Southwest Nebraska
Public Health Department

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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No-Cost Antiviral Medication for COVID-19

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) has been notified that antiviral medication to treat COVID-19 is available at no cost at several pharmacies in the health district. Local healthcare providers may prescribe these antivirals for adults who are at risk of more severe illness from COVID-19.

"We have a multitude of unused doses of these antivirals for the general public in our area," stated Myra Stoney, Health Director for SWNPHD. "This medication must be started within 5 days of symptoms starting and is <u>free</u> to the patient. We encourage residents to check with their healthcare provider about receiving this treatment to reduce the risk of severe disease from COVID-19."

The antiviral available is Molnupiravir, which is produced by Merck, and has been given emergency use authorization by the FDA. Molnupiravir may only be used for the treatment of mild-to-moderate COVID-19 in adults that meet the following criteria:
- Have a positive COVID-19 test.
- Are at high-risk for becoming severely ill due to COVID-19, including hospitalization or death.
- Alternative COVID-19 treatment options authorized by the FDA are not accessible or clinically appropriate.

Molnupiravir is **not authorized for use in individuals who are less than 18 years of age**.

At this time, prescriptions for this medication may be filled at the following pharmacies:
- Mark's Pharmacy- Cambridge
- U-Save – McCook
- Farrell's Pharmacy- McCook
- U-Save - Ogallala
- Adam's Drug - Imperial
- Benkelman Pharmacy - Benkelman

For Long-Term Care and Assisted Living Residents:
The Nebraska Antimicrobial Stewardship Assessment and Promotion Program (ASAP) has streamlined the process of ordering COVID-19 antivirals for residents of long-term care or assisted living facilities. When a resident tests positive, the facility submits their information to ASAP for review by an ASAP pharmacist. Then

the facility sends the order to the pharmacy which is processed through ASAP's stockpile and sent to the facility for administration at no charge to the patient. This process is usually completed within 24 hours. More information on this process can be found at https://asap.nebraskamed.com/covid19-treatment/.

SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10th St (1 block north of Arby's) in McCook and can be reached by calling 308-345-4223. The website www.swhealth.ne.gov contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote and protect health. You can also follow SWNPHD on Facebook and Instagram. SWNPHD serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties.

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