

Madison County Health Officials Discuss COVID-19 Treatment at Committee

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EDWARDSVILLE — Madison County health officials want the public to know that there is a treatment for those who test positive for COVID-19 and it decreases hospitalization and death from the disease.

Chairman Kurt Prenzler said on Tuesday the Madison County Health Advisory Committee discussed monoclonal antibody infusion following Missouri's rollout of the treatment last week.

“It’s important that this treatment is offered to COVID-positive patients as soon as possible,” Prenzler said.

Medical professionals say the treatment is a potent version of the natural defense that people build to fight a virus. Monoclonal antibodies are laboratory-made proteins that mimic the immune system’s ability to fight off harmful viruses and bacteria, which can cause disease.

Committee members asked about the treatment and why it wasn’t advertised. Committee member Laura DeLuca, a registered nurse, said a co-worker who tested positive was provided the treatment, because they knew about it.

“I don’t ever see anything about it,” Deluca said.

Health Department Director Toni Corona said medical providers in Madison County are aware of the treatment and it is available on a case-by-case basis. She said the trick is for the individual who tests positive for COVID to discuss the treatment with their health care provider.

“You’re right, you don’t hear a lot about it.” Corona said.

“It’s a shame it’s not advertised,” Deluca said.

Dr. Ray Weber, chair of the advisory committee, said in several states where it is advertised it’s made to sound like an alternative to the vaccine.

“It’s an alternative to life is what it is,” Deluca responded. “They were dying.”

Weber said the reason it’s not advertised is there is confusion among the public. He said the antibodies are not lasting like you would get with your own immune system producing them.

Committee members agreed the public should know more about it.

Committee member Dr. Loren Hughes said when Missouri announced it would be opening up COVID antibody infusion clinics, people in Illinois asked if it would be available here.

“I’m all about the vaccine, but this is also a very effective treatment,” Hughes said.

After the meeting Hughes found information about the treatment advertised on the Illinois Department of Public Health's website and asked that it be shared on the county health department site.

Prenzler said the consensus of the health advisory committee is that it is a good idea to tell the public that monoclonal antibody treatment is effective and available in Madison County.