



For Immediate Release

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Amida Care Condemns Trump Administration's FY2019 Budget Proposal That Would Undermine Access to Health Care

New York, NY (February 22, 2018) – Doug Wirth, president and CEO of [Amida Care](#), New York's largest not-for-profit Medicaid Special Needs Health Plan (SNP), made the following statement in response to President Trump's FY2019 budget proposal, issued on February 12, 2018:

“President Trump's executive budget proposal will not make America great—it will make America poorer and sicker. Access to quality and affordable health care is already a challenge for far too many individuals in this country. The budget proposal will make it much harder for individuals who are uninsured or underinsured, including those battling addiction and other behavioral health issues or people living with chronic conditions like HIV/AIDS.

We are deeply troubled by the President's proposed cuts to key health programs – most notably Medicaid. This budget proposal undermines core aspects of the program by ending the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) Medicaid expansion and converting Medicaid funding into block grants for states. These measures would put the health of more than 74 million Americans who count on Medicaid for health insurance in jeopardy. Without access to Medicaid, many people have no choice but to visit the emergency room more frequently, are 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

The President's budget proposal is a continuation of his assault on Medicaid, which included his approval of work requirements earlier this year. Implementing work requirements violates Medicaid's core mission to provide comprehensive health coverage to low-income people so they can get the health care they need. Work requirements will not help Medicaid recipients find or keep a living-wage job, and losing Medicaid will only make their economic situations worse. Sixty percent of Medicaid recipients are already working. Medicaid helps small businesses--nearly half of adults with Medicaid coverage who work do so for small businesses with 50 employees or less. Medicaid recipients who are not working are disabled, going to school, or taking care of a sick or elderly family member. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) should work with states to invest in readying people for the job market; programs like Amida Care's Innovator Workforce Project help individuals find and keep living-wage jobs.

We are further concerned by the proposed deep cuts to programs that address social determinants of health including poverty, unemployment, food insecurity, and housing instability. Funding for

Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) would be cut. Housing is health care. Unstable housing poses a formidable barrier to retaining people living with HIV in care and providing access to HIV treatment that leads to viral load suppression. 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). Additionally, the President’s budget zeroes out the AIDS Education Training Centers and the Special Projects of National Significance, which focuses on creating new models of care for people living with HIV/AIDS. Addressing the HIV crisis in the South necessitates innovations in care. The funding of these entities remains crucial to address social determinants of health that create barriers to accessing health care across our country.

With this budget as our blueprint, we risk halting—or worse, reversing—the progress made to end the AIDS epidemic. We will continue to oppose any measure that threatens to turn the clock back on the fight to end AIDS.”

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 homeless or of transgender experience (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.

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