

Amida Care at 20

The health plan specializes in coverage for people living with HIV.

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New York City's largest Medicaid Special Needs health plan, [Amida Care](#), which focuses on comprehensive health coverage for people with HIV, celebrates its 20th anniversary in August.

Founded in 2003 by community-based HIV and AIDS providers, the nonprofit currently serves more than 9,000 New Yorkers. Amida Care works in partnership with its members and clients, prioritizing their feedback to best address their needs and serve as a bridge between members and providers.

"Two decades ago, no one believed that seven community-based health care organizations with no experience with Medicaid managed care could launch a health plan. But thanks to the vision of our provider founders, we have been able to help thousands of New Yorkers live healthy, fulfilling lives by creating an innovative model of care that puts the needs of people impacted by HIV first," says Doug Wirth, president and CEO of Amida Care, in a news release.

By working with Medicaid—a health insurance plan for low-income and disabled Americans—Amida Care is able to provide communities most impacted by HIV with access to lifesaving care and resources. Amida Care offers primary care, gender-affirming procedures and mental health support services.

What's more, the health plan covers pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis—PrEP and PEP—the pills and long-acting injectables that prevent HIV.

Amida Care was one of the first plans to advocate for gender-affirming care, including hormone therapy and surgeries, as well as hepatitis C testing and treatment, which is now covered for all Medicaid members.

Two thirds of Amida Care members are living with significant mental health issues, 40% have

experienced homelessness at least once since their HIV diagnosis and 90% have a history of substance abuse. Black and Latino members make up 55% and 32% of Amida Care's current membership, respectively, highlighting the disproportionate impact HIV has on communities of color.

"We have grown and evolved," Wirth says, "but our commitment to addressing health disparities, ending HIV, breaking down barriers to care for marginalized communities and addressing racism as a public health crisis remains steadfast."

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<http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/amida-care-20-years>