

COVID-19 Therapeutics Checklist for Prisons, Detention Centers, and Homeless Service Sites

Overview

This resource is intended for community-based facilities that offer congregate living, dining, or programming to people experiencing homelessness, people with temporary or transitional housing needs, or people who are living in a Department of Corrections (DOC)-licensed facility or who are otherwise justice-involved. Examples include homeless service settings and encampments, jails, prisons, DOC-licensed correctional facilities, juvenile detention centers, domestic violence shelters, youth shelters, transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, unlicensed sober homes, halfway houses, and board and lodges.

Several COVID-19 medications are available to reduce severe health outcomes among people most likely to get very sick from COVID-19. Medications are available for patients who meet all the following conditions:

- Have mild to moderate symptoms.
- Are not in the hospital.
- Have had symptoms for fewer than five to seven days.
- Are at high risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that congregate living facilities assess residents' risk for severe health outcomes from COVID-19 and ensure timely treatment (within five to seven days of symptom onset) for those who are eligible for COVID-19 therapeutics. Visit [CDC: Respiratory Virus Guidance \(www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/treatment/index.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/treatment/index.html).

Facilities that do not have a health care provider on-site should have a plan for referring residents to care elsewhere to be assessed for eligibility and to receive COVID-19 therapeutics.

Minnesota is partnering with Cue Health to offer telehealth consultations and COVID-19 medication prescriptions for people who need them. The telehealth service is free; however, there may be a co-pay for medications. To obtain a telehealth consultation with a licensed clinician, visit [Cue Health: Get COVID-19 treatment in MN \(https://care.cuehealth.com/mn\)](https://care.cuehealth.com/mn). Prescriptions are available through delivery or pick up at a nearby pharmacy.

This document outlines steps for accessing COVID-19 therapeutics and includes a list of resources to support high-risk congregate living facilities in helping eligible residents access COVID-19 medications.

COVID-19 therapeutics screening and referral tool

1. Screen patients to determine if they may be eligible for COVID-19 therapeutics.

Patients may be eligible for COVID-19 therapeutics if they meet all of the following criteria:

- Patient **tested positive** for COVID-19 with NAAT (e.g., PCR) or antigen test OR a provider determines that a patient is eligible for antiviral therapy even if testing is negative, depending on symptoms, exposure history and risk factors.
- Patient has **at least one symptom** consistent with mild to moderate COVID-19 (e.g., fever, cough, sore throat, malaise, headache, muscle pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, loss of taste and smell). Medications are most helpful at the first sign of symptoms even if symptoms are mild!
- Patient is **within five to seven days of symptom onset** (five days for oral antivirals or seven days for IV antivirals).
- Patient is **not hospitalized** due to COVID-19.
- Patient is **at risk for developing severe illness** from COVID-19. This includes, but is not limited to, having one or more of the medical conditions listed below. Note that the more underlying conditions a person has, the higher the risk for severe COVID-19 outcomes.

If patient **does not report being at high risk** for severe illness **or is unsure** if they are at high risk but is still interested in talking to a provider to determine if they are eligible for therapeutics, **refer patient to a health care provider** for further assessment.

Conditions that may place a person at high risk for severe illness:

Some of the most common conditions that may place a person at high risk include:

- Being older than 50 years
- Obesity
- Having chronic medical conditions such as heart, lung or kidney disease
- Being on treatment that suppresses your immune system
- Pregnancy

To find a full list of factors that may put someone at high risk, visit [CDC: People with Certain Medical Conditions \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html).

2. If patient meets screening criteria, provide education about COVID-19 medications.

- Patient handout on oral antivirals: [COVID-19 Medications: Oral Antivirals \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/medsantiviral.pdf\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/medsantiviral.pdf).
- COVID-19 medications for the general public: [COVID-19 Medications \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/meds.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/meds.html).

3. Ask patient if they are interested in referral to a medical provider for clinical assessment and prescription (includes telehealth).

Is patient interested in a referral to a medical provider?

- Yes – Refer to medical provider (continue on to Step 4).
- No – Ask questions to try to understand reasons/concerns for declining referral.

4. Facilitate referral to medical provider for clinical assessment and prescription.

Work with patient to determine most appropriate referral. The following are referral options:

- Refer to patient’s regular health care provider.
- Refer to an on-site health care provider or contracted health care provider.
- Refer to [Cue Health: Get COVID-19 Treatment in MN \(https://care.cuehealth.com/mn\)](https://care.cuehealth.com/mn).
 - Patients can access treatment using the web, Cue Health App, or by telephone. Includes telehealth visit with a health care provider, a prescription for antivirals if eligible, and medication delivery where available.
 - The telehealth service is free; however, there may be a co-pay for medications. Patient assistance programs are available to cover costs and the majority of patients will be able to obtain medications for free or at low cost (see step 6 for more information).
- Coordinate patient transportation to a nearby **Test-to-Treat site**.
 - [HHS Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response: Find COVID-19 Medications \(https://treatments.hhs.gov/\)](https://treatments.hhs.gov/)
- Refer patient to a federally funded or community care clinic.
 - [HRSA: Find a Health Center \(findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov/tool\)](https://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov/tool)

5. Check whether patient is eligible for a patient assistance program for medication.

If the patient receives a prescription for medication, patient assistance programs are available to cover all or most of the cost. Providers are encouraged to help patients enroll in programs during their assessment but not all providers may be aware of available programs during transition to commercial availability.

Paxlovid programs: patient, provider, caregiver, or pharmacist can enroll patient online. Enrollment takes 5 minutes or less.

Lagevrio program: Provider must enroll patient. Enrollment takes 10-20 minutes.

NOTE: For any provider or patient experiencing difficulties with these programs, some pharmacies may still have supplies of government-distributed molnupiravir available, which may be dispensed for free to any eligible patient. [HHS COVID-19 Find COVID-19 Medications \(https://treatments.hhs.gov/\)](https://treatments.hhs.gov/) may be used to find pharmacies with these supplies.

Patient assistance programs

Paxlovid (nirmatrelvir/ritonavir)

PAXCESS Patient Support Program

- Eligibility:
 - Patients on Medicare or Medicaid or who do not have health insurance will be able to get Paxlovid free of charge until the end of 2024 through a Pfizer patient assistance program called PAXCESS.
 - Patients with private insurance can enroll in PAXCESS to receive a co-pay assistance card to cover some or all of their out-of-pocket costs.
- Website: [PAXCESS Patient Support Program \(https://paxlovid.iassist.com/\)](https://paxlovid.iassist.com/)
- Phone: 877-450-4412

Lagevrio (molnupiravir)

Merck Patient Assistance Program

- Eligibility: Patients who are uninsured or whose insurance does not cover Lagevrio
- Eligible patients will receive Lagevrio free of charge
- Website: [MerckHelps \(www.merckhelps.com/LAGEVRIO\)](http://www.merckhelps.com/LAGEVRIO)
- Phone: 800-727-5400

More information is available: [Commercial Availability of Antiviral Medications for COVID-19 \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/medsaccess.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/medsaccess.html)

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To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-201-5414.