



For Immediate Release

Media Contact: Shakira Croce, Assistant Director of Communications
scroce@amidacareny.org, (646) 757-7052

Amida Care Calls for Final Push to End the HIV Epidemic in New York

New York, NY (November 22, 2019) – Doug Wirth, president and CEO of Amida Care, New York’s largest not-for-profit Medicaid Special Needs Health Plan, released the following statement in response to a report released by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene announcing that New York City saw 1,917 HIV diagnoses in 2018, the lowest number since the city began reporting new cases in 2001.

“Thanks to Governor Andrew Cuomo, public health officials, research scientists, health care providers, people living with HIV, and community leaders, New York State has a plan to End the HIV Epidemic by 2020, and the numbers released by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene show that plan is working.

But to get over the finish line and be the first state in the nation to end the HIV epidemic by 2020, we need to do more. We need to expand access to pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), a game-changing daily pill that is 99% effective at preventing HIV. We need to encourage every New Yorker to get tested and know their status. And we want people who are HIV positive to get treatment so they can become virally suppressed, which means their HIV is at undetectable level and cannot be transmitted.

We need to double down on our efforts to reach communities that are disproportionately impacted by HIV and saw an increase in new HIV diagnoses, particularly the LGBTQ community and communities of color. Despite the overall decrease in new HIV diagnoses, there was a slight increase among transgender people, people ages 50 to 59 and men who report that they have sex with men and have a history of injection drug use. While PrEP usage is on the rise, it isn’t reaching many who are at elevated risk for HIV. We must ensure that all health care practitioners, from primary care to hospital staff, are trained and well-equipped to offer culturally competent care. It is essential to meet people where they’re at, in the places they already are, in the ways that are most meaningful to them.

By focusing on these priorities, New York can become the first state in the nation to End the Epidemic and serve as a model for the rest of the country.”

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.

###