



For Immediate Release:

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Amida Care Joins Call for NYC Mayor and City Council to Provide Stopgap Public Health Funds Cut by State; Urges State to Fully Restore Funding

(New York, May 13, 2019) - New York State reimburses localities across the state for critical health programs and services, but the FY2020 enacted budget has reduced the reimbursement rate in New York City from 36% to 20%, resulting in a loss of \$59 million in funding.

Public health funding is critical to the New York State plan to End the HIV/AIDS Epidemic by 2020. Cutting funding to New York City public health programs could derail these efforts: in 2017, 73% of new HIV diagnoses in New York State were in NYC. These cuts will result in a reduction of HIV treatment, prevention, and outreach programs provided by community-based organizations; a reduction in the number of naloxone kits and clean syringes distributed to people who use injectable drugs; the closure of two sexual health clinics; and the elimination of operating funds for school-based health centers—all of which will severely impact efforts to reduce the number of new HIV transmissions in NYC.

Doug Wirth, President and CEO of Amida Care, New York State's largest Medicaid Special Needs Plan (SNP) designed to serve individuals living with or at elevated risk for HIV, made the following statement regarding the cuts:

“We are calling on the New York City Council and Mayor Bill de Blasio to provide stopgap funding to address the \$59 million shortfall in funds for public health initiatives in New York City. It is unconscionable that in the midst of a national opioid epidemic and 18 months away from the 2020 deadline to End the HIV Epidemic in New York State, we would reduce support for essential public health services.

“Although recently released data from the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene shows new HIV diagnoses were down to a record low of 2,157 in 2017, the overall rate of decrease slowed from 8.6% decline in 2016 to a 5.4% decline in 2017. If we are to realize the goal of Ending the Epidemic in New York State, now is the time to invest more in public health, not less.

“At a time in our nation when the future of health care is so uncertain, it is all the more important for New York to continue to be a model for health care policy that drives innovative public health solutions and long-term cost savings. It is impossible to do that while cutting funds that sustain vital resources.

“We urge Mayor de Blasio and the New York City Council to fill the funding gap created by the New York State budget to prevent a public health crisis of escalating new cases of HIV and STIs. We also ask the Mayor and City Council to stand up for NYC public health programs by strongly advocating for the Governor and State legislature to restore these harmful cuts.”

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 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.