



Date: November 30, 2022
To: Health Care Providers and Health Care Facilities
From: New York State Department of Health

UPDATES ON COVID-19 TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Emerging omicron subvariants (e.g., BQ.1 and BQ.1.1) are resistant to the monoclonal antibodies (mAbs) bebtelovimab and Evusheld** (authorized for pre-exposure prophylaxis).
- **Bebtelovimab is no longer authorized** for treatment in the U.S.
- **Paxlovid is the preferred outpatient treatment for COVID-19 or IV remdesivir:** The National Institutes of Health (NIH) COVID-19 treatment Guidelines recommend Paxlovid as the preferred treatment or remdesivir (Veklury). The antivirals Paxlovid, remdesivir, and molnupiravir are expected to be active against newer subvariants.
- **Virtual Urgent Care:** To ensure all New Yorkers have equitable access to available COVID-19 treatments, the New York State Department of Health has launched a free Hotline for those who test positive for COVID-19, but don't have a health care provider.

Dear Colleagues:

COVID-19 variants are co-circulating with influenza and other respiratory viruses (e.g., respiratory syncytial virus, enteroviruses). Although up to date vaccination offers the best protection against severe COVID-19, therapeutics offer additional protection against COVID-19-related hospitalization and death. Please counsel patients with risk factors for severe disease on how to promptly get treatment if they develop COVID-19. This advisory provides updates on outpatient treatments for COVID-19.

COVID-19 variants and resistance to monoclonal antibodies

On November 30, 2022, the FDA updated the [Emergency Use Authorization \(EUA\) fact sheet](#) for the COVID-19 monoclonal antibody bebtelovimab. Due to the prevalence of Omicron sub-variants such as BQ.1/BQ.1.1, bebtelovimab **is not** currently authorized for emergency use in the U.S.

As of week ending 11/26/22, the estimated regional prevalence of Evusheld resistant variants (BQ.1/BQ.1.1/BF.7/BA.4.6/BA.2.75.2/BA.5.2.6) was 80.2% (covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#variant-proportions). Given the risk of infection by Evusheld resistant variants, providers should ensure patients with moderate to severe immune compromise are up to date on COVID-19 vaccinations, counseled on general prevention measures, and have a treatment plan in place to seek timely medical care if they develop symptoms.

For the most up to date tracking of circulating proportions of variants in the United States, including HHS regions and jurisdictions, please refer to the CDC's COVID Data Tracker and NOWCAST, located at <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#variant-proportions>.



COVID-19 antivirals are available and effective

Outpatient antiviral treatments for COVID-19, including oral antivirals (OAVs) and [IV remdesivir](#) (Veklury), are effective in reducing the risk for hospitalization and death. [Nirmatrelvir with ritonavir](#) (Paxlovid) is the preferred treatment for most outpatients or remdesivir if Paxlovid is contraindicated. The oral antiviral molnupiravir (Lagevrio) is authorized as an alternative when Paxlovid and remdesivir are not accessible or clinically appropriate. ([NIH COVID-19 Treatment Guidelines for Non-Hospitalized Adults](#)) The antivirals Paxlovid, remdesivir, and molnupiravir are expected to be active against circulating subvariants.

Remdesivir by IV infusion for outpatients

In clinical trials, remdesivir ([Veklury](#)) reduced the risk of hospitalization or death by 87% among high-risk unvaccinated patients with COVID-19 treated within 7 days of symptom onset ([Gottlieb, 2021](#)). It must be administered daily by IV infusion for 3 days. It is the only [treatment approved for children under 12 years of age](#).

Providing remdesivir in the outpatient setting may be of particular importance for facilities and providers that see large numbers of immunosuppressed patients, such as transplant and oncology centers, or high-risk pediatric populations. Providers are encouraged to order remdesivir to have on hand for patients unable to take Paxlovid. To order, contact AmerisourceBergen Specialty Distribution by calling 1-800-746-6273 or emailing C19therapies@AmerisourceBergen.com for more information. Visit for velkuryhcp.com coding and reimbursement information.

Access to Care

To ensure all New Yorkers have equitable access to available COVID-19 treatments, the New York State Department of Health launched a free Hotline for those who test positive for COVID-19, but don't have a health care provider. All New Yorkers outside of New York City, regardless of income or health insurance coverage who test COVID-19 positive, are eligible to be evaluated for treatment by calling 888-TREAT-NY (888-873-2869) or completing an evaluation at the [NYS COVID-19 ExpressCare Therapeutics Access](#) website, which includes a telemedicine visit. New York City residents should call 212-COVID-19.

Resources

Accessing COVID-19 Oral Antivirals

- Paxlovid and molnupiravir (Lagevrio) are widely available in NYS pharmacies listed on the [COVID-19 Therapeutics Locator](#) and [Test to Treat Locator](#).