



**For Immediate Release**

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**Amida Care, National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS (NBLCA), and Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams Host World AIDS Day Event in Brooklyn**

*Advocates encourage Brooklyn residents to get screened for HIV and learn about HIV prevention and treatment at Brooklyn Central Library*

**(Brooklyn, NY)** - Amida Care, a not-for-profit New York-based community health plan, the National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS (NBLCA), representatives from Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams' office, and Assembly Member Walter T. Mosley gathered days before World AIDS Day on November 28 to raise awareness around ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Brooklyn. Throughout the day, representatives of Amida Care, NBLCA, and Bridging Access to Care distributed information and resources to the public about HIV prevention and treatment. Bridging Access to Care also provided free HIV testing.

The event highlighted the power of art as a means to break down stigma around HIV/AIDS. Amida Care recently produced a special community magazine for World AIDS Day about HIV/AIDS and creative arts, and the event featured artwork from community members living with HIV. The event also included remarks from local leaders, community members, and health care providers.

“World AIDS Day is a time for us to remember all of the people we've lost, and a time for us to celebrate all the victories. It's also a time for us to get reinvigorated and take action, and why not do it in our beloved borough of Brooklyn? We want everyone to get tested. We also want to prevent HIV transmission. PrEP is such a powerful tool for prevention, but how many people in our community know about PrEP? Finally, we want to continue to treat people with AIDS and HIV, because if you're undetectable it means you're untransmittable,” said **Stephane Howze, Vice President of Member Experience, Amida Care.**

“We have come so far in the fight against HIV/AIDS, but much more needs to be done to address the specific needs of communities who continue to be disproportionately impacted by the epidemic. It starts with getting tested and knowing your HIV status.

Events like today's that raise awareness and encourage individuals to get tested, especially in Brooklyn, where the number of new HIV diagnoses are the highest in the city, are incredibly important," said **Lisa Matthews, Ed.D, MPH, Director of Programs at NBLCA.**

"As we approach World AIDS Day 2018, we understand that we need to take preemptive measures and proactive steps in our efforts to advance what we're doing as advocates to diminish the number of new HIV cases to zero," said **Assembly Member Walter Mosley.**

"We've made great strides in our community regarding HIV/AIDS awareness, but the fight won't be over until we hit the number zero. While on December 1st we will take a moment to remember those we have lost, we also need to support people living with AIDS and encourage people to educate themselves on the importance of getting tested and receiving services," said **Italia Granshaw, Policy Analyst for Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams.**

"Libraries have always been a place to turn for accurate information on the public health issues that impact our communities," said **Linda E. Johnson, President and CEO of Brooklyn Public Library.** "We are pleased to welcome Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams, Amida Care, and the National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS to Central Library to provide resources about HIV prevention and treatment."

"HIV and AIDS are present in our community. It's in the churches. It's in places where people don't think it is. HIV and AIDS has no face. It has no name. It has no color. It can affect anyone," said **Dolores Manigault, Health Educator at Bridging Access to Care.**

"Many times, stories are too hard to verbalize. That's where art therapy comes in. Our clients have amazing stories. Some of them are filled with trauma. Some of them are filled with guilt. In the arts, you don't need words. It's through the arts that clients are able to tell their stories. It's not about the product, it's about the process," said **Donna Alulema, Art Therapist at Harlem United.**

"I've been living with HIV for 17 years. Over that time, I've seen a lot of changes, but a lot has stayed the same. The thing that remains the same is our judgment around stigma. That judgment is what is killing our communities. My encouragement is for us to bring down the barriers that exist between care and access, and address the real needs that people have," said **Roscoe Boyd long-term survivor of HIV, and founding steering committee member of the U=U (Undetectable=Untransmittable) campaign.**

There are nearly 30,000 people living with HIV/AIDS in Brooklyn today, and the borough accounted for a quarter of new HIV infections in 2016 in NYC-- the highest number of new diagnoses out of all five boroughs. While progress is being made to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic in New York, more needs to be done to ensure that education and outreach are reaching higher risk, underserved communities in Brooklyn. Young adults (ages 20-29) account for the largest proportion of new HIV diagnoses in the borough.

The LGBTQ+ community, women, and men of color are also disproportionately impacted. Neighborhoods in Brooklyn [with the highest rates](#) of new HIV diagnoses are Bedford Stuyvesant-Crown Heights, East New York, and Williamsburg-Bushwick. Increased access and awareness around HIV testing, treatment, and prevention, including pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), are essential to address these health disparities.

**Amida Care Inc.** is a not-for-profit health plan that specializes in providing comprehensive health coverage and coordinated care to New Yorkers with chronic 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 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](http://www.amidacareny.org).

The **National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS, Inc.**, (NBLCA) is a 501c3, not for profit organization with a mission to *educate, mobilize, and empower* Black leaders to meet the challenge of fighting HIV/AIDS and other health disparities in their local communities. Founded in 1987, and headquartered in New York City, NBLCA is the largest nonprofit organization of its kind in the United States.

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