

Governor Walz Secures Federal Support to Expand Monoclonal Antibody Treatment, Vaccination Capacity

Weekly monoclonal antibody appointments will increase; MOA vaccination site to increase capacity to 2,000 doses per day

Governor Walz requested the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) medical team to bolster the Administration's strategy of providing even more COVID-19 tools to Minnesotans by vaccinating everyone who is eligible and providing life-saving treatments to those who are sick.

"We have powerful tools at our disposal to fight COVID-19: getting vaccinated is the best way to protect yourself and others from the virus, and treatments like monoclonal antibodies can help sick Minnesotans get better. To make sure more Minnesotans can access these life-saving vaccines and treatments, we requested and have received significant support from FEMA," said Governor Walz. "I am grateful for our ongoing partnership with Biden Administration – and I urge Minnesotans to take advantage of these opportunities to stay safe from COVID-19. Get your shot if you haven't yet. Get a booster right away if you're eligible. Get tested if you are feeling ill so you can get the treatment you need."

"I am continually impressed by Minnesotans' strong interest in getting their children vaccinated and receiving their booster shots, and I am deeply thankful for effective COVID-19 treatments like monoclonal antibodies," said Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan. "This FEMA team will help more Minnesotans get their shot and receive treatment if they need it. I thank the Biden Administration and federal doctors and nurses for making these resources available in our state."

In total, 16 FEMA personnel are arriving in Minnesota this week to support vaccination and monoclonal antibody treatment efforts.

With the FEMA team's arrival, capacity at the Mall of America vaccination site will increase from 1,500 doses per day to 2,000 doses. The site is a popular location for Minnesota families seeking vaccinations for 5- to 11-year-olds, as well as fully vaccinated Minnesotans seeking boosters. Since Nov. 3, the site has administered nearly 14,000 doses to 5- to 11-year-olds, and it administered 800 booster doses to adults last week alone. Minnesotans age 12 and up are also receiving their primary series of the vaccine at MOA.

The FEMA team will also allow more COVID-19 patients in central Minnesota to receive the monoclonal antibody treatment. The Administration and medical providers around the state are working to increase accessibility of monoclonal antibody treatments. Minnesota has been administering about 2,000 doses of the treatment per week since the beginning of October, and that has been increasing in recent weeks. For the week ending November 24, providers administered over 3,000 infusions for the first time.

Last week, MDH expanded hours and capacity at its St. Paul Clinic and M Health Fairview added about 300 appointments for monoclonal antibody treatment at its Columbia Heights clinic. Together, the measures increased Twin Cities monoclonal antibody treatment capacity by 50%.

With the FEMA team's arrival, Minnesota will be able to further expand monoclonal antibody treatment capacity.

Patients and their providers seeking monoclonal antibody treatments can use the state's online tool, the Minnesota Resource Allocation Platform (MNRAP) that helps match those who most need treatment with available appointments. When demand for monoclonal antibody treatments increases, as has happened recently, the Minnesota health care system will give priority to treating patients who are ill and who have the highest risk of developing severe illness and requiring hospital admission. These sites are not open to walk-in appointments.

COVID-19 monoclonal antibody treatment can help qualifying patients get better, faster. It is an outpatient treatment for patients with mild to moderate symptoms that started within the past 10 days, and who are at high risk of their illness leading to hospitalization or death. Learn more at the webpage [COVID-19 Medication Options](#).

"Monoclonal antibody treatments are an important tool, but they are not a substitute for vaccination. All those who are eligible should get vaccinated," said Minnesota Department of Health Commissioner Jan Malcolm. "We are working to ensure every Minnesotan has fair and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines and monoclonal antibody treatments. Capacity in our health care system is still very tight, so we are thankful for the support of these FEMA staff to help bolster our capacity. We also need all Minnesotans to take steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 by getting vaccinated and using the other layers of mitigation such as masking so that we have the health care capacity available to provide COVID-19 treatments to those who really need them."