



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 04/13/20

COVID-19 ANTIBODY THERAPY TREATMENT ADVANCES AT SCL HEALTH

St. Mary's Regional Blood Center begins collection of COVID positive patient plasma

April 13, 2020, Colorado: As the nation hastens to develop effective treatments for the COVID-19 viral pandemic, one Colorado healthcare system finds itself in a unique position to push forward with the antibody therapy known as Convalescent Plasma (CP) transfusions.

SCL Health is participating in work being mobilized by Mayo Clinic, as part of the Colorado Covid-19 Convalescent Plasma Program, to advance investigational convalescent plasma therapy. The approach involves giving patients an infusion of antibody-rich plasma from people who have recovered from the virus that causes COVID-19.

SCL Health operates hospitals, clinics, and regional referral centers across Colorado, but one of their holdings is unique to most hospital systems in the nation. That is their Regional Blood Center located in Grand Junction, Colorado. The Blood Center was originally established to supply critical blood products to Colorado's rural hospitals. It now supports the ability for the organization to harvest and process its own CP plasma, in addition to administering the therapy.

The Regional Blood Center will begin collecting donor plasma on Monday, April 13, 2020. Donors must meet several criteria established by the Food and Drug Administration, the first of which is to have already received a confirmed COVID positive test result. "The Regional Blood Center can only accept confirmed positive COVID donors who have had no symptoms for at least 14 days. Once established, a second test will be administered, and if negative, then the plasma can be drawn," said Jennifer Rhamy, Director of the Blood Center.

"This is very exciting research and we're honored to be a part of this," said the organization's project lead, Dr. Alan Miller, Chief Medical Director of Oncology and Associate Chief Medical Director of Clinical Research. "People are eager to help in any way they can. We are very pleased to have the opportunity to participate in this vital research from the very point of the donor draw through to the treatment of the patient," he concluded.

Use of convalescent plasma has been studied in outbreaks of other respiratory infections, including the 2003 SARS-CoV-1 epidemic, the 2009-2010 H1N1 influenza pandemic, and the 2012 MERS-CoV epidemic.

(more)



Potential donors must participate in a pre-screening process and be symptom-free for at least 14 days. Interested donors are encouraged to email their name and contact information to call 303-813-5230 or email convalescentplasma@sclhealth.org. A screener will contact them to establish the remaining criteria. “We are encouraging potential donors to contact us,” added Rhamy “we need to connect with you quickly to advance this important work.”

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NOTE TO MEDIA:

In respect of observing social distancing guidelines, video footage of interviews with the subject matter experts involved in this story has been provided. If you would like to schedule a Zoom interview, please contact:

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