



## NORTH MISSISSIPPI HEALTH SERVICES

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**North Mississippi Health Services, MSDH and HHS partner to expand access to monoclonal antibody therapy to treat COVID-19 patients**

Tupelo, MS (August 25, 2021) -- North Mississippi Health Services, in partnership with the Mississippi Department of Health (MSDH) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), announced today that it expanded access to COVID-19 monoclonal antibody (mAb) treatments and will begin administering the therapies at six of their locations. For people who are at high risk for developing severe COVID-19 illness and have tested positive for the COVID-19 virus or are unvaccinated and have been exposed to someone who has tested positive, this promising mAb treatment has been shown to help prevent progression of the disease that might otherwise require hospitalization.

With the rapid spread of the Delta variant and a major surge in COVID-19 case rates, North Mississippi Health Services will be offering expanded access to the mAb treatment at six of its locations, increasing capacity from 50 treatments to 76 treatments per day. As of today, patients can receive the mAb treatment at the Mississippi: Tupelo, Iuka, Amory, West Point and Eupora locations, as well as in the Hamilton, Alabama location during operating hours. To confirm eligibility for the treatment and book an appointment, patients should contact their primary healthcare provider. For more information about monoclonal antibodies visit [www.crushcovid.com](http://www.crushcovid.com).

If administered within 10 days of onset of COVID-19 symptoms, the one-time therapy is highly effective in neutralizing the virus and preventing symptoms from worsening. The treatment may be administered intravenously (IV) or through subcutaneous injection.

“As we fight our most recent surge of COVID-19, the Delta variant, an instrumental part of our treatment is the use of monoclonal antibodies. If you have a COVID positive test please see your provider or seek an appointment to help prevent requiring hospitalization,” said Jeremy Blanchard, M.D., M.M.M, System Chief Medical Officer of North Mississippi Health Services. “We are looking forward to expanding our care by providing outpatient monoclonal antibody treatments to COVID-19 patients in our area.

“With the increase of cases in our community, we believe this treatment will play an important role in caring for more individuals and preventing the spread of this virus,” he continued.

“Mississippi is on the front edge of the worldwide fight against COVID-19, and North Mississippi Health Services is helping lead the way,” said Dr. Thomas Dobbs, state health officer of the Mississippi Department of Health. “The fight is far from over, but this new monoclonal antibody therapy treatment, along with the federal funding that supports it, is a key part of our national plan to crush the virus and save lives. It’s a testament to the outstanding leadership and staff at North Mississippi that they were selected to offer this treatment as part of this initiative, bringing more solutions to serve our patients here in Mississippi.”

On March 17, 2021 HHS [announced it was investing \\$150 million](#) to increase access to mAb therapy for high-risk patients in underserved and disadvantaged communities across the country. With support from KPMG LLP, HHS is developing new prototype models for expanding access to mAb treatment and leveraging an existing network of health care partners who have the experience and equipment necessary to provide the therapy.

North Mississippi Health Services is the first provider organization in Mississippi to join this national initiative and joins a growing list of mAbs therapy providers supported by KPMG and sponsored by HHS as part of the federal effort to help end COVID-19 and improve health equity in underserved communities across the country. In addition to the sites in northern Mississippi, more than 40 infusion sites have now been established or expanded under this initiative in

Landover, MD; San Diego, CA; Detroit, MI; Barnstable County, MA; Houston, TX; Beckley, WV; Worcester, MA; western Michigan; southern Missouri, northeast South Carolina, and southern Mississippi.

The therapy is the first COVID-19 treatment granted emergency use authorization by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for outpatient use. A Phase 3 clinical trial showed that the antibody therapy reduced the risk of hospitalization or death by up to 70% in patients who received the drug intravenously compared to those who received a placebo.

To be eligible for mAbs treatment, patients must meet the Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) definition of high risk. Same-day COVID-19 tests can be performed, followed by a telemedicine visit for evaluation and qualification for therapy. The mAb treatment can take from 20 to 70 minutes, with an observation time afterward. There is no cost to the patient and treatment is offered regardless of immigration status or health insurance.

### **North Mississippi Health Services**

North Mississippi Health Services is dedicated to being the provider of the best patient- and family-centered care. NMHS connects patients and their families with convenient access to care that is cost efficient and of the highest quality. NMHS provides acute, diagnostic, therapeutic and emergency services, with the sole trauma center (Level 2) in our service area, through North Mississippi Medical Center in Tupelo. The health care system also includes community hospital locations in Amory, Eupora, Iuka, Pontotoc and West Point, Miss., and Hamilton Ala., a regional network of more than 45 primary and specialty clinics; nursing homes and telehealth services. NMHS serves 24 counties in north Mississippi and northwest Alabama from headquarters in Tupelo, Miss. NMHS is a 2012 recipient of the prestigious Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, and NMMC, its flagship hospital, is a 2006 Baldrige Award recipient.

### **About Crush COVID:**

A treatment for COVID-19 is here and is available in every state at hundreds of locations across the country. With the help of KPMG, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), state and local health departments, and local hospitals and health clinics, eligible patients will have increased access to mAb treatment in a growing number of underserved and disadvantaged communities through this initiative. Authorized by the FDA, monoclonal antibody therapy (mAb) is available to patients who have tested positive for COVID-19 and are considered at high risk for progressing to severe COVID-19 and/or hospitalization. To learn more about eligibility and find a treatment location near you, visit <https://crushcovid.com>.