

Dept. of Health Services: Deputy Secretary Deb Standridge statement on new FDA emergency use authorizations of the first anti-viral pills to treat COVID-19

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“The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued Emergency Use Authorizations for Pfizer’s Paxlovid and Merck’s Molnupiravir, the first oral antiviral medications authorized for use in mild to moderate cases of COVID-19. The federal government will begin allocation of these medications shortly and DHS is preparing for this medication to become available to eligible Wisconsinites within the coming weeks. At this time, we know that the initial supplies will be limited and we ask for everyone’s patience. Distribution will focus on the most vulnerable and hard-hit communities, and we will continue to provide updates as additional information is available.

In clinical trials, these medications reduced hospitalization and death rates in people who tested positive for COVID-19, and who were at high risk of severe COVID-19 illness. Treatment is by prescription and should begin as soon as possible after diagnosis but no longer than 5 days after symptom onset. These medications are not for people with some pre-existing conditions, so please discuss your eligibility with your health care provider.

We are pleased that the authorization has come through as we are facing a surge in hospitalizations due to the increased transmissibility of the Omicron variant of COVID-19. But we must continue to use all the tools in our toolbox to combat this pandemic. Paxlovid and Molnupiravir are not intended as a substitute for COVID-19

vaccination. DHS urges all Wisconsinites to get vaccinated as soon as possible, and to get a booster shot when you are able. Please get tested for COVID-19 if you are planning to travel or visit people outside of your home during the holidays. Wearing a mask and practicing physical distancing also helps to stop the spread of this virus.”