

## Cooper Expands Access to Monoclonal Antibody Treatment for COVID-19

By Administrator

Monday, 13 September 2021 10:52 -

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Governor Roy Cooper signed an Executive Order to make it easier for North Carolinians to access treatment for COVID-19. The Executive Order authorizes and directs State Health Director, Dr. Betsey Tilson, to issue a statewide standing order to expand access to monoclonal antibody treatment, which if taken early can decrease the risk of severe disease, hospitalization, and death. The Order will be in effect through November 30, 2021. “Expanding access to monoclonal antibody therapy will help more patients across the state get this highly effective COVID-19 treatment,” said Governor Cooper. “In addition to getting more people vaccinated, we need to do all we can to save the lives of people who become infected.”

The Governor has previously directed, and affirmed the State Health Director’s authority to direct, the issuance of statewide standing orders to facilitate COVID-19 vaccination and testing efforts, most recently in Executive Order No. 229.

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (“NCDHHS”) reports that while they have seen an increase in the number of providers who are administering monoclonal antibody treatment, there is still limited capacity to administer this medication among the state’s primary care providers and providers not associated with a health system. A statewide standing order for monoclonal antibody treatment will make it easier for people with COVID-19 symptoms, particularly those with less access to a regular health care provider, to get this potentially life-saving treatment. Under the order, treatment could be provided in a medical supervised community setting, such as part of COVID-19 testing sites.

“We want to do everything possible to help people recover from COVID and keep them out of the hospital,” said NCDHHS Secretary Mandy K. Cohen, M.D. “Get tested right away if you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. Treatment for COVID must be given within 10 days of symptoms starting and before someone becomes sick enough to need the hospital.”

While vaccines provide the best protection from COVID-19, treatment options such as Monoclonal Antibodies are available if you have had symptoms of COVID-19 for 10 days or less or have been exposed to COVID-19. If taken early, they can reduce the risk of severe disease, hospitalization, and death. Ask your doctor about Monoclonal Antibodies or call the Combat COVID Monoclonal Antibodies Call Center at 1-877-332-6585 (English) or 1-877-366-0310 (Spanish).

Monoclonal antibodies are proteins made in a laboratory to fight infections, in this case, the virus that causes COVID-19, and are given to patients directly with an IV infusion or a shot.

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Some early evidence suggests this treatment can reduce the amount of the virus, or viral load, that causes COVID-19 in a person's body. Having a lower viral load may reduce the severity of symptoms and decrease the likelihood of hospitalization.

The Order received concurrence from the Council of State.