative's office.

- Prevention provides a huge return on investment. A lifetime of medical costs for a person with HIV can be in excess of \$500,000 (adjusted for inflation).
- The flagship Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program cannot pick up the slack of these lost resources. The Program cannot cover prevention services.
- Prevention programming currently supported by CDC will either be lost completely or passed onto the states to cover. State budgets are tight, and it is likely that states cannot afford to replace these lost resources.

Call your Senators and Representatives and tell them to do everything they can to stop these cuts. Find your elected officials by calling the US Capitol Switchboard: 202-224-3121 (Senate); 202-225-3121 (House).

Help Protect Medicaid & SNAP

April is Second Chance Month – a time to recognize the importance of reentry programs and the role that Medicaid and SNAP play in helping individuals rebuild their lives after incarceration. These programs provide essential support, ensuring access to health care, including substance use disorder (SUD) and mental health treatment services, and vital food assistance, both of which are critical for successful reentry. By sharing your story, you can help protect this vital program and ensure others continue to receive the care they need.

If Medicaid has played a role in your life, or the life of someone you know, we invite you to share your story by clicking this [link](#). Record a video or upload your own, telling your personal healthcare story and why you demand Medicaid equity [here](#).

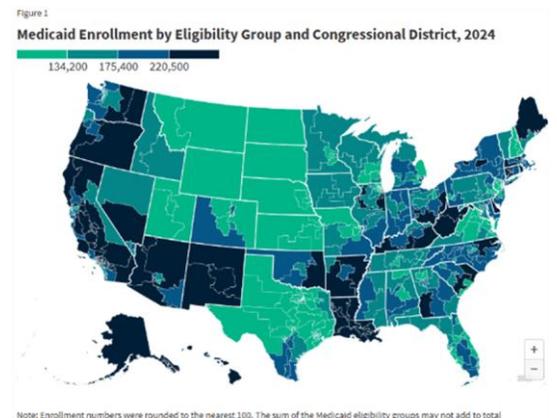
Useful Information to Share about Medicaid

District Level Impacts:

<https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/congressional-district-interactive-map-medicaid-enrollment-by-eligibility-group/>

Fact sheets about Medicaid in each NY Congressional district

<https://medicaidmattersny.org/federal-issues/>

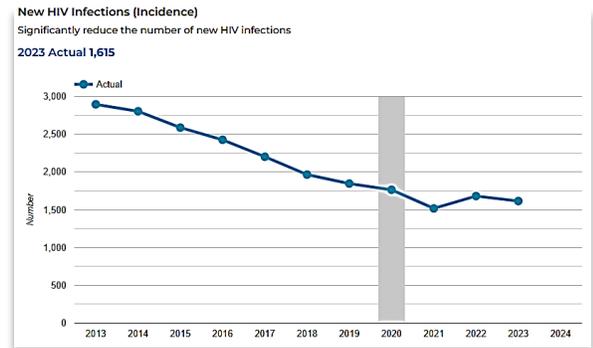


Useful Information and Links

Helpful Information About HIV & HIV Prevention

Below you will find some useful links regarding HIV prevention. The below links contain facts concerning HIV, HIV prevention and related data. This [link](#) will take you to the [Ending the AIDS Epidemic](#) website where you can find a vast amount of data on HIV infections, prevention and trends.

- [HIV.gov HIV Facts](#)
- [PrEP Fact Sheet](#)
- [AIDS in NYC Data](#)

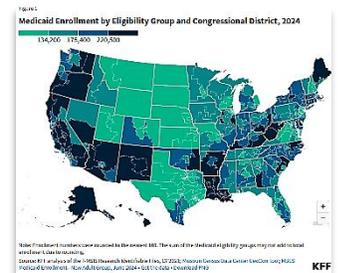


Harmful Impacts of Medicaid Cuts on New York Congressional Districts

<https://medicaidmattersny.org/federal-issues/>

Interactive Map about Medicaid at the Congressional Level

<https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/congressional-district-interactive-map-medicaid-enrollment-by-eligibility-group/>



A cut to Medicaid is a cut to Medicare

<https://justiceinaging.org/a-cut-to-medicaid-is-a-cut-to-medicare-fact-sheet/>

Interrelated HIV funding streams

<https://targethiv.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/2023-05/TAP-in-Braided-Funding.pdf>

Federal AIDS Policy Partnership (FAPP) Opposition letters to HIV and Medicaid funding cuts

<https://federalaidspolicy.org/about/fapp-documents/>

What Do Federal Staffing Cuts and HHS Restructuring Mean for the Nation's HIV Response?

<https://www.kff.org/policy-watch/what-do-federal-staffing-cuts-and-hhs-restructuring-mean-for-the-nations-hiv-response/>

Resource to understand what potential Medicaid cuts could mean for states and their residents

<https://www.kff.org/medicaid-watch/>

JUSTICE IN AGING | MEDICARE RIGHTS | Older Americans Resource Survey | Community Catalyst

A Cut to Medicaid is a Cut to Medicare

FEBRUARY 2025

At the 116th Congress, the House passed a bill to cut Medicare funding by 30%. This would mean that 30 million Medicare enrollees could lose the care they need, jeopardizing their health and well-being. Less than 1% of all Medicaid dollars go to Medicare.

30% of Medicaid dollars support Medicare enrollees

Medicaid Makes Medicare Affordable
Medicaid covers the high premiums and out-of-pocket expenses that many seniors and people with disabilities need to afford their Medicare.

✓ **Medicaid provides Medicare premium assistance.**
Medicaid covers premiums for 1 in 6 Medicare enrollees. This vital benefit is cut in the House bill. It means a 30% increase in out-of-pocket costs for 1 in 6 Medicare enrollees.

✓ **Medicaid covers out-of-pocket costs.**
Medicaid covers Medicare Part B premiums, copays, and deductibles, ensuring that 2 million Medicare enrollees living on a pension can afford the costs of their Medicare.

Medicaid opened the door to Medicare for Carro
Medicaid's coverage of Medicare premiums and out-of-pocket costs was the changing for Carro, an 84-year-old living in Medicaid. Carro and his wife had to leave Medicaid in 2013 because they were no longer eligible to stay in Medicaid. They were going without needed medical care and had to pay for their own prescriptions. After we showed them they had paid for several hundred out-of-pocket costs with their own money, Carro and his wife decided to get back into Medicaid. Thank to Medicaid, they could finally see their doctor, fill their prescriptions, and have enough money for basic things like food and utilities.

BRAIDED FUNDING EXTENDS THE REACH OF HIV SERVICES: A ROADMAP

Ending the HIV Epidemic | Technical Assistance Provider Innovation Network | Aged by CAI

Maximize State Medicaid Potential
States can improve their Medicaid programs to better serve people with HIV/AIDS.

- Expand Medicaid to all people with HIV/AIDS
- Increase Medicaid reimbursement rates for HIV/AIDS services
- Increase Medicaid coverage for HIV/AIDS services
- Increase Medicaid coverage for HIV/AIDS services
- Increase Medicaid coverage for HIV/AIDS services

Tap Into Health Exchanges
States can use Health Exchanges to increase their Medicaid enrollment.

Use Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program (RWAP) and Other Social Determinants of Health Support
States can use RWAP and other social determinants of health support to increase their HIV/AIDS services.

EHE Funding
States can use EHE funding to support their HIV/AIDS services.

- EHE funding

Other Topics of Note

Nationwide “Hands Off” Protests

Saturday April 5 saw mass protests nationwide, showing resistance to the Trump administration. The “Hands off” rallies had people coming out into the streets protesting the massive federal cutbacks, financial turmoil and perceived attacks on democracy. People showed up with a wide range of personal causes spanning from protection of health care, federal agencies, women’s health and HIV prevention to grievances towards the oligarchy, foreign policy and attacks on the LGBTQ+ communities around the nation. Organizers reported that over 600,000 people had signed up, but estimates on the streets are much higher.



NYS Officials Tell Trump Administration They Will Not Comply With DEI Order

New York state officials have told the Trump administration that they will not comply with its demands to end diversity, equity and inclusion practices in public schools, despite the administration’s threats to terminate federal education funding.

Daniel Morton-Bentley, counsel and deputy commissioner of the state Department of Education, said in a letter dated Friday to the federal Education Department that state officials do not believe the federal agency has the authority to make such demands.

“We understand that the current administration seeks to censor anything it deems ‘diversity, equity & inclusion,’” he wrote. “But there are no federal or State laws prohibiting the principles of DEI.” Morton-Bentley also wrote state officials were “unaware” of any authority the federal Department of Education has to demand that states agree with its interpretation of court decisions or to terminate funding without a formal administrative process. Article is available [here](#).

Orange County, California Community Rallied Against Ban of Pride Flags on City Property

Right-wing Aliso Viejo city council member Mike Munzing, known among his opponents as “MAGA Mike” faced a fierce pushback from the public during a 6 hour meeting on Wednesday April 2. Over several hours of testimony extending well past midnight, 164 people spoke in opposition to the proposal. Just 13 speakers expressed their support. Munzing himself, who finally spoke at 12:45AM in the morning. In a fit of rage, MAGA Mike ripped up the revised proposal to cheers and a standing ovation. The flag ban was voted down 5-0. Article available [here](#).

Rep. Hakeem Jeffries Holds Medicaid Teach-In

On March 17, 2025, Congressman Hakeem Jeffries described a proposal to slash up to \$880 billion in Medicaid and the fight to stop the cuts as the “central battle of the moment.” At the 1199SEIU headquarters, Rep. Jeffries urged on communities, allies, unions, and clergy, and denounced claims of rampant waste, fraud, abuse in the Medicaid program as a “smokescreen of lies.” Watch the whole teach in [here](#).

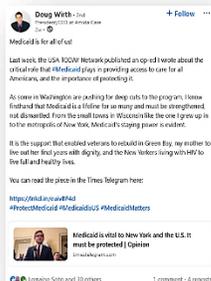
Restoration of Harriet Tubman Website

The National Parks Service has reversed edits and restored contents to its webpage about Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad in the wake of news reports and public backlash over the changes. The original opening sentence referenced the railroad’s core role in “the resistance to enslavement through escape and flight. The edited version called the railroad “one of the most significant expressions of the American civil rights movement. Link to article can be found [here](#).

NYC Mayor Adams' office issues order allowing ICE, fed agencies on Rikers

Mayor Adams' office issued an executive order Tuesday April 8, 2025, allowing federal immigration agents to operate on Rikers Island again, a move sought by President Trump's administration. Many believe the planned opening of the ICE office is a violation of sanctuary city law. Read the article [here](#).

Media Round Up (PPGR & Communications Partnership)



- NY1 Noticias, February 5, 2025 – Response to Presidential Executive Order against Gender-Affirming Care; Interviews with C.N. Molina and N. Teyuca; [Watch on YouTube](#)
- NY1 Noticias, February 6, 2025 – BHAAD – Access to HIV Prevention and Treatment Op-Ed by J. Pressley & S. Cowan; [Día de la Concientización Contra el VIH en la Comunidad Afroamericana](#)
- NY Amsterdam News, February 6, 2025 – BHAAD – Access to HIV Prevention and Treatment Op-Ed by J. Pressley & S. Cowan; [Greater access to HIV prevention and urgent treatment in the Black community](#)
- BlackDoctors.org, February 7, 2025 – BHAAD – Access to HIV Prevention and Treatment op-ed by J. Pressley & S. Cowan; [The urgent need for greater access to HIV prevention and treatment in the Black community](#)
- New York Times, March 2, 2025 (in print 3/5/25) – Letter to the Editor, Trans Rights are Human Rights; Rene Melendez, author; <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/02/opinion/transgender-rights.html>
- USA Today Lower Hudson, March 4, 2025 – Medicaid is vital to New York and the U.S. It must be protected Op-Ed D. Wirth; <https://www.lohud.com/story/opinion/2025/03/04/medicaid-is-vital-to-new-york-and-the-u-s-it-must-be-protected-opinion/81199406007/>
- [This piece was published in 16 of 17 USA Today Network publication areas across NYS.]
- New York Daily News, March 6, 2025 – Readers sound off on ashamed Americans, ditching a town hall and Medicaid cuts Author: Anthony Randolph; <https://www.nydailynews.com/2025/03/06/readers-sound-off-on-ashamed-americans-ditching-a-town-hall-and-medicaid-cuts/>
- NY Amsterdam News, March 10, 2025 – NWGHAAD Op-Ed by L. Albors & S. Cowan; [Op-Ed: Prioritizing Women for HIV Prevention and Treatment](#)
- El Diario, March 10, 2025 – NWGHAAD Op-Ed by L. Albors & S. Cowan; [Priorizando a las mujeres en la prevención y tratamiento del VIH](#)
- El Diario Nueva York, March 10, 2025 – Medicaid es un salvavidas para la comunidad hispana de Nueva York, Carlos N. Molina, author; <https://eldiariony.com/2025/03/10/medicaid-es-un-salvavidas-para-la-comunidad-hispana-de-nueva-york/>
- WJFF Radio Catskill with Tim Bruno, March 11, 2025 – NY Healthcare CEO: Medicaid is a Lifeline and Must Be Protected, Interview with D. Wirth; <https://wjffradio.org/42631-2/>
- Albany Times Union – March 25, 2025 Commentary: As Washington targets trans Americans, New York must step up Author: Doug Wirth; <https://www.timesunion.com/opinion/article/washington-targets-trans-americans-new-york-step-20238718.php>
- WJFF 90.5 Radio Catskill with Tim Bruno – March 26, 2025 NY Healthcare CEO: CDC & HIV Prevention Interview with Doug Wirth; <https://wjffradio.org/local-reaction-to-trump-administrations-pull-back-on-support-for-hiv-prevention-efforts/>
- Gay City News – March 28, 2025 – Medicaid is a Lifesaver for Trans People Like Me. Policymakers Must Protect It. Op-ed by Rene Alise; <https://gaycitynews.com/medicaid-protect-trans-healthcare-funding/>

Round Up

As the times continue to be uncertain in terms of our economy, health care, federal government and more, it is important not to lose sight of the positive work that we all do and how important it is to continue advocating and supporting marginalized communities.

The PPGR team continues to be dedicated to monitoring challenges faced by Amida Care and progress related to our priorities concerning Medicaid funding and Gender-Affirming care, continue to be directly involved in talks with legislative offices, engaging in advocacy efforts, and meeting with both State and Federal partners, reminding them of the importance of protecting trans health and access to healthcare.

