



practice notes



**NORTH MISSISSIPPI
MEDICAL CENTER**

October 2021

A monthly
newsletter for
physicians, nurse practitioners,
physician assistants & other
health care professionals

NMHS, MSDH & HHS Partner to Expand Antibody Therapy

North Mississippi Health Services, in partnership with the Mississippi Department of Health (MSDH) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), has expanded access to COVID-19 monoclonal antibody (mAb) treatments and is administering the treatment at seven locations. Additional locations are being added.

For people who are at high risk for developing severe COVID-19 illness and have tested positive for the COVID-19 virus or are unvaccinated and have been exposed to someone who has tested positive, this promising mAb treatment has been shown to help prevent progression of the disease that might otherwise require hospitalization.

If administered within 10 days of onset of COVID-19 symptoms, the one-time therapy is highly effective in neutralizing the virus and preventing symptoms from worsening. The treatment may be administered intravenously (IV) or through subcutaneous injection.

“As we fight our most recent surge of COVID-19, the Delta variant, an instrumental part of our treatment is the use of monoclonal antibodies. If you have a COVID positive test please see your



provider or seek an appointment to help prevent requiring hospitalization,” said Jeremy Blanchard, M.D., M.M.M, NMHS chief medical officer. “With the increase of cases in our community, we believe this treatment will play an important role in caring for more individuals and preventing the spread of this virus.”

On March 17, HHS announced it was investing \$150 million to increase access to mAb therapy for high-risk patients in underserved and disadvantaged communities across the country. With support from KPMG LLP, HHS is developing new prototype models for expanding access to mAb treatment and leveraging an existing network of health care partners who have the experience and equipment necessary to provide the therapy.

NMHS is the first provider organization in Mississippi to join this national initiative and joins a growing list of mAbs therapy providers supported by KPMG and sponsored by HHS.

The therapy is the first COVID-19 treatment granted emergency use authorization by the U.S. Food and Drug

Administration for outpatient use. A Phase 3 clinical trial showed that the antibody therapy reduced the risk of hospitalization or death by up to 70% in patients who received the drug intravenously compared to those who received a placebo.

The mAb treatment can take from 20 to 70 minutes, with an observation time afterward. There is no cost to the patient and treatment is offered regardless of immigration status or health insurance.

For more information about monoclonal antibodies, visit www.crushcovid.com.

PLI Accepting Applicants

NMMC's Physician Leadership Institute (PLI) provides an opportunity for physicians who are committed to growing their leadership skills and promotes a greater understanding of our health care system, its mission and operation.

More information is available at www.nmhs.net/physician-leadership-institute. Application deadline is Dec. 3. Participants will be notified of acceptance by Jan. 3, 2022. PLI requires approximately four months of institute training, which includes eight mandatory class sessions plus outside assignments.

To submit information, call (662) 377-3712 or email drpugh@nmhs.net.
Visit www.nmhs.net/practice-notes to read this newsletter online.

NMHS Welcomes New Physicians

Orthopaedic Institute of North Mississippi

Mary Elizabeth “Lizzie” Gibson, M.D., received a bachelor’s degree in nursing in 2008 from the University of Tulsa in Oklahoma before attending medical school. She earned her medical degree from the University of Texas Medical School at Houston in 2015. She completed residency training in orthopaedic surgery at Orlando Health in Florida in 2020, where she received the Resident Community Service Award. Dr. Gibson recently completed a fellowship in hand, upper extremity and microvascular surgery at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque.



Jeb Williams, M.D., recently completed a fellowship in adult reconstruction at Mississippi Sports Medicine and Orthopaedic Center in Jackson. Dr. Williams completed his residency in Orthopaedic Surgery at the University of Florida in Jacksonville, where he was selected administrative chief resident and named most outstanding resident. Dr. Williams earned his medical degree from the University of Tennessee in Memphis. He holds a bachelor’s degree in biology from the University of Tennessee at Martin.



Sanders Clinic for Women

Brittney Billsby, D.O., holds a bachelor’s degree in chemistry/medical sciences from Mississippi College in Clinton. She earned her medical degree from William Carey University College of Osteopathic Medicine in Hattiesburg in 2017. Dr. Billsby completed an OB-GYN residency at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson in June.



Elizabeth Stokes, M.D., holds a bachelor’s degree in cell and molecular biology from the University of Tennessee at Martin. She earned her medical degree in 2017 from the University of Tennessee Health Sciences Center in Memphis, where she completed an OB-GYN residency in June.



Iuka Medical Clinic

Kaycee R. Burcham, M.D., received her medical degree in 2018 from the University of Mississippi School of Medicine in Jackson. Dr. Burcham completed her internal medicine residency in June at Magnolia Regional Health Center, where she served as ambulatory chief resident. She is a 2014 graduate of the University of North Alabama in Florence with a bachelor’s degree in biology.



Jessica Jensen, M.D., received her medical degree in 2018 from St. George’s University School of Medicine in Grenada, West Indies. She completed an internal medicine residency in June at Magnolia Regional Health Center. She holds bachelor’s degrees in physics and biology from the University of Mississippi in Oxford.



Cardiothoracic & Vascular Surgery Clinic (Tupelo, Corinth)

John Chalmers “Jack” Neill Jr., M.D., recently completed a fellowship in vascular surgery with Prisma Health-Upstate in Greenville, South Carolina. A native of Jackson, he holds a bachelor’s degree in political science with a minor in Spanish from Rhodes College in Memphis and a master’s degree in biology/medical sciences from Mississippi College in Clinton. He earned his medical degree



from the University of Mississippi School of Medicine in Jackson in 2014 and completed a residency in general surgery at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in 2019.

Carl Ballard, FNP-C, earned an associate degree in nursing from Beville State Community College in Hamilton, Alabama, and a bachelor’s degree in nursing from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. He completed a master’s degree in nursing and his family practitioner training at UAB in 2020. He has been employed by NMMC since 2008 and previously worked as a registered nurse on the Cardiovascular Step-down Unit and in Surgical Services as a cardiovascular surgery circulating nurse, scribe nurse and case manager.



Paige Nabors, FNP-C, earned an associate degree in nursing from Itawamba Community College in Fulton and a bachelor’s degree in nursing from Mississippi University for Women in Columbus. She completed her master’s degree in nursing leadership in 2017 from the University of North Alabama in Florence. In 2018, she completed her family nurse practitioner training and certification at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg. Nabors joined NMMC in 2012 and has worked as a registered nurse, charge nurse and clinical nurse educator. She served as nurse manager for 2 West from January 2019 until joining the Cardiothoracic and Vascular Surgery Clinic in July.



Booneville Medical Clinic & Urgent Care

Michael Thompson, M.D., completed residency training at the NMMC Family Medicine Residency Center in Tupelo, where he served as administrative chief resident. He earned a bachelor’s degree in biological



engineering from Mississippi State University in Starkville. He completed his medical degree at University of Mississippi School of Medicine in Jackson.

Eupora Pediatric Clinic

Britney Williams, M.D., recently completed residency training in pediatrics at Le Bonheur Children's Hospital in Memphis. She received her bachelor's degree in biology from Blue Mountain College before attending Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee. She received her medical degree from the University of Mississippi School of Medicine in Jackson.



Urgent Care

Matthew Dowdy, D.O., cares for patients at North Mississippi Medical Clinics' urgent care locations in Tupelo, Booneville and West Point. Dr. Dowdy recently completed the NMMC Family Medicine Residency Program. He is a graduate of William Carey College of Osteopathic Medicine, where he earned his medical degree. He holds a bachelor's degree in biology from Mississippi College in Clinton.



Pontotoc Medical Clinic

Meagan Cherry, FNP-C, received her associate degree in nursing from Northeast Mississippi Community College in Booneville and her bachelor's degree in nursing from Mississippi University for Women in Columbus. She earned her master's degree in nursing and family nurse practitioner training at the University of Mississippi School of Nursing in Jackson.



Calhoun County Medical Clinic

Robin Harrelson, FNP-C, joined NMHS in 2010 at IMA-Tupelo and transferred to Pontotoc Medical Clinic in 2013. She received her associate degree in nursing from Holmes Community College in Grenada in 1996 and her bachelor's degree in nursing from Mississippi University for Women in Columbus in 2000. She completed her master's degree in nursing and her nurse practitioner training at MUW in 2010.



Children's Clinic Opens in Fairpark

The Children's Clinic has a new location, 199 Grandstand Place in Fairpark in downtown Tupelo. The new facility includes 27 exam rooms, each equipped with infant scales, plus large waiting areas for well and sick children. Other features include a breastfeeding room for nursing mothers, a laboratory, procedure room and rooms for vision and hearing screening.



On staff are pediatricians Jennifer Grisham, Charles Meeks, Katie Meyer, Amy Price, Charles "Skip" Robertson Jr., Van Stone III, Eric Street and Veronica Valdez, and nurse practitioners Tina King and Lauren Parrish.

Dr. King Co-Authors Clinical Study

Rheumatologist Charles King II, M.D., of Rheumatology Consultants is a co-author on a recent study, "Reducing Immunogenicity of Pegloticase (RECIPE) with Concomitant Use of Mycophenolate Mofetil in Patients with Refractory Gout – a Phase II Double Blind Placebo Controlled Randomized Trial."



Pegloticase is used for treatment of severe gout patients but its use is limited by immunogenicity. The study evaluated whether mycophenolate mofetil (MMF) would prolong the efficacy of pegloticase. For more information, visit <https://doi.org/10.1002/art.41731>.

Dr. Desai Authors Book Chapter

Pranjal Desai, M.D., an obstetrician-gynecologist with Women's Group of West Point, has written a chapter in the book, "Medical Robotics." His book chapter, "Present Challenges of Robotics in Gynecology," can be found online at www.intechopen.com/online-first/present-challenges-of-robotics-in-gynecology.



NMHS Hospitals Recognized with QUEST Hero Award

NMHS hospitals in Tupelo, Amory, Eupora, Iuka, Pontotoc and West Point, Mississippi, and Hamilton, Alabama, have been recognized with a 2021 Premier QUEST Hero Award.



The award recognizes hospitals for their exemplary efforts to act nimbly and quickly evolve care and operations in the face of extraordinary circumstances presented by the pandemic. The award comes from Premier Inc., a leading health care improvement and technology company.

"Throughout the pandemic, our health care team has risen to the challenges presented by COVID-19 and faced them with courage in spite of the risks involved," said Shane Spees, NMHS president and chief executive officer. "Their dedication and resilience in caring for our patients, as well as each other, have been heroic to say the least."



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IRB Renews Studies

The NMHS Institutional Review Board (IRB) currently oversees more than 80 biomedical and behavioral studies. The IRB meets monthly and the following studies were approved or renewed on August 19, 2021.

New Study

Study: *A Phase II, Randomized, Open-label, Repeat Dose, Safety and Efficacy Study of Renal Autologous Cell Therapy (REACT) in Subjects with Type 1 or 2 Diabetes and Chronic Kidney Disease (REGEN-007)*

Investigators: Thomas Wooldridge, M.D. (PI); Marcus Britton, M.D.; John Elliott, DO; John Lee, M.D.; Morris Hamilton, M.D.; Son Lam, M.D.; Amita Maibam, M.D.; Tzonko Milev,

M.D.; Christopher Miller, M.D.; Richard Arriola, M.D.; Jeffrey Howard, M.D.

Summary: The purpose of this study is to determine if Renal Autologous Cell Therapy is safe and effective and if it works to improve kidney function when given as one injection or up to two injections into the kidneys of patients with diabetes and chronic kidney disease.

Study Renewals

Study: *Pattern of Use and Safety/Effectiveness of Nivolumab in Routine Oncology Practice (CA209234)*

Investigators: Jiahuai Tan, M.D. (PI); Charles Montgomery, M.D.; Paschal Wilson, M.D.; Ashley Gilliland, ANP; Tammy Pelegrin, CFNP

Summary: This trial will study how nivolumab is used to treat patients who are diagnosed with advanced melanoma or lung cancer, and will review these patients' health related experiences overall. Enrollment is open.

Study: *Corrona Spondyloarthritis and Psoriatic Arthritis (PsA/SpA) Registry (PSA-400)*

Investigators: Charles King, M.D. (PI)

Summary: The purpose of this registry is to learn more about PsA/SpA, how doctors treat PsA/SpA, how well medications and other treatments work, the safety of those treatments, and to improve the care and outcomes of people with PsA/SpA. Enrollment is open.



Continuing Medical Education

We encourage you to check out our online educational offerings at www.nmhs.net/online-learning.