



## **For Immediate Release**

Media Contact: Shakira Croce, Assistant Director of Communications

[scroce@amidacareny.org](mailto:scroce@amidacareny.org), (646) 757-7052

## **Amida Care Urges Increased Attention to Trans Communities to End the Epidemic**

New York, NY (December 10, 2019) – Doug Wirth, president and CEO of [Amida Care](http://Amida Care), New York’s largest not-for-profit Medicaid Special Needs Health Plan, released the following statement following a hearing before the New York City Council Committees on Health and Hospitals:

“PrEP is a game-changing pill that is 99% effective at preventing sexual transmission of HIV when taken daily. New York has made tremendous progress towards an AIDS-free future, due in large part to the expansion of PrEP awareness and education.

“Unfortunately, misinformation about PrEP continues to circulate and threatens to derail the progress we’ve made here in New York. The assertion that PrEP interferes with hormone therapy has been debunked by multiple [studies](#) and was refuted by the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) in November. In order to improve PrEP uptake, we must continue to address this misinformation head on and assure New Yorkers that the benefits of PrEP far outweigh the risks.

“While PrEP usage is on the rise, it isn’t reaching many who are at elevated risk for HIV. Today, most Medicaid PrEP users are cisgender white men, despite the fact that in 2017, nearly 80% of new HIV diagnoses were among people of color and people of trans experience.

“We can help by making concerted efforts to improve PrEP access. Insurance plans must educate their members about the availability of PrEP, remove administrative barriers such as prior authorization, and cover the medication cost, as well as follow up laboratory testing and medical appointments to ensure treatment adherence.

“At Amida Care, we know this is possible because we’ve done it. In 2017, NYS expanded eligibility for Amida Care to include people of transgender experience regardless of HIV status. Today, Amida Care has more than 500 transgender members who are HIV negative, and 25% are accessing PrEP. We have also had tremendous success helping our members of transgender experience who are living with HIV become virally suppressed or undetectable, meaning that they are unable to sexually transmit HIV to others. Of our 1,200 transgender members, more than 60% are living with HIV, and 83% of them are undetectable.”

### **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](http://www.amidacareny.org).