



For Immediate Release:

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Amida Care Supports First Ever “PrEP Aware Week” in New York State

- *PrEP Can Help End the HIV/AIDS Epidemic* -

(New York – October 8, 2019) Amida Care is joining the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) AIDS Institute, Governor Andrew Cuomo, Commissioner Howard A. Zucker, advocates, New York City elected officials, community organizations, and health care providers from across the state to support and actively promote PrEP Aware Week. Doug Wirth, President and CEO of Amida Care, released the following statement in recognition of PrEP Aware Week, commending Governor Cuomo and the NYSDOH AIDS Institute for their work to increase the number of New Yorkers using pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).

“Increasing the number of New Yorkers taking PrEP is one of our greatest weapons in winning the war against HIV/AIDS. PrEP is a game-changing once-a-day pill that has proven to be 99% effective in preventing HIV transmission. The state just announced another drop in the number of new HIV infections, down 11% between 2017 and 2018. We know that by increasing the use of PrEP, we can get that number down significantly more and really move the needle in ending the HIV epidemic.

“Governor Cuomo has taken a number of important actions to make PrEP accessible for all New Yorkers, including mandating that it be covered by insurance without cost-sharing. But while PrEP usage is on the rise, it isn’t reaching many who are at elevated risk for HIV, particularly in black and Latinx communities. In New York, the largest proportion of Medicaid recipients taking PrEP are white men, despite the fact that in 2017 more than 78% of new HIV diagnoses were among people of color. A recent [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) report found that doctors are less likely talk to black and Latinx men about PrEP. PrEP Aware Week is designed to help and encourage health care providers to engage all their patients in sexual health conversations that include PrEP. Providers can play an important role in closing gaps in PrEP awareness and access – disparities that must be addressed in order to reach New York’s goal of ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic by 2020.

“As New York’s largest Medicaid Special Needs Health Plan, designed to serve New Yorkers living with or at elevated risk for HIV, Amida Care has deep expertise in providing sexual health services. We are proud to engage our network of health care providers and staff in supporting PrEP Aware Week. Currently, only about 6,000 New York Medicaid recipients are using PrEP, but the state hopes to increase that number to 30,000 by the end of 2020. We will continue to work with the state to make that goal a reality. Not only will increasing PrEP use improve health outcomes, it will also create significant cost savings. For every 2,000 new HIV infections prevented, \$1 billion in future state Medicaid costs are averted.”

About Amida Care

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 who are homeless, regardless of HIV status. Amida Care has a wide network of health care 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.