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## **Physician General, Medical Professionals Discuss COVID-19 Treatment Options Available for Pennsylvanians**

**Harrisburg, PA** – Pennsylvania Department of Health Physician General Dr. Denise Johnson today led a discussion about the COVID-19 treatment options available for Pennsylvanians. This panel discussion was part of Pennsylvania's ongoing fight against COVID-19 and educated residents with relevant and accurate information about COVID-19 and addressing the questions of concerned community members.

"New treatment options are now available in our toolkit to help in the fight against COVID-19," Dr. Johnson said. "There are two types of products that can be used for treatment – monoclonal antibodies and oral antivirals. Monoclonal antibodies are authorized treatment of early disease as well as for pre- and post-exposure treatments, while the oral antivirals are only authorized for individuals who test positive for COVID-19."

Dr. Johnson was joined by additional medical professionals versed in COVID-19 treatments:

- Dr. Ryan Bariola, M.D., FIDSA, FACP, Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine in the Division of Infectious Diseases at the University of Pittsburgh and the Medical Director of Antimicrobial Stewardship at UPMC; and
- Dr. Pablo Tebas, M.D., Professor of Medicine and the director and the PI of the AIDS clinical trial unit of the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Tebas is an Infectious Diseases physician at the hospital of the University of Pennsylvania.

"COVID-19 remains with us and will continue to be with us for the foreseeable future", Dr. Bariola said. "After vaccination and other preventative measures, early treatment with proven and effective therapies is critical for improving outcomes in those who do become infected with COVID-19. With treatment, earlier is better, so patients should seek care and testing as soon as they feel ill. It is likewise critical that providers remain up to date regarding proven treatment options and know how to get these treatments for patients as quickly as possible."

"COVID-19 continues to challenge this nation and the world both at the individual patient level and at the population level," Dr. Tebas said. "We have learnt a lot since the beginning of this pandemic and have developed effective diagnostic, supportive, preventive and therapeutic tools to fight this terrible infection. As the virus does, we need to be able to adapt to the current pandemic situation to offer our patients the best therapeutic options at any given time in the course of their disease and to decrease the strain in our health systems so we can continue to provide the best possible supportive care both to people with COVID 19 and those without it."

With the spike of COVID-19 cases and emerging variants, there may be logistical or supply constraints that make it impossible to offer the available therapy to all eligible individuals. Therefore, treatments are being given to individuals that need it the most right now. If you are

not sure if you qualify for treatment, speak with your healthcare provider. To find locations to receive these treatments, visit [health.pa.gov](https://health.pa.gov).

The best way to fight COVID-19 remains getting vaccinated and receiving a booster shot. If you or your loved ones are not yet vaccinated, now is the time to get fully vaccinated, get boosted, and get children ages 5 – 18 vaccinated. Visit [vaccines.gov](https://vaccines.gov) to find a vaccine provider near you to schedule your vaccine appointment.

More details from today's event including the full video and information about the panelists can be found on [Facebook](#) and [PAcast](#).

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