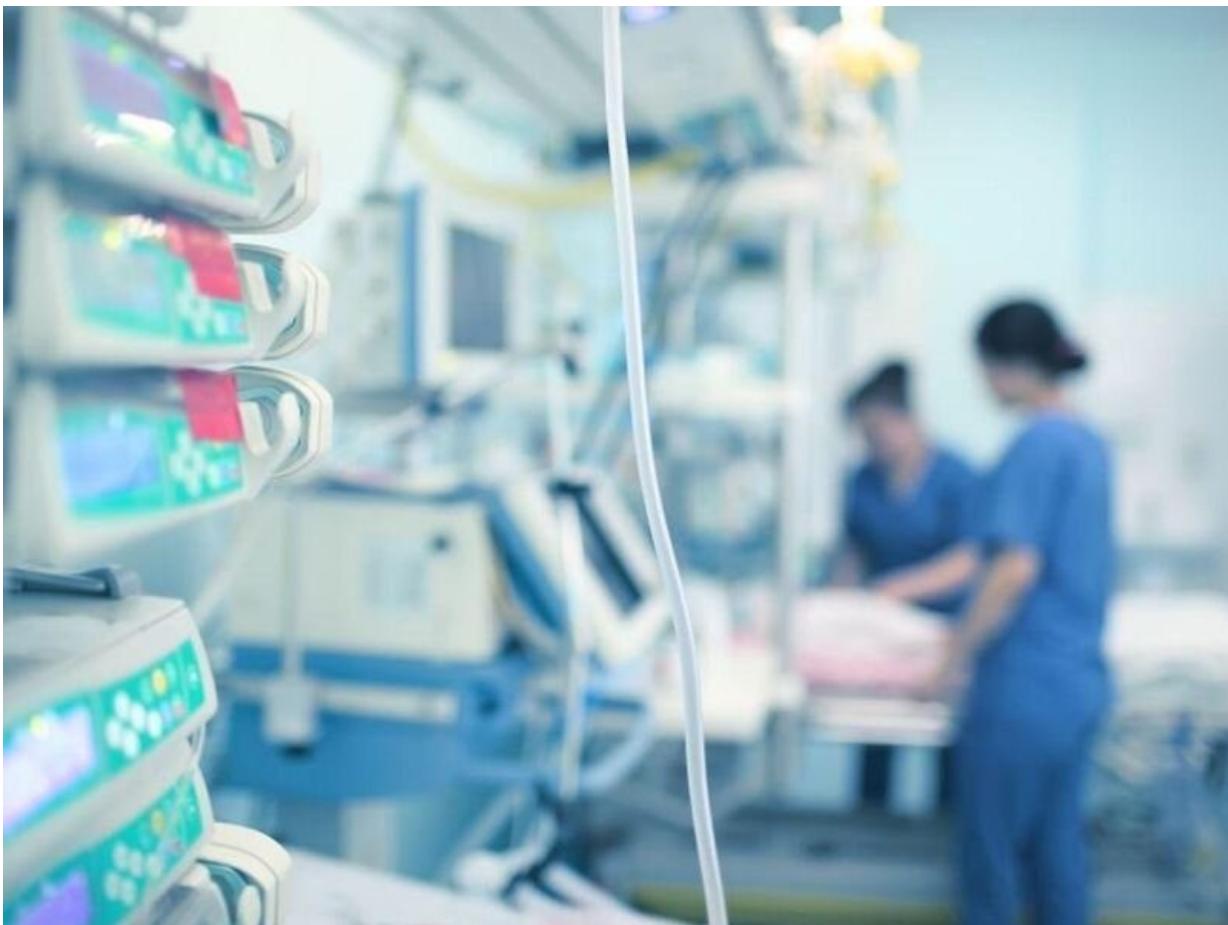


Biden administration buys more monoclonal antibody treatments to ward off shortage

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(HealthDay)—As severe cases of COVID-19 rise and demand surges for

monoclonal antibody treatments, the U.S. government is ordering more from two key suppliers.

Monoclonal antibodies, which are lab-engineered [immune system proteins](#), can help trigger a healthy immune response against COVID-19 infection.

The Biden administration has also taken over distributing the therapeutics, to help avoid shortages and to ensure equitable distribution, *CNN* reported.

"HHS will determine the amount of product each state and territory receives on a weekly basis. State and territorial health departments will subsequently identify sites that will receive product and how much," said a spokesperson from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. "This system will help maintain equitable distribution, both geographically and temporally, across the country—providing states and territories with consistent, fairly-distributed supply over the coming weeks."

Just seven states—Florida, Texas, Mississippi, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia and Louisiana—have accounted for 70% of orders, *CNN* reported.

"Given this reality, we must work to ensure our supply of these life-saving therapies remains available for all states and territories, not just some," the HHS spokesperson said.

HHS will allocate the therapeutics to states and territories each week, rather than have administration sites order them directly.

One of the manufacturers, Regeneron, announced that the U.S. government has contracted with the company for 1.4 million additional

doses, making a total of 3 million doses ordered.

Regeneron's treatment was authorized for emergency use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. It's a cocktail of two monoclonal [antibodies](#) meant to reduce the risk of hospitalization and death both for patients, as well as for close contacts of infected people.

Regeneron will supply the additional doses between now and the end of January 2022.

The United States is paying Regeneron \$2,100 per dose, which the government is then providing to patients at no cost. Regeneron will be paid \$2.94 billion for the additional doses, according to the U.S. Department of Defense.

A second manufacturer, Eli Lilly and Company, said the United States bought 388,000 doses of its monoclonal antibody treatment etesevimab. The United States had previously purchased the company's bamlanivimab.

Previous shipments had stopped because Eli Lilly's treatment had not worked against earlier SARS-CoV-2 variants, *CNN* reported. However, new evidence suggests that the two treatments used in combination are effective against the Delta variant of COVID-19. The treatments will be supplied in the third and fourth quarters of this year.

"The recent increase in COVID-19 cases has caused a substantial rise in the utilization of monoclonal antibody drugs, particularly in areas of the country with low vaccination rates," Dr. Daniel Skovronsky, Lilly's chief scientific and medical officer and president of Lilly Research Laboratories, said in a statement. "Lilly developed bamlanivimab and etesevimab for administration together, in anticipation of variants such as the highly contagious Delta variant, which currently accounts for more

than 98% of all identified COVID-19 cases in the U.S."

By Sept. 10, 2.17 million doses of existing [monoclonal antibodies](#) had been shipped to sites. Since last December, 938,000 doses have been used. About 43% of the distributed doses have been used as of Sept. 3.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has [more on COVID-19](#).

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