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For immediate release

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### **Monoclonal Antibody Treatment may help COVID symptoms improve sooner and reduce hospitalizations**

- **Newly confirmed COVID positive residents encouraged to reach out to their healthcare provider to see if they meet the criteria and before symptoms become severe**

When a person becomes infected with COVID, their body makes antibodies to fight off the virus. Monoclonal Antibody Treatment is a COVID neutralizing antibody treatment infusion that helps the body make enough antibodies to successfully fend off the virus while the body continues naturally making its own.

Receiving the treatment may help COVID symptoms improve sooner and make a hospital visit less likely by nearly a 70% reduction. The treatment is available at long-term care facilities and for the general population.

“This treatment should be administered as soon as possible after a positive COVID test, ideally within the first five days from symptoms starting. Don’t hesitate and don’t wait to contact your healthcare provider to see if you meet the criteria and before symptoms become severe,” said Kim Engel, Panhandle Public Health District Director.

She added, “With a case fatality rate higher than the state average, we must use all options necessary to fight this insidious virus.”

The infusion takes about three hours, and patients will be charged an outpatient administration fee but not charged for the medication. Improvements can be seen anywhere from one to three days after treatment. However, this does not shorten the length of time needed to stay isolated.

The Federal Pharmacy Program announced last week will include three locations in the Panhandle. Alliance Community Pharmacy is using the coordinated Panhandle list. The Walmart’s in Chadron and Scottsbluff will also be using the coordinated Panhandle list by early March but in the meanwhile, they are taking registrations for people who are 65 and older. This can be accessed at [www.walmart.com](http://www.walmart.com) and using or creating an account.

This is in addition to the current vaccine providers that have been offering COVID vaccines in the Panhandle. Current eligibility for the vaccine remains at health care personnel, long-term care, and individuals 65 and older.

We are encouraging all Panhandle residents over the age of 18 that have not registered yet to please do so now at [vaccinate.ne.gov](https://vaccinate.ne.gov) or [www.pphd.org](https://www.pphd.org). Registration is simple and takes less than a couple of minutes. If you have already registered, rest assured, you are on the list and do not need to register again.

If you need help registering, call either of these numbers: 833-998-2275 or 531-249-1873. The Spanish version will be coming soon.

COVID vaccinations are also available at the Scottsbluff Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) for veterans enrolled in the VA Health Care system. Vaccinations are by appointment only, no walk-ins. Call 308-225-5330 for appointment scheduling.

As of today, 8,604 or 13.1% of Panhandle adults have received the COVID vaccine. Health care personnel, long-term care, and those 65 and older are currently being vaccinated. This will take several more weeks. People who are fully COVID vaccinated will not be required to quarantine due to close contact.

If you have had COVID, you are still encouraged to get the vaccine once you no longer have symptoms and achieved recovery status. If you received the monoclonal antibody treatment, it is recommended to get the vaccine no sooner than 90 days after treatment.

If you have received your first dose and have not heard when you will receive your second dose, don't panic, you will be contacted by the vaccine provider that administered your first dose.

Unified Command confirms 81 more cases of COVID in the Panhandle since last reporting on Monday, February 8. The investigations are underway, all close contacts will be quarantined.

<b>All Ages: 81</b>	
<b>County</b>	<b>Cases</b>
<b>Banner</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Box Butte</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Cheyenne</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Dawes</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Deuel</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Garden</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Grant</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Kimball</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Morrill</b>	<b>6</b>

Scotts Bluff	23
Sheridan	1
Sioux	0

Exposure Type	
Community	68%
Close Contact	26%
Travel	0%
Under Investigation	6%

#### March 2, 2020-February 15, 2021

- **Total Tests Conducted: 34,145**
- **Positive: 8,557**
- **Last 14 days (active) cases: 164**
- **Last week's cases: 81**
- **Last week's positivity rate: 16.6%**
- **Deaths: 180**
- **Active Hospitalizations: 8**
- **Total Cumulative Hospitalizations: 529**
- **Doubling time (November 11, 2020-February 15, 2021): 97 days**

#### Avoid the Three Cs:

- Avoid Crowded Places – Avoid gathering in groups where you cannot maintain 6-foot of distance from others
- Avoid Close Contact – Wear a mask over your nose and mouth or maintain 6-foot distance when you are spending more than 15 total minutes with people you don't live with
- Avoid Confined Spaces – Avoid enclosed spaces with poor ventilation

Current COVID testing access can be found at [www.pphd.org](http://www.pphd.org).

The Panhandle COVID dashboard is updated weekdays at 4:30 pm MT and available at [www.pphd.org](http://www.pphd.org). For the most up to date information from the CDC, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

Panhandle Public Health District, Region 21, 22, and 23 Emergency Management, and Scotts Bluff County Health Department are working as a unified command on this evolving situation. Essential updates will be regularly communicated to the public and community partners.

Panhandle Public Health District is working together to improve the health, safety, and quality of life for all who live, learn, work, and play in the Panhandle. Our vision is that we are a healthier and safer Panhandle Community. Visit our website [www.pphd.org](http://www.pphd.org).