



**COVID-19**  
**ORAL THERAPEUTICS PLAN**  
February 16, 2022

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## I. PURPOSE

Paxlovid and molnupiravir received emergency use authorization the week of December 20<sup>th</sup>. These oral COVID-19 medications are critical additions to our toolbelt of treatments against COVID-19 disease. The new therapeutics play an especially important role as some monoclonal antibody treatments were discontinued due to their efficacy against the Omicron variant.

While oral therapeutics are in short supply, a limited pharmacy network will be necessary. Supply is anticipated to increase over the next several months.

## II. ENSURING HEALTH EQUITY

Oral therapeutics offer the opportunity to increase accessibility of COVID-19 treatments to all New Mexicans, including those who are medically underserved. The following have been identified as traditionally medically underserved populations:

### **TRIBAL, NATIVE, AND PUEBLO COMMUNITIES**

IHS has a robust plan in place for care of tribal communities. Due to the public health emergency, IHS and tribal pharmacies will accept prescriptions from providers outside of the IHS system to reduce barriers to care. NM DOH will support IHS efforts and will ensure that messaging to New Mexicans is clear and collaborative.

### **NURSING FACILITIES**

Nursing facilities have access to oral therapeutics through their normal distribution channels. Reducing the need to transport COVID-19 positive nursing facility patients for treatment will minimize transmission exposure and patient risk associated with transport. NM DOH will work with long-term care pharmacies to ensure adequate supply is available for this population.

### **NEW MEXICANS WITHOUT PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIANS**

The state is committed to reducing barriers to care and is leveraging an existing network of federally qualified health care centers offering COVID-19 testing for patients without primary care physicians to receive assessment and treatment for COVID-19 disease. Additionally, patients without primary care physicians can contact the COVID Hotline at 1-855-600-3453 for coordination of care with a COVID therapeutic provider.

### **NEW MEXICANS WITHOUT HOMES**

NM DOH has coordinated with healthcare providers that serve persons experiencing homelessness in order to increase access to this population. Additionally, the state offers COVID-19 treatment to individuals at NM DOH run COVID isolation and quarantine medical shelters.

### **CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES**

NM DOH has ensured the New Mexico Corrections Department has had access to oral therapeutics. NM DOH will continue to work with prisons and jails to ensure that patients meeting the eligibility criteria have access to oral therapeutics.

### III. DISTRIBUTION

Oral therapeutics will be made available in New Mexico through a network of pharmacies and community health centers.

Partner pharmacy locations will accept eligible prescriptions from all authorized prescribers (refer to Section V). Due to limited supply, the network of pharmacies will initially be limited to a few partners. As additional supply becomes available, the pharmacy network will expand to include all federal and state pharmacy partners.

New Mexico has partnered with *Community, a Walgreens Pharmacy*. This location will fill the prescriptions and mail for next day arrival direct to the patient's home, anywhere in the state, or as directed by the patient to a nearby authorized pick-up location. Partnering with *Community, a Walgreens Pharmacy* ensures that until all oral therapeutics are readily available across the state that residents of rural areas will continue to have equitable access to treatment.

Please refer to <https://cv.nmhealth.org/providers/covid-19-oral-therapeutics-information-for-providers/> for an up-to-date list of pharmacy locations.

### IV. PATIENT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

As of February 11, 2022, New Mexico has no restrictions on the prescribing of COVID-19 oral therapeutics. Providers must follow the FDA Emergency Use Authorization requirements for each COVID-19 therapeutic.

New Mexico has created a [\*COVID Therapeutics: Quick Reference Guide for Providers\*](#) to help aid in treatment selection. Sotrovimab is currently in short supply and NM DOH recommends reserving Sotrovimab for patients who are ineligible for Paxlovid or Molnupiravir. Please refer to <https://cv.nmhealth.org/providers/covid-19-oral-therapeutics-information-for-providers/> for a copy of the guide.

### V. PRESCRIBING ORAL THERAPEUTICS

#### **AUTHORIZED PRESCRIBERS**

Molnupiravir and Paxlovid may only be prescribed for an individual patient by physicians, advanced practice registered nurses, and physician assistants that are licensed or authorized under state law to prescribe drugs in the therapeutic class to which the medication belongs. Providers should review the FDA fact sheets for providers and carefully review contraindications and potential drug interactions prior to prescribing either of the new oral therapeutics. Providers should be aware that the pharmacy may not have access to medication lists for patients. Prescribers are responsible for assessing any potential drug interactions prior to prescribing an oral therapeutic.

### **POSITIVE COVID-19 TEST**

A positive COVID-19 result from any FDA approved COVID-19 diagnostic test including rapid antigen tests is acceptable. Confirmation with PCR is not necessary for the purpose of prescribing oral therapeutics.

Providers should confirm any positive COVID-19 test result with the presence of symptoms that support the positive test result. Oral therapeutics should be provided only to symptomatic patients.

### **REQUIRED PATIENT HANDOUT**

Prescribing health care providers must provide the patient/caregiver with an electronic or hard copy of the “Fact Sheet for Patients and Caregivers” prior to the patient receiving molnupiravir or paxlovid and must document that the patient/caregiver has been given an electronic or hardcopy of the “Fact Sheet for Patients and Caregivers”

### **DATE OF SYMPTOM ONSET**

Both molnupiravir and paxlovid must be started by the patient within 5 days of symptom onset for the therapy to be effective. Providers should ensure that the patient is able to receive medication within the treatment window.

**Prescribers should note the date of symptom onset on the prescription. This information is critical for pharmacists to ensure the patient receives their prescription within the treatment window.**

For prescriptions sent to *Community, A Walgreens Pharmacy*, please allow 24-48 hours for medication processing and shipment. It is recommended to send prescriptions for patients that require home delivery within 72 hours of symptom. Patients who are close to their 5 day window should be referred to a same-day pick up location.

### **PRESCRIPTION ROUTING**

All prescriptions shall be sent electronically when possible. Providers without the ability to send an E-Rx may send a fax or phoned prescription. Please include in the notes section the date of symptom onset. It is important for the pharmacy team to know this information so that they can ensure the patient receives their medication within the treatment window.

Please refer to <https://cv.nmhealth.org/providers/covid-19-oral-therapeutics-information-for-providers/> for an up-to-date list of pharmacy locations.

### **REQUESTED DATA ELEMENTS**

In order for the pharmacy to process oral therapeutics prescriptions in a timely manner. The following information is essential:

#### **1. Date of symptom onset**

- It is important for the pharmacy team to know this information so that they can ensure patient receives medication within the therapeutic window.

#### **2. Patient address (if the patient does not have permanent housing please annotate as such)**

- Alternative shipping location if applicable

3. **Patient's telephone or an alternate means of contact for the patient**
4. **Pharmacy insurance information**-if available
5. **Alternate Therapy**- Supply remains limited. In order to ensure your patient receives timely treatment, please indicate the alternate therapy you would prefer your patient receive if the medication is out of stock. For example, *"If paxlovid is not available, please substitute molnupiravir OR If paxlovid is not available, please contact prescriber for re-assessment."*

### **PRESCRIPTION PROCESSING**

- The dispensing pharmacy shall obtain a list of the patient's medications in order to check for potential drug interactions.
- The dispensing pharmacy shall confirm that the patient will be able to receive and start the medication within 5 days of symptom onset.
- During the initial central distribution, prescriptions must be filled and shipped overnight within 24 hours of receipt.
- If a prescription is unable to be filled within 24 hours, the prescriber and patient shall be notified and referred for alternative COVID therapeutic or pharmacy location.
- If a prescription is not picked up within 5 days of symptom onset, the prescription shall be returned. The prescriber shall be notified.