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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON PIX11

Dan Mannarino: Well, as the number of coronavirus deaths in New York City, reach 100, Mayor de Blasio now urging the federal government for immediate help. He joins us this morning to discuss what exactly is ahead for so many New Yorkers. Mr. Mayor, once again, thanks for making the time for us this morning.

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Thank you, Dan.

Mannarino: So, let me first begin with the fact that you spoke to the president and the vice president late last night. What exactly was discussed in that phone call in terms of getting so many much needed supplies here to New York?

Mayor: Dan, it was a detailed phone call, really about exactly how these next days are going to go. I made clear to President Trump and Vice President Pence that we have the most urgent need in our hospital system, particularly our public hospitals when it comes to equipment and supplies, that our first need is ventilators, that if we don't get a significant supply of ventilators in starting this week that we're really in danger of losing some lives that could have been saved. That was the number one topic. The number two topic was the personnel reality, that we have these extraordinary health care workers in this city, doctors, nurses, technicians, everyone in our hospitals, our clinics, but they are being stretched right now and we're going to have a situation where as we build out more and more medical facilities, we're not necessarily going to have the personnel to staff them.

And I asked the president and vice president for military medical personnel to be sent to New York City immediately and for some kind of mobilization of medical personnel from around the country, civilians included. And then we talked about the stimulus bill and I made very clear that New York City – not just us, cities, towns, counties, states, everyone's, you know, trying to handle a huge amount of new human need and crisis and emergency. Right now, in this city, our government has billions of dollars in new expenses and we've simultaneously lost billions of dollars in revenue and that we need that stimulus bill to reach localities and reach public and private hospitals, Dan. And we went into all of that and I made clear that all of those things have to happen or we're going to get to a situation where our health care system simply can't handle the strain.

Mannarino: So, let me talk about a timeline then. You know, obviously we are seeing a dire situation in terms of those supplies. When do you expect that hospitals will actually run out of those supplies and when will they be coming from the federal government?

Mayor: I'm waiting for a real answer. I appreciated the conversation for sure. And I will certainly be following up with the White House, but I'm waiting for a real answer of when exactly we're going to get each kind of supply, each kind of equipment, and it starts with those ventilators and that's now. We need those in the matter of days. So, Dan, I heard good intentions, which I appreciate, but I want to see the real thing. I want to see the product. I want to see the aid actually in New York City. And that's what I have to keep fighting for.

Mannarino: Well, we know that this pause in New York is happening now, right. We saw it go into effect last night. Do you think that's actually going to help curb the number of positive cases we see? As more people get tested, those numbers are going up. When will you know if the flattening of the curve is actually working?

Mayor: Dan, we'll see in the numbers, I think, to some extent, but I think it's the other way around in the sense of if we had not done this – and Governor Cuomo and I fully agreed on the need to take this step – if we had not done this, the numbers would be skyrocketing much higher. That's the way to really understand this. We had to take this extraordinary step to have any chance of stabilizing our health care system and providing, you know, life saving help to people who are going to be coming in, in droves and keep health care for all the other people who have, you know, other real serious conditions that aren't coronavirus. I think the blunt reality, Dan, is we're going to start struggling this week in our public hospitals, especially if we're not seeing that equipment and supply come in.

But after that, April will get increasingly difficult. And my fear is, Dan, that May could be even tougher. So we're on a very steep trajectory. If we don't take these really sharp measures – and we need New Yorkers to live by them. And I know it's not easy. I totally understand anyone who is thinking, how on Earth am I going to spend most of my time indoors and all. We need you to, because the way to think about it is, if you don't, if you don't practice social distancing, we have a health care system that can't handle it unless we all do the right thing.

Mannarino: Understood. So, how are you going to actually go about enforcing that? I was out there this weekend. I saw people in crowds within the park. So the police – we heard Commissioner Shea talk about going out there and telling people to go home, but how can you actually enforce this? Are you going to be giving tickets, placing people under arrest?

Mayor: Dan, it's not that yet. Let's be very clear. People are quickly learning a new reality. And we got to understand for all of us, this is a world we've never lived in. This is a reality we all have to get used to and people have been making massive adjustments. I mean, this is literally the first day where, you know, millions of people aren't going to work. We got to give people a little time to make these adjustments. But what we're going to do is, the NYPD will be out in force, reminding people, warning people, educating people. Our officers know how to do this. Our officers have been telling people – and I like to say for generations, they've been telling people move along, you know, break it up. They're going to go out there and if they see crowds in the parks or anywhere else, they're going to say, we're not doing that anymore, it's time to go home. And I think the vast majority of New Yorkers are going to recognize that. If we get to a point where we need sharper enforcement measures, we're ready to do that. But that's not how

we're going to begin. We've got to give people a little time to adjust to this new reality and they're getting more information on this topic, on coronavirus than they probably got on anything in their lives. And I think it's really going to have [inaudible] –

Mannarino: I understand. We're almost out of time, I've got to let you go because you have another interview. I want to get to the fact that the Governor did ask you and the City Council to actually shut down some street city streets, which would allow people almost like a Summer Street program to let people kind of freely walk in the street and practice social distancing. Is there a plan today like the Governor asked for?

Mayor: That's not what happened, Dan. I understand where you get the question from. I talked to the Governor at length yesterday. We're presenting a plan today. We are not going to the street shutdown in the first instance. We're sticking with the parks we have, the places where people go because we know how to patrol those places and enforce. If we decide to expand from there, we'll make that decision in the coming days. But we're starting with all the places people go right now or when they need exercise.

Mannarino: And lastly, I want you to quickly get to education. We had the Chancellor on Friday talking about how there were some laptops and tablets, about 25,000, given to low-income families today, but still about 275,000 do not have them. How do you anticipate that they'll be actually able to keep up with the education lessons and when is the timeline to get all of them tablets and laptops? I know it's a challenging situation.

Mayor: This is part of why I was so hesitant to close our schools because we've got hundreds of thousands of kids we can't even reach with distance learning. But, Dan, we're going to keep getting more kids laptops and the technology they need and the Wi-Fi connections. It's just going to have to be an ongoing thing. We're getting a lot of help from the private sector. It's going to be, you know, day by day, week by week. But we will reach a lot more kids over time.

Mannarino: You said April and May. Do you anticipate school will be closed for the rest of the year?

Mayor: Right now, even though April 20th is our goal to reopen, I can't see it. We're going to make that judgment as we get closer. But at the trajectory we're on now, I can't see it. I do, unfortunately, believe the likelihood right now is that we lose the whole school year, which is really, really deeply unfortunate.

Mannarino: Mr. Mayor, I thank you once again for making the time this morning. I do appreciate it.

Mayor: Thank you, Dan.

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