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## NEWS RELEASE

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## New Distribution Process for Monoclonal Antibody Treatments in Georgia

**ATLANTA** – The federal government has changed the way COVID-19 monoclonal antibody treatments will be distributed in the United States, including Georgia. The decision announced Monday by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is the result of supply shortages and extraordinary demand for the treatments across the country, particularly due to the rapid spread of the delta variant. Health care providers will no longer be able to order the treatments directly.

HHS will determine each state's weekly allocation of monoclonal antibody products based on use and the number of new COVID cases. The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) will identify which sites in the state will receive the product and the amount each site receives. Healthcare providers must record their administration of the products in order to be eligible to receive additional shipments.

DPH will work to provide monoclonal antibody treatments quickly and equitably to as many Georgia providers as possible. The Department will also address the backlog of requests previously made to HHS, which DPH was not made aware of until yesterday.

Monoclonal antibodies are synthetic, laboratory-created antibodies. They help people at high risk for severe COVID illness, individuals who have recently tested positive (within 10 days) for the virus, or people who are close contacts of persons who have tested positive for COVID. They do not teach a patient's body how to create its own antibodies.

### **Monoclonal antibody treatments are not a replacement for COVID-19 vaccination.**

“We have safe and highly effective vaccines to protect against COVID-19. It is much easier to get a vaccine than risk becoming seriously ill with life threatening complications,” said Kathleen E. Toomey, M.D., M.P.H., commissioner of the Georgia Department of Public Health.

“Monoclonal antibodies are in short supply and high demand and hospital beds are full. What Georgia does have is enough vaccine for all Georgians aged 12 and over to be vaccinated.”

As of today, 53% of Georgians have received at least one dose of COVID vaccine and 46% of Georgians are fully vaccinated. COVID vaccine is available statewide and is our best tool for ending this pandemic and reducing the overwhelming strain on EMS, the healthcare system and healthcare providers. To find a COVID vaccination location, log on to <https://dph.georgia.gov/covid-vaccine>.

There are currently 136 locations in Georgia where monoclonal antibody treatments are being administered. <https://protect-public.hhs.gov/pages/therapeutics-distribution>. Patients should talk to their healthcare provider about monoclonal antibody treatments and must have a prescription or physician's referral to receive the treatments.

For updates on COVID-19, follow @GaDPH and @GovKemp on Twitter and @GaDPH and @GovKemp on Facebook.