



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Media Contact: Shakira Croce, Communications Manager  
[scroce@amidacareny.org](mailto:scroce@amidacareny.org), (646) 757-7052

### **Amida Care Urges Increased Access to PrEP for Communities at Higher Risk of HIV**

New York, NY (September 6, 2018) – Doug Wirth, President and CEO of Amida Care, New York’s largest managed care not-for-profit Medicaid Special Needs Health Plan specially designed for New Yorkers living with or at higher risk for HIV, issued the following statement in response to news around pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). The news includes [data](#) demonstrating that communities at higher risk of contracting HIV continue to experience low levels of PrEP usage in addition to [reports](#) that some managed care plans are denying coverage for Truvada for PrEP.

“If we are committed to ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic once and for all, communities that are at higher risk for contracting HIV must have access to prevention tools like PrEP. Here in New York City, once the epicenter of the AIDS epidemic, we have made notable strides in increasing the number of PrEP users, but far more work needs to be done to ensure that PrEP is available to people of color, young men who have sex with men (MSM), women, intravenous drug users, and the transgender community. Throughout New York State, although PrEP use among Medicaid recipients increased by 20%, 82% of new PrEP users were male and 37% were white.

PrEP is not for everyone, but everyone should have access if needed and have the opportunity to consider whether it is right for them. Not only does PrEP enable people to take control of their sexual health, by preventing HIV infection it also saves hundreds of thousands of dollars that would be spent to treat HIV. PrEP costs an average of \$55,000 over five years for one person, while the cost of a lifetime of HIV treatment can be as much as 10 times that amount.

Denying coverage for PrEP makes about as much sense as denying coverage for a flu shot. At Amida Care, we work with culturally competent providers who go above and beyond to ensure that members feel safe, comfortable, and empowered to take control of their sexual health. New York State HSNPs like Amida Care provide comprehensive PrEP programs to support HIV negative transgender and homeless populations, and Amida Care is requesting to serve other communities at higher risk of HIV, including MSM. It’s important that other health plans ensure that everyone who could benefit from PrEP is able to access it.”

#### **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 chronic 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).

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