

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: December 7, 2022, 7:15 AM
CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS APPEARS LIVE ON FOX 5'S "GOOD DAY
NEW YORK"**

Bianca Peters: Well, the city's new policy to move homeless people off the streets and into hospitals, possibly involuntarily, is facing some tough criticism. The new policy directs police officers and street outreach workers to transport someone to the hospital for a psychiatric evaluation if they appear to be unable to meet their own basic needs.

Rosanna Scotto: But some mental health professionals are condemning the plan, arguing that it takes away a person's basic human rights. Advocates for the homeless say housing is the best solution for homelessness. Joining us this morning from City Hall with more on this policy, Mayor Eric Adams. Nice to have you back on Good Day New York.

Mayor Eric Adams: Yes, thank you very much. Good to get feedback with you.

Scotto: So mayor, how are you going to do this? Listen, we know we've got a homeless problem. We know we have a mentally ill problem on the streets. We can't continue with the status quo not working. So how do you do this? I mean, you know that there are going to be some people who are going to resist this.

Mayor Adams: And that's not what we're finding when we're out on these subways and on the streets, we're finding to the contrary. First of all, this is not a police-driven plan, and I think some of the distortion that has come from the reporting is really unfair to New Yorkers. This is a small specific group of people who can't take care of their basic needs and they are dealing with mental health illnesses to the extent that they are in danger to themselves and others. And so the goal is to zero in on them, give them the care and services they need. Don't wait until they do something that's harmful, if you observe this. We're saying as a city, we clarified the policy and the law so we're not walking past people who fit this very specific group.

Scotto: So mayor, how many people would you say are out there on the streets right now? And some of them are aggressive, they're not going to go voluntarily.

Mayor Adams: Well, if someone is breaking a law, that's an entirely different set of standards and norms. If someone's breaking a law, if they're dealing with a mental health illness or not, the

mental health professionals are going to do their job as well as with our law enforcement personnel. If they're breaking the law, we have to do that...

Scotto: How many people would you say are on the streets right now that need your help?

Mayor Adams: I cannot give you that number, I do not know. Every day is such an evolving situation. This is a very complex situation, and what we are saying is that this administration is not simply going to leave an unclear policy out there. We're going to give very clear directions to our mental health professionals that are partnering with our law enforcement personnel when it's needed.

Peters: Well, I know you got a nod from the governor, as she is going to be able to pay for 50 beds. That's being paid for by the state to start off with. And I know you're not saying you don't know how many people you might expect, but also will you guys keep track of the people that you are taking in for this help? Because that includes transparency, because I know you don't have a plan yet for that, but I think a lot of people would like to know what you're dealing with numbers-wise month to month.

Mayor Adams: And that's very important what you said about the 50 beds. The 50 beds are for the group who must stay for over a hundred days, I think it's close to 125 days. Those 50 beds are for a specific body of people. Those individuals coming to the hospital weren't on their medication, dealing with bipolar or some other issues that are extremely dangerous. The doctors would make the decision. So what is happening, people are attempting to broad-brush this entire approach. As we build out the system, build out the training, we wanted to send a very clear message to New Yorkers and our mental health professionals and our law enforcement officers, we're going to give clarity on what your authority allows you to do. And we're not going to violate any laws, we're going to stay within the boundary of the laws, but we do think we need to do some things in Albany to strengthen Kendra's Law and others.

Peters: Well, let's talk about crime in the city because that seems to just be a topic that is just on the minds of New Yorkers day in and day out. I know the stats say that there's a jump in murders last month compared to November of 2021, but you're saying crime overall is down. What are you telling New Yorkers right now that still feel a little bit uneasy as they walk the streets?

Mayor Adams: And they should... It's understandable, because there's a moment you go from what you are feeling to what you felt. And so I am very clear that New Yorkers, I speak with them every day. I'm in the subway system from time to time. I understand what they are feeling. I know what they read every day and how they feel. But we know this, we know in the last 28-day period as we monitor crime in the subway system, we're down 25 percent. We know we have a double digit decrease in the year on shootings and homicides. We have a substantial increase in the number of guns we have removed off the streets. We're going after the gangs and those who are repeated offenders.

So we know we are trending in the right direction. We stated it from the beginning, we were going to focus on those serious violent crimes and that's exactly what we have done. And I just want to commend the police commissioner that stayed the course and we have a new team in

place with Chief Maddrey that's going to be leading, the chief of the department. And New Yorkers, we are moving in the right direction and I'm happy about that because that's what I committed to do.

Scotto: All right, so mayor, yesterday, as you know, the city was on edge. We had a man who was armed and dangerous running around New York City. We now find out he has a long criminal history. He left two young people dead. Are we hearing anything about reforming bail reform?

Mayor Adams: Well, and he left two young people dead and he shot an innocent person over 90 years old. And you said it best, look at his record. This just continues to personify what we have been stating in this administration. And I told the police commissioner, every time we make these arrests, we're going to show the record. New Yorkers need to see. When I talk about a small group of people who have made up their mind they're going to be violent to innocent New Yorkers, this is who I'm talking about. We must reform our criminal justice system, bail reform is one part of that.

Scotto: Is Albany listening to you, mayor?

Mayor Adams: I'm sorry?

Scotto: Is Albany listening to you? Because we hear you've gone up there to talk to them, the police commissioner's gone up there to talk to them and basically the people who were in power are not talking to them.

Mayor Adams: Well, what we've learned... I think our biggest error is that we did not clearly allow the New York public to see the records of some of the individuals who were arrested and what they have done. We're moving away from that policy. If we are going to move legislation, I've learned this from being a former senator, it doesn't happen the first time you ask, it's repeated going to Albany, showing your case, proving your case. And it's more than just bail, it's also discovery. It's also dealing with how do we give the right resources to our prosecutors so they can have the attorneys to prosecute these cases. We have a bottleneck in our criminal justice system that we must address.

Scotto: Mayor, before we go, when can we see the police implement this plan with the mentally ill homeless? And how long will it take them to get up to speed with training?

Mayor Adams: Well, the day we announced the plan, we stated that we announced the first day of the training. And I cannot articulate more, that change is hard and we know that. We know how people feel when something new comes, automatically everyone piles on. It's going to take a while to fix the mess that we've had around people with serious mental illness and we're moving in the right direction. Hey, listen, I did not become mayor to climb a hill, I became mayor to climb a mountain, and this is a mountain that I'm willing to climb and I'm going to meet it face on. I'm not going to punt this serious problem.

Peters: All right, we'll climb that mountain with you. We certainly do appreciate you implementing this and staying the course for us New Yorkers to feel a bit more safe.

Mayor Adams: Thank you.

Scotto: All right, mayor, appreciate it. See you in the studio pretty soon. Thank you.

Mayor Adams: Yes, take care.

Scotto: Good luck.

###