

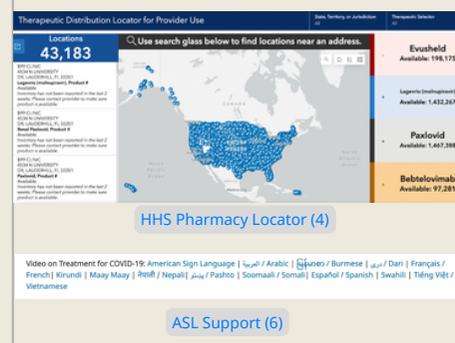
Rating COVID Public Health Department Websites on COVID-19 Treatment Options

Rhea Bharadwaj, Niki Eckert,
Kevin Fiscella, MD, MPH and Mechelle Sanders, Ph.D



03. Methodology

We first reviewed each state/territory website and created accessibility categories/rating criteria through discussion and consensus. Categories included: 1) ease of navigation to the webpage containing treatment options; 2) oral and injectable options for treatment; 3) eligibility requirements for treatment; 4) how and where to obtain treatment; 5) treatment costs and availability for uninsured patients; 6) text language(s) other than English including American Sign Language; and 7) phone support including TTY/TTD. We independently applied the criteria for each rating category from June-July 2022 for each website and rated them 0-2 based on consensus criteria: (0) not met; (1) partially met; and (2) fully met. We each rated a designated set of websites and then blindly obtained an overlap of ratings to confirm potential agreement ratings by different coders (kappa scores).



01. Introduction

Oral and/or injectable antiviral therapeutics are available to treat non-hospitalized, high-risk children, adolescents, and adults who test positive for COVID-19. Public health websites are the main source of information for patients seeking these treatment options. Therefore, it is necessary to evaluate and assess whether dimensions of accessibility/readability are met for language-diverse and low-literacy populations.

02. Research Question

We investigated how to effectively assess and systematically rate state health department websites in their level of accessibility for COVID-19 treatment for patients searching for information about COVID-19 infection.

Available therapeutic treatments

COVID-19 therapeutic treatments, including monoclonal antibodies and antivirals, can help lower the amount of virus in your body, protecting you from severe symptoms.

Treatment pills

- Paxlovid** (must be taken within 5 days of your first COVID-19 symptom) is an antiviral treatment pill for individuals age 12 and older. A free telehealth service is available to help you find out if it is right for you.
- Molnupiravir** (must be taken within 5 days of your first COVID-19 symptom) is an antiviral treatment pill that reduces the COVID-19 virus's ability to multiply in the body.

Injections/Infusions

- Remdesivir** (must be given within 7 days of your first COVID-19 symptom) is an antiviral infusion medication administered over the course of 3 days for individuals who have mild-to-moderate COVID-19 and are at high risk for severe COVID-19.
- Bebtelovimab** (must be administered within 7 days of first symptom) is a monoclonal antibody infusion therapy for individuals who have mild-to-moderate symptoms and are not hospitalized.

04. Results/Analysis

There was substantial agreement (70%) between the coders, $\kappa = .582$ (SE 0.05), $p < .001$. Agreement was lower for level of phone support and readability. The mean ease of readability score was "difficult" (47.1), corresponding to requiring some college education. The range was "very difficult" (20.6) to "very easy" (93.2), corresponding to college graduate to fifth grade readability.

Agreement	Expected Agreement	Kappa	Std. Err.	Z	Prob>Z
69.63%	27.36%	0.5819	0.0498	11.68	0.0000

- below 0.0 Poor
- 0.00 – 0.20 Slight
- 0.21 – 0.40 Fair
- 0.41 – 0.60 Moderate
- 0.61 – 0.80 Substantial
- 0.81 – 1.00 Almost perf

05. Conclusions/Implications

By mimicking the process of usual website users with our own devised criteria in mind to compare to, we show that this rating process can constructively highlight website flaws and information gaps and identify those needing more explicit rating criteria. Ratings could inform improvement in accessibility to information thus promoting equity in lifesaving treatment among diverse, low-literacy groups.