



For Immediate Release

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

Amida Care Praises Governor Cuomo's Commitment to Advance GENDA Legislation, Urges Swift Action by Legislature

New York, NY (January 2, 2019) – Doug Wirth, the President and CEO of [Amida Care](#), New York's largest not-for-profit Medicaid Special Needs Health Plan (SNP), issued the following statement in response to Governor Andrew Cuomo's stated "Justice Agenda" for New York State for the first 100 days of 2019:

"The Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act (GENDA) will legally codify protections for transgender and gender non-conforming (TGNC) people against discrimination in employment and health care. We applaud Governor Cuomo's commitment to advance this essential legislation that will ensure gender equity and safeguard patient protections in the Affordable Care Act (ACA). This comes at a critical moment in New York's effort to end the HIV epidemic. The state continues to see a decline in new HIV diagnoses, but that progress is threatened by federal efforts to remove patient protections, especially for TGNC Americans, who experience significant health disparities and alarmingly high rates of HIV.

"Passage of GENDA has been stalled by the New York State Senate for more than a decade, and it is needed more urgently now than ever before. By repeatedly changing regulations that exclude TGNC people from protections against discrimination in health care, the Trump administration has embarked on a campaign to effectively erase them. Here in New York, the executive orders and regulatory changes that currently exist to protect the TGNC community against discrimination have moved us in the right direction, but don't go far enough.

"Thanks in large part to the ACA and Medicaid expansion, we've made concrete and steady progress toward ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the U.S. Medicaid coverage for HIV-positive people [rose](#) from 36 percent in 2012 to 42 percent in 2014. Without access to health care provided by the ACA, thousands of people living with HIV will face a formidable barrier to accessing HIV treatment that enables them to become virally suppressed. Viral suppression is key to preventing new HIV infections; a person living with HIV who has an undetectable viral load cannot transmit the virus to others: "Undetectable equals Untransmittable" (U=U).

"Codifying ACA protections in New York State law will protect residents against judicial and legislative attempts to strip away all we've accomplished thus far. Without access to health coverage, people living with pre-existing and chronic conditions will have no choice but to visit the emergency room more frequently, be hospitalized more often, require costly nursing homes, rack up higher medical bills, and get pushed into poverty. Those higher costs are ultimately passed on to the government, insurers, and taxpayers. We strongly support Governor Cuomo's leadership on this issue, and urge the New York State legislature to move swiftly to make GENDA a reality in New York. There is no time to waste."

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.