



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Baptist is First Provider in Arkansas to Join HHS Initiative to Expand Access to Monoclonal Antibody Therapy

West Memphis and Jonesboro, ARK., Oct. 27, 2021 — Baptist Memorial Health Care, along with the Arkansas Department of Health and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, announced today that it has expanded access to COVID-19 monoclonal antibody (mAb) therapies at Baptist Memorial Hospital-Crittenden and NEA Baptist Memorial Hospital.

mAb treatment helps prevent progression of COVID-19 that might otherwise require hospitalization for people who are at high risk of developing severe illness and have tested positive for the virus or are unvaccinated and have been exposed to someone who has tested positive. This therapy may be administered intravenously or through subcutaneous injection. If administered within 10 days of having COVID-19 symptoms, this one-time therapy has proven effective in neutralizing the virus and preventing symptoms from worsening.

“Preventing the spread of COVID-19 and limiting the effects of this illness on our community have been our priorities during the past year and a half,” said Jillian Foster, system pharmacy administrator for Baptist Memorial Health Care. “Monoclonal antibody treatment has proven to be an effective tool in reducing hospitalizations, especially among those at high risk for severe illness. But to have the greatest impact and do the most good, we need to continue to make this treatment available to everyone who qualifies in our community.

“Through our collaboration with ADH and HHS, we will have the resources to expand our reach and extend this treatment to the most vulnerable people in our community. We hope that will help improve survival and stop the spread of this disease.”

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Baptist to Expand Antibody Therapy

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“This treatment is a tool to help patients recover quickly and reduce the number of people who need hospitalization,” said Dr. Atul Kothari, Arkansas Department of Health associate medical director for infectious diseases. “ADH has been working with hospitals, long-term care facilities and pharmacies across the state to ensure equitable distribution of this treatment.”

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.

Baptist is the first provider organization in Arkansas to join this national initiative to increase access to mAb treatments for patients in underserved and disadvantaged communities across the country. The initiative now includes over 25 prototype models, supported by KPMG and sponsored by HHS, to increase access to mAb therapy at more than 80 infusion locations in 16 states.

mAb therapy is the first COVID-19 treatment granted emergency use authorization by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for outpatient use, and Baptist Memorial Hospital-Memphis was one of the first locations in the country to offer the treatment. A Phase 3 clinical trial showed that 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.

The two Arkansas Baptist Memorial hospitals expanding treatment availability will collectively be able to increase the number of patients treated from 200 to more than 400 per week. To be eligible for mAb treatment, patients must meet the emergency use authorization definition of “high risk.” Patients with insurance may have some out-of-pocket expense for the administration of the product, but there is no cost to any patient for the drug product, and the treatment is offered regardless of immigration status or health insurance.

Both sites will administer the treatment through infusion therapy and subcutaneous injections. For more information, the public can call:

- NEA Baptist Memorial Hospital in Jonesboro: 870-936-1050
- Baptist Memorial Hospital-Crittenden in West Memphis: 870-394-7800

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Baptist to Expand Antibody Therapy

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About Baptist Memorial Health Care

Baptist Memorial Health Care is one of the country's largest not-for-profit health care systems and the largest provider of Medicaid in the region. Baptist offers a full continuum of care to communities throughout the Mid-South and consistently ranks among the top integrated health care networks in the nation. The health care system comprises 22 affiliate hospitals in West Tennessee, Mississippi and East Arkansas; more than 5,400 affiliated physicians; Baptist Medical Group, a multispecialty physician group with more than 800 providers; home, hospice and psychiatric care; minor medical centers and clinics; a network of surgery, rehabilitation and other outpatient centers; and an education system highlighted by Baptist Health Sciences University (formerly Baptist College of Health Sciences). Baptist employs more than 19,000 people, and in fiscal year 2020 contributed more than \$352 million in community benefit and uncompensated care to the communities it serves. For more information, please visit www.baptistonline.org or follow us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

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, state and local health departments, and local hospitals and health clinics, eligible patients will have increased access to monoclonal antibody therapy in a growing number of underserved and disadvantaged communities through this initiative. Authorized by the FDA, mAb treatment 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>.

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