



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Monoclonal Antibody Treatment Continues to Show Outstanding Results for Phoebe COVID-19 Patients

Albany, Ga. – In the first three months of its use at Phoebe, monoclonal antibody infusion therapy has shown outstanding results for COVID-19 patients at high risk of developing severe illness. The therapy was part of President Trump’s treatment regimen when it was in an experimental stage last October. The following month, the Food and Drug Administration gave the treatment emergency use authorization, and Phoebe began providing the therapy to approved patients in early January.

“The therapy is approved for high-risk patients soon after their diagnosis. The goal is to help those patients avoid emergency room visits and hospital stays, and that is exactly what we are achieving with our use of the treatment at Phoebe,” said Dianna Grant, MD, Phoebe Putney Health System Chief Medical Officer.

Through April 1, Phoebe has provided the treatment to 194 patients at Phoebe North and 75 at Phoebe Sumter. “Only two of the 269 patients we have treated with monoclonal antibodies have required hospitalization for COVID-19 treatment, and both of those patients were already starting to show more serious symptoms by the time the infusions actually began. We have found that most patients show significant improvement within 24 hours of the treatment,” Dr. Grant said.

The laboratory-made antibodies mimic the human body’s natural response to the coronavirus. They work by attaching to the virus and stopping it from invading human cells. The therapy is approved for people 65 and older and those with existing health conditions that put them at higher risk of developing severe complications from COVID-19. Patients must be referred by a physician for the treatment. “We really want our physician community to know this treatment works, and it is still available. We began using it as the third wave of COVID-19

hit our community early this year. As cases have dropped, so have our referral numbers, but we must be ready for a potential fourth wave. This therapy would play an important role in our response to another surge in cases, and we strongly encourage physicians throughout southwest Georgia to refer newly-diagnosed COVID-19 patients who are appropriate for the therapy. It truly is a lifesaver,” Dr. Grant said.

Phoebe has ample supply of the medications used in the treatment at both Phoebe North and Phoebe Sumter. “I read a newspaper editorial this week written by a physician in New York City who is having trouble finding a place for his patients to receive this therapy,” said Brandi Lunneborg, Phoebe Sumter Medical Center Chief Executive Officer. “Even when his hospital has had access to the drugs, the doctor said the approval process has been long and cumbersome. We are fortunate that we are able to provide this service to the people of southwest Georgia and that our process is efficient and easy,” she added.

Physicians interested in referring COVID-19 patients for monoclonal antibody infusion therapy at Phoebe North in Albany can call Phoebe Pulmonology at 229-312-5579. Those interested in referring patients to Phoebe Sumter in Americus should call 229-931-1128.

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EDITOR’S NOTE: Attached photos show Jocelyn and Alvin Moment receiving monoclonal antibody therapy at Phoebe North in January.



