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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Ascension St. Vincent's, Alabama Department of Public Health and HHS partner to expand access to monoclonal antibody therapy to COVID-19 patients**

BIRMINGHAM, Ala., (October 1, 2021) -- Ascension St. Vincent's is working together with the Alabama Department of Public Health and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to expand access to COVID-19 monoclonal antibody (mAb) therapy with the addition of a new treatment site. For people who are at high risk for developing severe COVID-19 illness and have tested positive for the virus that causes COVID-19, this mAb treatment may have an effect on reducing hospitalization and severe illness.

With the rapid spread of the Delta variant and a continued surge in COVID-19 case rates, Ascension St. Vincent's will be expanding access to the mAb treatment with a new location at Ascension St. Vincent's East. As part of this expansion, Ascension St. Vincent's will be able to treat up to 200 patients per week. As of September 27, patients have been able to receive the mAb treatment at the Ascension St. Vincent's East location with an appointment. To confirm eligibility for the treatment and to obtain an appointment, patients should contact their primary care physician, as a physician referral is required.

If a person receives a positive COVID-19 test and is within 10 days of symptom onset, mAb may be a treatment option for high-risk patients and their physician should be consulted to determine if they are a candidate. The one-time therapy, made up of synthetic proteins designed to mimic the body's own immune response, may neutralize the virus and prevent symptoms from worsening. The therapy has been granted Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for outpatient use for treatment of COVID-19.

"Alabama is experiencing high COVID-19 cases and hospitalization rates," said Chris Moore, Ascension St. Vincent's chief operating officer and chief nursing officer. "Our ability to expand this treatment may help us keep the most vulnerable members of our community out of the hospital. For individuals who test positive for COVID-19 and are considered high risk, the mAb infusion may be a solution to reduce their risk for hospitalization and death."

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 to provide the therapy for underserved and disadvantaged populations.

Ascension St. Vincent's joins a growing list of mAb therapy providers as part of the federal effort to help reduce hospitalizations related to COVID-19 and improve health equity in underserved communities across the country. In addition to the new site at Ascension St. Vincent's East, more than 60 infusion sites across the U.S. have now been established or expanded under this initiative, including recently in other parts of Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, and Washington, D.C.

"Monoclonal antibody therapy available through this new treatment site, along with the federal funding that supports it, will help ensure more high-risk Alabamians receive the care they need to recover more quickly and may prevent them from being hospitalized," State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris, Alabama Department of Public Health, said. "Low vaccination rates and the Delta variant continue to be obstacles in our fight against COVID-19. The additional access provided by Ascension St. Vincent's and HHS to this life-saving treatment is crucial in helping halt disease progression in these vulnerable patients."

To be eligible for mAb treatment, patients must meet the Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) definition of "high risk." The [FDA Emergency Use Authorization](#) provides additional information on eligibility for mAb treatment. Treatment is offered regardless of immigration status, health insurance coverage, or ability to pay.

### **About Ascension St. Vincent's**

In Birmingham, Alabama, Ascension St. Vincent's operates five hospitals in addition to several healthcare facilities and employs more than 4,800 associates. Across the region, Ascension St. Vincent's provided more than \$57.8 million in community benefit and care of persons living in poverty in fiscal year 2016. As one of the leading non-profit and Catholic health systems in the U.S., Ascension is committed to delivering compassionate, personalized care to all, with special attention to persons living in poverty and those most vulnerable. The national health system operates more than 2,600 sites of care – including 139 hospitals and more than 40 senior living facilities – in 19 states and the District of Columbia. Visit [www.ascension.org](http://www.ascension.org)

### **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 monoclonal antibody therapy (mAb) treatment in a growing number of underserved and disadvantaged communities through this initiative. Authorized by the FDA, mAb are available to high risk patients who have either tested positive for COVID-19 or are

unvaccinated and have been exposed to the virus. To learn more about eligibility and find a treatment location near you, visit <https://crushcovid.com>.