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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HEALTH BOARD, HOSPITAL TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON ALTERNATIVE COVID-19 TREATMENTS

WINNEMUCCA, Nev.— Humboldt County residents who screen for COVID-19 through Humboldt General Hospital’s testing site will soon be provided information regarding alternative options for prevention and treatment.

That was the consensus of Humboldt County Health Board and Humboldt General Hospital officials after community members asked that officials share more than COVID-19 isolation, quarantine and vaccination information with those testing for the virus.

During the Tuesday, November 23, health board meeting, public commenters said the health board’s emphasis on community-wide vaccination disregards an array of options for community residents who don’t wish to get vaccinated but who still hope to be protected from COVID-19, or who want early treatment if they do contract the virus.

“[We are asking for] leadership guidance and action,” said community member Lyndsee Jimenez, adding that she and others are seeking direction on “who we talk to” and “where we go” to find alternative options to vaccination.

Among those options, the group asked officials to share information about non-traditional pharmaceutical treatments such as Ivermectin, an anti-parasitic drug that is often used to treat or prevent parasites in animals and humans, and hydroxychloroquine, a drug which is commonly used to treat autoimmune conditions like rheumatoid arthritis and lupus in humans.

The group also asked officials to share information regarding nutraceuticals—natural foods such as antioxidants, dietary supplements, vitamins, minerals, herbals and more—and monoclonal antibody infusion treatments to help prevent severe symptoms in high-risk patients.

Humboldt County Health Officer Charles Stringham, MD, told the group his position is not to remove any options from community residents.

“I have absolutely no interest, nor should I think anybody else on this board should have any interest whatsoever, in taking options away from people,” he said.

However, he and other health board officials noted that the board’s position is not to recommend specific alternatives or even providers; instead, any materials distributed will encourage patients to visit with their

medical provider to assess any new treatments or medications and how those could affect a patient's existing care plan.

"It's very important that the relationship between patients and doctors be preserved," said Dr. Stringham.

That would apply to those hoping to avoid COVID-19, to those who have contracted the virus, and to those who continue to feel the lingering effects of COVID illness.

Some of the public participants contended that local providers do not prescribe certain medications, like Ivermectin, but officials continued to encourage residents to find providers who align with their personal medical beliefs.

A Reno-area physician, Warren Gilbert, called into the meeting to share his positive views on the use of Ivermectin as a COVID-19 treatment option; local officials referred to Dr. Gilbert several times following his comments to reassure residents there are providers who can help those seeking alternative medical treatments.

In addition, Humboldt General Hospital Interim CEO Robyn Dunckhorst said a COVID-specific medical provider is available at the hospital's COVID-19 screening clinic to meet with patients for any COVID-related matters.

Following the meeting, Dunckhorst, Dr. Stringham and Humboldt County Health Board Public Information Officer Nicole Maher worked together to complete a draft flyer on alternative COVID-19 preventative measures and treatments that may be considered in conjunction with each person's medical provider, including Humboldt General Hospital's new antibody infusion clinic.

While HGH has been providing Regeneron antibody treatments in its Emergency Department for several months, the new drive-through clinic will ease access to the treatment through an online appointment system, while freeing ED beds for other patients.

Patients may schedule an appointment within 10 days of testing positive for COVID by calling (775) 623-7923 or by visiting <https://www.hghospital.org/patients-visitors/covid-19-resources/>. Patients must be 12 years or older and weigh at least 80 pounds. The Regeneron drug is free; however, HGH does charge a fee to administer the treatment.

Monday, December 13, during a regularly scheduled meeting, health board members reviewed the draft flyer and authorized Maher to release the information. The flyer will now be readied for distribution in person at HGH's COVID-19 screening clinic and electronically through community channels.

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