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**Amida Care Reaffirms Our Strong Opposition to President Trump's Discriminatory Ban on Military Service for Transgender People**

Washington, D.C. (August 31, 2017)— In July, Amida Care issued a statement rejecting President Trump's intention to ban transgender Americans from serving in the military. Last Friday, the President signed a memorandum formalizing this intention. We condemn this discriminatory stance and reaffirm our commitment to support equal rights and fair treatment for the transgender community.

"This policy is an insult to the transgender Americans who have put their lives on the line to serve in our military," said Doug Wirth, President and CEO of Amida Care. "Discrimination of any kind has no place in our military and in America."

Currently, 15,000 transgender men and women serve our country. [One in five](#) transgender Americans having served at some point in their life - double the percentage of the general U.S. population who have served in the military.

Defense Secretary James Mattis has said that the Department of Defense will postpone the outright ban for currently serving transgender service members pending further study. But postponement isn't good enough - the proposed policy is disrespectful to people of transgender experience and should be abandoned. Existing [evidence shows](#) that the inclusion of transgender individuals has no significant impact on military readiness and, in reality, benefits the military by creating an inclusive and diverse workforce. Amida Care supports bi-partisan efforts in Congress led by New York Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and Maine Senator Susan Collins that would prevent the Trump administration from ending medical payments or discharging transgender service members.

President Trump has previously cited medical costs as one of the reasons behind this decision. However, a [2016 RAND](#) study found that the medical costs of transgender service members represented a very small portion of the military's health care expenses. According to the study, care for transgender service members would represent between 0.005 to 0.017 percent of overall Department of Defense health care expenditures.

Amida Care, the largest Medicaid Special Needs health Plan (SNP) in New York, has been a local pioneer for transgender health, with 7% of our members identifying as transgender.

"Banning transgender people from military service for any reason is shameful, and using medical costs is a poor excuse," Wirth added. "We believe health care is a right, not a privilege. Everyone in this country - from civilians to the men, women, and people of transgender experience who serve in our military - deserves access to high-quality care. This is clearly not about medical costs, it's about bigotry."

Amida Care remains firmly committed to supporting the LGBTQ community in leading healthy, authentic lives and advocating for LGBTQ social justice.