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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY**

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Good morning, everybody. Well, we start a new week. And as we start this week, it's a chance to really, think about something that's kind of different than what we normally think about. I want everyone to just take a minute, really take a minute to break out of whatever you're doing right now, whatever you normally would do this time of day, even the middle of this crisis, and put yourself in the shoes of the people who are saving lives right now. Think about our doctors, our nurses, our health care workers. For a moment, try to feel, try to imagine what their lives had been like for these last two months. You, every one of us has some kind of daily routine, and we're trying to make sense of our daily routines in the middle of this crisis, but think about the daily routine for a doctor, for a nurse, for anyone in one of our hospitals and how it really is anything but routine what they're going through right now. They wake up each morning and go directly into battle. That's the reality they face today and they have been for weeks and weeks. They all are in the places that are the epicenter of this epicenter that is New York City. And you think about this crisis affecting our whole nation, our city has been the epicenter, but our hospitals have been the place where this horrible, painful crisis has played out most deeply. And they, these heroes, have been the ones who just every single day walk through those doors to confront whatever is thrown at them. Now, they are fighting an enemy they've never seen before and they're fighting an enemy that the rest of us fear. But they go to face every single day. They do that thing we always talk about with first responders, then run toward the danger. Day after day, these heroes are saving lives, and it's even more powerful, more profound to think about the fact that they're fighting an enemy, they cannot see. They're fighting an enemy no one fully understands, but they have not for a moment run from that responsibility or shirk from that responsibility. They keep fighting.

Now, these are warriors fighting a different kind of war than we've ever seen. And we would never send our warriors into battle without armor, without ammunition. We would never do that. When you think about a soldier, when you think about our armed forces, we would never imagine sending someone to battle and saying, oh, you know what, we don't have a helmet for you, we don't have a gun for you. That would be literally unthinkable. So, we have to understand that for these heroes in our hospitals, the personal protective equipment is their armor, is their ammunition. All the things they need, the equipment, the supplies, are to keep them alive and protect them, protect their families so they can keep fighting this war. And we work every day to get them what they need. And yet, we see the profound challenge that every city, every state, every country on earth is trying to find the exact same things for their health care workers and there's simply not enough in this country, there's not enough in this world. And so, it's always a race against time. So, we're going to keep talking about these PPEs. But I don't want you to hear, you know, think of a product on a shelf somewhere, I want you to think about the armor for our

heroes, the ammunition for our soldiers in this battle. I want you to recognize how hard they have been to come by and how we have to fight every single day to find everything we need. And that's why we're going to build more and more of these things and manufacturing and create them right here in New York City because it's the right thing to do. And we literally don't have a choice. We're going to keep demanding the federal government provide us what we need for these heroes, but we know those demands sometimes are met, sometimes they're not. We're going to scour the market all over the nation, all over the world, but we know how unreliable that has been. So, the point is to think of each of these. These items is exactly what we say, the personal protective equipment – think about protecting our heroes. And now, I'm going to talk to you about where we stand. I think it's yet another reminder of how every week, every day this is a fight to stay one step ahead of this crisis to make sure we protect people. But it's never been easy since the very beginning and it won't be easy going forward either until we get to a very much better place.

So, let me update you on where we stand with our supply of personal protective equipment and the other things we need, the equipment we need. And there is good news in the first instance, because, compared to a few weeks ago, we definitely have a better situation. I've talked to you a lot about Sunday, April 5th. That was a crucial day where it looked like the supplies and equipment were not going to be there when we needed them and the crisis was going to grow. And, thank God, the crisis to some extent has leveled off and more supplies and equipment have come in. But, again, we are far from out of the woods. We're just in better shape than we were at the worst point. And remember, I want to say this because our health care professionals deserve for all of us to understand this, what we're providing them is still have that crisis standard that the CDC has set – the Centers for Disease Control. It means in a wartime dynamic, in a crisis dynamic, this is a level of protection that will still help them. It's by no means the level of protection we want to achieve in better times. We want to give them so much more. So, by that crisis standard, we do have a sufficient supply for this week. We have begun, it'll get us through to Sunday and that means the N95 masks, the surgical masks, the face shields, the gloves. These things are constantly being delivered to hospitals more and more to nursing homes as well, and to first responders, to all of our agencies that protect us. Those supplies, by the crisis standard, we have enough for this week. We also, thank God, have enough ventilators. We'll be saying more about ventilators this week. And that's an area where we came from behind and we've made a lot of progress and the situation is much better than what it was a few weeks ago.

But there's been a growing problem, and this problem we have not found a solution to yet – that is the surgical gowns. And these are crucial because they protect our health care workers when they're doing some of the most sensitive work and some of the work that really makes them most vulnerable. Now, it got to the point where it's very clear that we were not going to be able to buy enough on the open market no matter what we did. It got to the point where it was clear. Sometimes the federal government has gotten us supplies or the state has, but those have been very uneven. And we always appreciate it, but we can't say it's reliable or an abundant supply. So, we made the decision to manufacture our own here in New York City, and that is now starting to become a major part of the equation, because it's the one thing we can depend on. But even with that, we do not have a secure supply. We're using fallback items like coveralls that certainly provide protection, but, even with the fallbacks, we are not sure we're going to have enough to get to Sunday of this week. We're fighting every way we can to find more, but that's

how tight this situation is. This is an area I'm really concerned about and we're going to work every way we can. So, I want to immediately say, I'm making an appeal to the federal government, because if there's any place that might be able to find a supply that is not yet been tapped, it is the federal government. We need more surgical gowns in New York City and we need them now. And I have reiterated this request over the weeks. I will go today and reiterate it again, but we're trying our best to create our own in the numbers we need, and those numbers are very, very large – that's the truth – but we need the federal government immediately to try and help us find solutions even just to get to the end of this week.

Now, I want to give credit. When the federal government does something right, I'll also say that. And here's an example of them doing something right. They did not have a substantial supply. We asked over a week ago, knew that this was a growing crisis, and I do want to say what they did come up with is deeply appreciated – 265,000 Tyvek suits to help our public hospitals. And that is helpful for sure. And I want to thank everyone who was involved in that effort. I particularly worked with Peter Navarro in the White House, who has been very responsive. I want to thank Peter and everyone who worked to get us those Tyvek suits. That helps a lot. But again, we need a much, much greater number to move forward. So, the other thing that we asked for, we said, if you can't get us actual surgical gowns – and imagine, the greatest country in the world, you know, the richest, most powerful country in the world, and we can't get surgical gowns for our largest city to even get through a week. It says so much about what we're learning from this crisis about the madness of so many of the supplies we need for health care and for protection of our people are not even made in this country and not even available or can't even be moved quickly. It certainly speaks to the lack of use of the Defense Production Act to build these kinds of supplies on a much greater level. There's a lot of things wrong here. But I will say, that when we couldn't get the surgical gowns, I said to Peter Navarro, can you get us fabric, because at least we have fabric, waterproof fabric, we can start to manufacture more and more of our own gowns here. And he did come through, and a group of other folks from the industry – the textile industry came through. I want to thank everyone who's a part of that effort and we'll list them out soon so we give all the thanks that are due. But we've got enough fabric in now to make 400,000 gowns. That's substantial, but, again, nowhere near the need we have. But I'll still say, if we can make 400,000 gowns, that's 400,000 times that our health care workers are protected. And I certainly am very appreciative for that. 40,000 will be made now. That full 400,000 will be made by May 23rd. We're going to try and speed that up, but we're literally building a new industry right away in this city and my goal is to see it expand rapidly. This is not a product that was made here in New York City. We want to see it become a major, major part of what we do as we fight this battle. But we're going to need a lot more than that to get through.

Now, let me talk to you about another piece of this reality we've been facing. A few weeks ago, we went through something that was a huge challenge. We saw a major, major uptick in the number of calls to EMS – 9-1-1 calls on a level we had never seen literally in our history. The kind of records that were set were the kind of records you never want a set of the most calls to 9-1-1 ever. Our EMTs, our paramedics fought back. I want to thank Commissioner Dan Nigro and everyone at FDNY for the really powerful, smart, you know, calm, steady way they handled this crisis in a way they fought back. And now, I am really pleased to say we've seen a rebound. We've seen really big improvement, Still, a lot to do, but FDNY held the line, EMS held the line. Our EMTs and paramedics worked long hours. They saved a lot of lives. They fought back.

There's no question that we are not out of the woods yet. So, I'm saying there's been a rebound, but there's still a lot more to this game. But the numbers are coming down substantially and getting much closer to normal. So, I want to give you an update on that and just a sense of how extraordinary the surge we saw was, going back to March 30 – a number that's just astounding – we got 6,527 medical emergencies in one day. Never seen anything like that. By this last Saturday, April 13 – excuse me, April 18th – this last Saturday, April 18th, the number was down to 3,485. So, not quite half, but getting close to half the number of calls that came in just about three weeks earlier. So, Saturday was 3,485. When you compare that to the average for last year – the average day last year, it was actually below the average. The average last year was 4,196 on a typical day. So, thank God, that number has come way down. There's still a lot to do, but that's giving us real relief. We also, of course, had a huge challenge, ensuring that we could respond in this crisis with so many more calls. And, obviously, the most urgent, the most life and death calls got prioritized, but if you take the average across the board, in March, that average was just over 10 minutes on the response time. In the last two weeks, it's gone down to – up until Friday of this last week, it went down to eight minutes, 46 seconds. Now, on Saturday, April 18th, that went down to six minutes, 43 seconds. So, something's, again, profoundly changed. Many fewer calls, much faster response time, thank God for that. Also, the number of FDNY personnel who had been on leave – a sick leave continues to go down. So, again, 1,446 and returned to service – a much lower sick leave level now than we saw at the peak. The same with for fire and for EMS – the same thing. So, EMS has now almost a thousand members who have returned from dealing with COVID-19 and we see the number of folks on sick leave going down. Long way to go, but real progress for sure.

Now, one of the things that tied us over, I want to give a lot of thanks to FEMA. And so, this is the federal government doing something really good, and I want to give credit where credit is due. And I've talked to Pete Gaynor, who's the administrator for FEMA nationally – a really, really good guy who's really been there for New York City many many times. Tom Von Essen, our former fire commissioner from the days of 9/11, who now is the FEMA regional administrator. They've both been absolutely fantastic. When they saw that FDNY, EMS were struggling so much, they reached out immediately and got ambulances, and EMTs, and paramedics from all over the country. And I had that real amazing experience going to meet a lot of these good, good people who came from around the country to help us and to thank them on behalf of all New Yorkers. And folks came from California and Alabama and Florida, all over the country. And particularly met ambulance crew from Kalamazoo, Michigan – two really good guys that drove all night to get to New York City because they just wanted to help out. And that has made a huge difference. That's really been one of the X factors and giving relief to EMS and helping them through. I'm happy to report the FEMA has helped us again, and just in the last week we've added another hundred ambulances from around the country. So, now, from FEMA, we have 350 ambulances active with 790 EMTs and paramedics that come from 19 states of the union. This is truly America's stepping up to help New York City, just like New York city has so many times sent our heroes and our first responders out to help folks all over the country in the middle of their challenges and disasters, and folks are really coming to bat for us. So, we expect this group now to take us through basically the month of April and continue to provide a lot of relief and support for our EMTs and paramedics, help them through – I'm sorry, I should have say past April, another 30 days, my apology – into May – to the end of May – and to give a lot of relief to our EMTs and paramedics who, again, they've done so much in these last weeks. They

continue to need that support and that teamwork and it's continuing to come thanks to FEMA. So, very good news.

Now, a couple of days ago we talked about the fact that as we evaluate where we're going, going forward, we keep recognizing the power of what people are doing, what every-day New Yorkers are doing. Again, I'm going to say thank you a lot of times because you've been amazing at social distancing. You've been amazing at shelter in place. It's not easy, but you've been doing it really, really well. I want to be very clear, we're going to be smart about how we come back. We're going to be smart about how we turn a corner. We're not going to let our foot off the gas prematurely. We're not going to run the risk of this disease reasserting itself. So, we're going to be going in stages as we work that slow, steady road back to normal. And we already miss so much of what was part of our everyday lives. A lot of us are missing sports, both playing sports, watching sports. We're missing all sorts of community gatherings, family gatherings. There's so much we miss right now and it's almost like it's impossible to count all the things that are gone that we love and we miss. And this is the time of year where you start to have more and more big public events, the street fairs, the festivals, parades, outdoor concerts, outdoor plays, things that are really a beautiful part of the year in New York City. That's all true, but we also know compared to all the basics we're focused on right now, compared to people's health and safety and food, shelter, all the things we're trying to guarantee for New Yorkers, and especially compared to the big question – how do we come back safely, smartly? These kinds of community events, we love them, but they're not what we need right now, they're not the most essential things, and we have to be smart about it. And we have to also recognize when thousands and thousands of people gather in one place, of course that goes against everything we're trying to do with social distance in a shelter in place and everything we're trying to do to bring ourselves back.

So, a few days ago I said that a city permits for events scheduled for the month of May have been canceled. I told you we were going to talk to the organizers of events in June, which includes some really big important annual events. We have had those conversations and this probably will not surprise you, but I'm now reporting today that we will cancel city permits for June events as well. It's not a happy announcement but it's one we have to make. And look, a lot of these events will be postponed. I want to be clear, the permits are being canceled for June, but the event organizers, a lot of them are looking at doing something later in the year, and we're going to work with them on that. And, again, I think the fact that they're postponing now is actually going to help us get to that point later in the year where things can open up and be better. And then, we're going to work closely with them to find the right time and place to do what they do each year. The bottom line, of course, is to think about safety, to think about saving lives, protecting people's health, speeding us to that day when we get more normal. So, this is the right thing to do and this is what we are doing. But I will say, obviously, I will note three events in particular that are just highlights of the whole year – the Salute to Israel Parade, the Puerto Rican Day Parade, and the Pride Parade. And this was – you know, this year is the 50th anniversary of the Pride Parade, and it's a very, very big deal. That march is such an important part of the life of this city, but this year in particular was going to be something that was a historic moment. Look, we're going to miss all three of them in June, but they will be back, and we will find the right way to do it, working with all the event organizers. And that joy and that

pride that all of these events bring, that celebration, will be back. We're going to do it when it's the right time.

Now, to the question that we turn to every day, how are we doing overall? And we have these three indicators we keep coming back to tell us so much. And it's a high bar, but we wanted to set a high bar to make sure we get it right. So, what I would say, what we are seeing day after day is progress in many of the categories. We still haven't hit that perfect note we want to hit, which is getting all three of categories to go down together for a long period of time. But we see consistently most of the categories going in the right direction. And so, something is moving positively because of everything people are doing and it says, just keep doing it. First of all, the first indicator, daily number of people admitted to hospitals for suspected COVID-19, that is down – good news – down from 317 to 212. That's a really good drop. The daily number of people in ICU across our public hospitals for suspected COVID-19, that is up, although it's up by just a little bit – 849 to 853. So, not the right direction, but notable that it's a very, very small increase. The percent of people who tested positive for COVID-19 citywide, down from 38 percent to 34 percent. Public health lab, down 84 percent to 67 percent. So, this is not a perfect daily report, but it's getting better and it's damn close to what we're looking for. Let's see if we can keep pushing. Everyone, keep doing what you're doing so we can get this tracking to start moving consistently in the right direction and that's going to give us the chance to really start to make the moves towards a more normal life.

So, let me close with this. We said from the beginning of this crisis, it's like nothing we've ever seen. We're fighting an invisible enemy, an enemy no one understands, and there's no timeline here, there's no ground rules, there's no playbook. No one knows exactly how this will go. Anyone who tells you they know exactly how this is going to go is lying to you. What we can say though, one thing we have heard universally is this is a crisis that has an end point. Everything we know about the nature of this disease is that there is a point where we turn a corner. That doesn't mean it won't be back in the future. It doesn't mean there won't be challenges. We obviously all want to see that day where there's a vaccine and a cure, but this crisis will end at some point. The question is, are we strong enough? Are we tough enough? Are we resilient enough as New Yorkers to fight our way through to that point? The answer is a resounding yes. You have proven it already in so many ways. The heroic health care workers, first responders, they've proven it over and over again. But everyone in this city who's contributing in so many ways to this fight has proven it. So, I've no doubt we're going to get there. I know it's going to be a tough road. I know it's not going to be simple. I know it's going to be a long road. Now, how do we get there? We'll keep coming back to the testing we need to allow us to make that transition to when we have a low level of transmission of this disease and we can really start to get to normal. Can't do it without the testing. But the other thing is, we cannot do it if we don't get help from Washington DC, it's as simple as this. Think about it for a moment, this city, this heroic city that has been fighting this battle, epicenter of the crisis for the United States of America, fighting so often alone without help from the federal government from the very beginning when the tests weren't there, to the many many times we've asked for help and it hasn't come. I will always give credit for when the help did come. I'll always say thank you for that. But we still don't have a clear picture on testing. And the one thing that I've asked the President for lately that should be the easiest part of the equation is to help New York City through this crisis, give us the financial support to make us whole, to actually balance our

budget, pay our first responders and our public servants who are doing this work, because, you know what – and I'll address this to the President again – you know, Mr. President, you know what we're doing right now? We are saving lives here in New York City. We are spending hundreds of millions of dollars now, it's going to be billions of dollars to save lives. We are not hesitating. We're not for a moment doing anything but what is right to protect New Yorkers and to protect all Americans by beating back this disease. We estimate by the end of this calendar year the City of New York will have spent \$3.5 billion to save lives and protect people in this city. The federal government is not stepping up. You, Mr. President, are not saying, I see your burden, I see the fight you're waging, let me offer a helping hand, let me save the day by taking that burden off of New York City. In fact, Mr. President, you know, it was quite clear when the airline industry was in trouble you were quick to act. You gave them \$58 billion. But when New York City, and cities all over the country, states all over the country had been pleading in the middle of a huge budget crisis where we can't provide the services that our people need going forward, we're not going to be able to have a recovery, you are absolutely silent. I'm challenging you to open your mouth. I think I may be the first person in history to challenge Donald Trump to speak up. He's not shy. But it's amazing, he was asked yesterday at his press conference and he barely could say a word about the need for a stimulus program that would actually help America's cities and states.

So, everyone's watching. Mr. President, you say the word and Mitch McConnell will act, the Senate will act, we can be made whole and we can actually help restart the nation's economy and move a recovery. But if you don't act, we're just not going to have what we need to move this city forward to help our people, to protect our people, to help our nation. We're not going to have it. So, I don't know what more I have to say but that is the truth. And there's still time to act right now in Washington. That stimulus bill is being discussed right this minute. You know what? There's even some bipartisanship. I'm hearing it from mayors all over the country, Republican and Democrat. You're seeing it from governors, Republican and Democrats saying the federal government has to provide this help. Even yesterday, two senators – Republican Senator Cassidy from Louisiana, Democrat Senator Menendez from New Jersey put forward a \$500 billion plan to help cities and states recover. Even in Washington, there are people trying to act in a bipartisan fashion to move us forward. Mr. President, you're the only one who's missing an action right now. Why don't you step up and say this is the right thing to do? And you would be doing something for this whole country in our time of need.

To conclude, let me say a few words in Spanish, and then we'll go to questions from the media.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

**Mayor:** With that we will turn to our colleagues in the media and as always, please let me know the name and the outlet of each journalist.

**Moderator:** Hi all. Just a reminder that we have Commissioner Negro, Commissioner Criswell and Commissioner Barbot on the line. With that we will start off today with Debralee from Manhattan Times Bronx Free Press.

**Question:** Hey, good morning everyone. How are you?

**Mayor:** Good morning. Debralee.

**Question:** So Mr. Mayor, in light of these ongoing cancellations announced today of these large scale public events, of youth summer employment programs and continuing staying at home measures for really the duration, essentially the first half of the summer. You were bound to see these moments of resurgence, of surreptitious gatherings, you know, whether there be young people socializing at our barber shops on weekends or the religious gatherings at [inaudible] and other instances. We heard of both just over the weekend and they were likely to pop up again. But in reports you're seeing young teenagers being arrested and in some instances you're seeing nothing happen where, you know, the police officers show up and sort of shrug their shoulders and ask people to disperse. You know, what are the strictures that are being put in place? What are the assurances that you're providing that there's one standard as folks continue to adjust to the new normal and some communities are not being penalized in ways that others are not?

**Mayor:** Debralee, it's a great question. I'm going to say that I've asked about the facts and I don't think the facts bear out on equal treatment, meaning we do not have – I'm really sensitive to this point and concerned about it. I'm glad you're raising it. I won't tolerate unequal treatment. I've had this conversation with Commissioner Shea and Chief Monahan, Chief Pichardo, that we – the bottom line is this, before you even get to the question of fairness across all communities, I want to see an aggressive, assertive, consistent effort by the NYPD and all enforcement agencies. No matter where they are, no matter what's going on. We cannot tolerate gatherings. We cannot tolerate a lack of social distancing. There has to be just really fast, consistent enforcement. That's why I want people calling 3-1-1 or giving us information on where they're seeing problems so we can act on it quickly.

NYPD unquestionably has been enforcing in all kinds of communities and I've asked them to consistently put out reports so people can see the whole truth of the many times when enforcement was done across many communities. We don't want to give summonses and violations and fines if we don't have to. But some places people have been resistant, they're going to get those fines. We certainly don't want to arrest people in this environment but if we have to, we will. So, we'll get that information out more clearly because I think when you see the whole picture you see consistency across communities. If there's any instance where there is not consistency, I will deal with that harshly because I won't accept it. And by the way, to our officers, we all know the vast majority of our officers are out there enforcing these rules and it is part of why we're succeeding. We have to thank the NYPD and all the Parks Department enforcement officers, everyone who's been doing this enforcement is part of why we see these indicators getting better and they'd been doing it even though they'd been short staffed. But I don't have any hard evidence of any officer failing to disperse a crowd or following through, if I get hard evidence of that, I am going to ask the NYPD to follow through in whatever manner related to discipline they normally would in such a case. But I would welcome you, Debralee and everyone, anyone in the media who has hard evidence that any officer did not follow through on enforcement or that there was unequal treatment in communities. I want it and I won't tolerate it and we'll act on it.

**Moderator:** Next we have Katie from the Wall Street Journal.



**Question:** Hey, good morning Mr. Mayor and everyone. I wanted to ask you sort of mentioned it with Debralee's question, but do you have the numbers and I guess if, how many photos and, and tips that have come in on the sort of like three one, one neighborhood watch, social distancing line and how that's been going. And if you've followed up on any of those tips?

**Mayor:** Of course, there's follow-up on all those tips. We'll happily assemble the numbers and get them out. I'll ask my team to make sure that happens. And again, when I spoke with our NYPD leadership, I made clear to them that I want public reporting on how enforcement is going and I want to show the fullness of it. There are many, many times where they've broken up gatherings across a whole range of communities, but that has not been something that's been portrayed publicly. I want a maximum reporting. I want to show all the times whether it's a line at a supermarket or it's breaking up a gathering on the streets or whatever it is, or certainly a religious gathering. You'll remember a couple of weeks ago I made very clear that any attempt by any people of any faith to gather in religious worship is unacceptable. And I'm sorry it will have to be broken up, but it will. So we're going to get out more and more of both the overall numbers, but also I want you to see the pictures. I want you to hear the stories. I want you to see how much enforcement has been done. I don't think it's been portrayed effectively. I think a lot more is happening than has been talked about. And I'm going to ask NYPD in particular to put all of that out more so you see it

**Moderator:** Next, we have Marcia from CBS.

**Mayor:** Marcia?

**Question:** My question today has to do with when the city gets to the point of reopening, but it has to do with the fact that you've had a lot of people or city workers who have passed away because of the virus, be it transit workers, be it, you know, firefighters, police officers and especially teachers. And I wonder if that's going to make it more difficult for you to reopen. I mean, kids going back to classrooms where their teacher isn't there anymore. Sanitation workers unable to pick up the trash. And how difficult will it be that your workforce has been depleted? What special problems will that pose for you and especially in the classroom?

**Mayor:** Yeah, Marcia, it's much more of a human problem and an emotional problem than anything. I want to start with that. I think for all of our – all the folks who serve us, the fact that they have lost their colleagues, I think a lot of them are going to go into, you know, the future with that pain. Whether you're at a Sanitation garage or you're at a school or a police precinct, just you know, the, the loss of someone they cared about and someone that they worked so closely with. I think that's going to be a pain that will feel for a long, long time. And I think in school communities in particular, it's going to be very, very challenging because we have schools that have lost teachers, principals, you know, people who are backbones of school communities and a school community is like an extension of the family. It's very, very tight knit. You're also going to have kids who have lost family members. So one of the things the Chancellor talked about in the last week is how we have to provide a lot of mental health support starting now, and we're going to be expanding that as we go through the spring, for children and families who have been through a lot. But really getting ready for the beginning of school in September, I think it's

going to be a painful beginning trying to sort out how to move forward while recognizing the loss and the trauma that kids have been through. So that's where I think the, the real challenge is and it's a tough one and we're going to, you know, whatever is needed to address it. We're going to, we're going to provide.

In terms of, you know, running our city and moving forward. We're going to find a way as we always do, but the losses are great and, and not just in number, in talent, some incredible human beings who did so much, but you know, we will find a way through that problem. I think the emotional and human and psychological problem is going to be in many ways the tougher part.

**Moderator:** Next, we have Julia from the Post. Hi, good morning, Mr. Mayor. I know we're still months away from reopening the city, but you said on Morning Joe this morning that you thought that workplace temperature checks would be a key point of reopening. I'm just wondering if you could expand on that a little bit. Will those be, do you think you'll require that? Will they be suggested? Will we see temperature checks at restaurants and what are the other facets other than a citywide testing for reopening?

**Mayor:** Yeah, Julia, we're going to be putting out more and more specifics of the reopening plans as we're working through the details for this city. I would say the important thing to recognize with the temperature checks, they absolutely have a role to play. They've been an important tool in other countries that have – some have had some of the better experiences containing the coronavirus and working their way back. But guess what, there's not enough thermometers right now. So this is another one of these like staggering realities about our country that I just – it's hard as an American to take in how ill prepared this country was in terms of just basic supplies and how little we make of our own at this point. Or to the extent we do make things or can make things how long and slow the process of gearing up production has been.

I just can't make sense of it. I really think there should have just been a full-scale mobilization from the beginning of industry and obviously I think of the military as well to have tried to break through all of this and it's still never happened. So to even get to that point, we'd have to get a really substantial and steady supply of thermometers. We do not have that. That's another thing I'm going to try and see if there's any way to create in New York City. But I do think it's a logical part of the equation and it fits with the testing. I mean, if you think about it, what you want as you come back is the ability to constantly monitor for who might be sick and then get them to quarantine or isolation, get them the support they need to get through, make sure they don't go back into the workplace until they're really well, make sure they are isolated from their family members and other people in their life.

The temperature checks are a great way to see if someone might be starting to show symptoms. Obviously wide-scale testing is needed to make anything like that happen and I have to say, you know, initially I think that's something like hundreds and thousands of tests a day given the scale of this city, as much as we're doing in the whole nation right now per day. So I think it has an important role to play in combination with testing, but we'll put together those details as we get closer and obviously we've got to find the reliable, a huge supply of test kits and lab capacity just like we have to find a reliable supply of thermometers.

**Moderator:** Next we have Shant from the Daily News.

**Question:** Yeah. Good morning, Mayor. I wanted to ask about a plan that some City Council Members plan to propose this week under which cars would be banned from I think 75 miles of city roads. I'm just wanting to ask you if you agree with that goal or even think it's feasible. And also could you [inaudible] what kind of communications you've had, if any, with the Council on this issue.

**Mayor:** Thank you, Shant. I've spoken to Speaker Johnson several times over the last weeks about this broad concept and you know, we tried a version of it early on working with the Council and it was, you know, not the best time to try it, obviously given weather, but it also, what we found immediately was the real drag on the enforcement needs that we had everywhere else. And with an NYPD in particular, that still is below the strength levels we want to be. So we're – I'm definitely ready to, you know, talk to the Council about it, see if we can find some common ground. But what I've said to date is I'm concerned that it doesn't fit our reality in terms of safety. It doesn't fit our reality in terms of enforcement where we need to put our enforcement. The models have been used elsewhere in the country I think were for places that had a much different reality in terms of, you know, how dense they are and what their sort of driving culture was compared to us, and one thing or another. So, it'll be a real conversation. But I still start with the concern that I have not seen a plan that I think works for New York City yet.

**Moderator:** Next we have Juliet from 1010 WINS.

**Question:** Oh, hi. Good morning, Mr. Mayor. How are you?

**Mayor:** Good morning, Juliette. How you doing?

**Question:** I'm okay. I wanted to get back to the NYPD enforcement of social distancing. What exactly are they doing on the subway to enforce that? Are they limiting people standing on platforms or limiting the number of people getting on the trains? What exactly is their plan on the subway?

Look, it's a great question, Juliet. I think – I've talked to Pat Foye, the head of the MTA about – I think there needs to be a clearer message about how many, literally how many people are allowed on a subway car. And clearly, you know, it can't be more than 50 percent of what the normal capacity is. It may have to be a lot less, but whatever it is I think a clearer ground rule would help everyone. I haven't heard it at least, but yeah, the deal is that the NYPD is out there. If a subway car is too crowded, the idea is clear it out, disperse people throughout the train or get some people off if you have to. If a platform is crowded, you know, disperse people through or spread them through the platform or have some people wait outside the station, whatever it takes.

Now I still think we're seeing kind of an uneven reality where we get kind of sporadic reports around overcrowding and it seems to be in large measure due to the shortages in labor at the MTA and the fact that some, you know, there's some disruptions on some lines and trains don't come for a while – doesn't seem to take a consistent shape or in a consistent place. But the plan

that the police are working on or working from, I should say, what they've been doing now for weeks and weeks is just if you see any instance of overcrowding on a subway car or on a platform, disperse, break it up, don't allow it to exist. You can't have a crowded subway car and just leave it be. You have to get people off and dispersed throughout the train or to the platform or whatever will work.

**Moderator:** Next, we have Kathleen from Patch.

**Question:** Hi, Mr. Mayor. I was just wondering if you could provide us some numbers on those surgical masks. How many do we have right now and how many do we need by the end of the week and how much you know those would cost on the – today's market.

**Mayor:** Yeah, the cost part we can get back to you on Kathleen. In terms of supply, so surgical masks has actually been – if there's a bright spot in this whole reality, the surgical masks had been the thing we've been able to get the most of and our supply is good for this week and from what I saw earlier into next week as well. The N95s which are, you know, a higher caliber if you will, have been harder to get. But again, at least we have a secure supply for this week on that crisis standard. I'll keep emphasizing that crisis standard is what we're working from. So, we can get you exact numbers. There's a lot – we need a lot to get through each week. But surgical masks, a strong supply, N95s, certainly enough to get through this weekend and next week and we'll get you a sense of what we're finding. We have to pay for these things in the current market.

**Moderator:** Next we have Andrew from NBC.

**Question:** Mayor, good morning. How are you?

**Mayor:** Good man. How you feel?

**Question:** Hanging in there. A question about the large public events. You mentioned this morning that when you spoke to organizers, particularly of Pride in the Puerto Rican Day Parade, that they're interested in postponing, but given the size of these events, you're talking hundreds of thousands, maybe a million or more people realistically. Can those events happen in calendar year 2020?

**Mayor:** Andrew, they might. I mean this one, you know, it's a great question. I think again, for all of us sports fans we're asking this question, can you know our leagues come back in 2020 at all? I think this is an area where we don't know yet. I'm taking what I think is a cautious, steady approach to how we reopen New York City, but – and we have to always plan on the worst-case scenarios we have to protect ourselves. But there's also, you know, better case scenarios that could come along and could get proven that might open up possibilities for later on, you know, late in the summer going into the fall, there may be opportunities. So I think what was clear was the event organizers really and to their, you know, the folks at Salute to Israel Parade, the Puerto Rican Parade, Pride – very consistently there was a concern for the health and safety of all of the people who come to join these gatherings. That was their central concern. And they knew that it would be very hard for a lot of people to feel comfortable and it just didn't make sense to have

them in this environment. But I think everyone does want to consider from what I've heard, the option of going and looking at opportunities, you know, late in the summer or into the fall and we'll know a lot more in the coming weeks, according to these indicators I go over each day and how we see this disease act and how we all act. So I certainly don't rule it out Andrew. I think it is a possibility and every, you know, every organization will make their own choices and, and we will know a lot more as we get through the next few weeks.

**Moderator:** Next we have Henry from Bloomberg.

**Question:** Well, Mr. Mayor, I'd like to ask you a question about the budget. The budget has some deep spending cuts, but for this year, but a lot of them reflect, not spending on schools, etc. because of the virus. And you've had some critics like the Citizens Budget Commission who says there's not enough recurring cuts and your estimates of federal aid, state aid and the bounce back of the economy may be way too optimistic. How would you answer those critics?

**Mayor:** Well, I don't understand the part about state aid and federal aid. The only things we have indicated in the way with federal aid are the things that already exist. The amount from the previous stimulus bill, which I'm certainly happy we are getting but is nowhere near obviously what we are paying out in terms of COVID-19 related expenses and the money we received from FEMA, but we still receive it with a 25 percent local payment requirement, which makes no sense in this crisis – by the way, that is much worse than what was true in previous natural disasters where localities were not required to pay 25 percent. They were required to pay substantially less. I know Senator Schumer is fighting for what I think is the right thing, which is 100 percent of FEMA coverage of costs related to COVID-19. This is an international pandemic and we are spending money to save lives and we're spending it wisely, but always when people need help, we're going to be there for them. I don't know why that isn't a hundred percent federally covered. So the only thing we've assumed, Henry, is the 75 percent coverage of the FEMA eligible costs and the previous money from the previous stimulus. We have not made any projection going forward about what future stimulus money should be. It should be a full coverage of all COVID-19 related costs and all lost revenue. If they really want to get New York City and all cities and states back on their feet. And I just want to come back to this point. How do you restart an economy with these big gaping holes on accounted for and they've already done \$2 trillion plus in stimulus programs including again \$58 billion for the airline industry, why not make cities and states whole if you're serious about a restart and a recovery, but we are not assuming that, Lord knows. So, I don't understand that part of the equation.

With the, the critique you raised in terms of the recurring expenses, look in terms of the recurring expenses, look, we've already done some really painful things including not being able to provide for our young people this summer so much of what we would normally like to and believe is crucial to our city. But when you go forward with all due respect to the Citizens Budget Commission, we – this is not a what they think from their point of view, maybe they think this is a wonderful moment for budget cutting. That's not how I see it. This is a moment to try and protect our people, protect their safety and health, make sure they have enough food to eat, make sure that they have a roof over their head and whatever that costs is what we need to do, and then work our way back to the city that just months ago was succeeding across the board in terms of having a thriving economy and the lowest unemployment we've seen in a long, long

time, and you know, the things you would want for this city. We want to get back to that and the formula was working. We want to get back to that formula. So, I would argue, you know, we were on the something very good. We want to work our way back to it. But no, we're not for a moment – we're not assuming any State aid. In fact, the state cut us \$800 million and we have to guard against future State cuts. So, I think we're being very realistic about that. I think if there is not federal aid, you're going to see many tougher decisions that are really going to hold us back and undermine our ability to provide even the most basic services.

**Moderator:** Next, we have Mark Morales from CNN.

**Question:** Hi everyone. How are you doing this morning?

**Mayor:** Hey Mark.

**Question:** So, I had a couple of questions. The first was about a report that happened over the weekend about folks that are [inaudible] –

**Mayor:** Mark, Mark, you're coming in and out. Let me – let me interrupt you, Mark. You're coming in and out a little bit. Can you get closer to the microphone and speak a little more steadily?

**Question:** Sure. Is this any better?

**Mayor:** Yeah, let's try.

**Question:** Oh, cool. So, the first one is about inmates at Rikers Island that have left the jail system and have gone out, committed crimes, and are back in the jail system now. Can you just speak a little bit about that and what have you seen? The second question I had was about testing.

**Mayor:** It's about? Go ahead, say it.

**Question:** You mentioned on Friday that you were going to be opening up new testing centers and I just wanted to know how did that work out? Who was tested? Do you have any data on that?

**Mayor:** Okay. Thank you, Mark. On the second question, we'll get the data and start to put out that data as we confirm it. Some of the centers were opened Friday, some are opening today and we gave the projections on what they'd be able to do each week. But again, said I want to see those numbers go up rapidly. So, we'll get a report out later today on how Friday went and on how today is going and what the numbers look like. On the folks who have come out of Rikers, look when this crisis began, the issue was how could we address the humanitarian crisis in our jails appropriately? Let out people who could be let out safely, deal with the fact that there were individuals with profound, you know, major, major health problems who had been particularly vulnerable to this disease, but also always keep public safety in mind. And obviously by getting people out of the jail system, it was going to allow a safer environment for everyone who was

still in, including very much the folks who work there, and we depend on so much of our officers.

And that has proceeded to happen, about 1,400 people have been released, and that has certainly improved the overall situation in our jail situation – in our jail system. But we said there would be, you know, a rigorous monitoring effort as well, and that has been built up. We do see some recidivism. I don't have the exact numbers, we see some, I've not seen a huge amount, but any amount is obviously troubling. And I think it's unconscionable just on a human level that folks were shown mercy and this is what some of them have done. But, you know, it's a small number of people. We're going to keep, you know, just buckling down on it, making sure there's close monitoring and supervision to the maximum extent possible, and the NYPD is going to keep doing what they're doing. They've obviously been driving down crime these last few months and they're going to keep doing that. But if anyone commits the kind of crime they have to be rearrested, of course they will be. If they have to be re-incarcerated they will be. But I think, you know, against the backdrop of what was a real humanitarian crisis it was the right approach. Now we're going to deal with everything going forward.

**Moderator:** Next we have Sydney from the Staten Island Advance.

**Question:** Hey, Mr. Mayor. Good morning. I have two questions if I may, about the medical personnel you announced yesterday and the 3-1-1 number. So first can you explain what exactly the differences between the 600 medical personnel and volunteers and 535 medical military staff? Our medical personnel, more nurses and technicians and our military medical staff - staffs specifically more like doctors and nurses. And why didn't you send any of the medical military staff to Staten Island hospitals? And my second question is yesterday I tried out the 3-1-1 Social Distance Enforcement number and I received an error message saying the tech service was unavailable, your office was quick to fix the problem, and I resent the photo and it seems to be working. I got a text message saying that a representative would be with me shortly, but I never heard back. Can you explain how exactly the tech service is supposed to be working? Is someone supposed to get in touch with you after you send a text? And why was the tech service not working at least, you know, yesterday?

**Mayor:** Yeah, there was an issue yesterday. It has been resolved. So the basic concept is this, if you call in, as I said to the day on anything COVID related, particularly food, we want people to have an instant ability to talk to a human being and register their need and get it acted on. On the calls related to violations of social distancing, that's also obviously urgent. We need people to be able to get that to a human being right away and then get it out to where it can be dispatched by NYPD. So I appreciate – again, I'll keep saying thank you to you and everyone in the media who is doing this quality control because I think it helps us to keep monitoring. Obviously, the city does it's own quality control, but anytime you find a gap in the system that's helpful because we want to fix it. So in terms of the calls, that's how it has been working on, should work, and again, many, many additional personnel have been added in the last few days to beef it up. In terms of the photos, I know I've spoken to Commissioner Shea about this, that the photos are being monitored constantly by the NYPD for action. In terms of whether there's a response back to the person who sends the photo, I don't know that, but we will get you an answer on that today.

On the question of the military personnel and the volunteer medical personnel. So the military are a variety of specialists. There are doctors, nurses, respiratory therapists, dieticians, pharmacists, there are a whole range of specialists, primarily doctors and nurses. They are – the original request was for our public hospitals that unquestionably were bearing the brunt. Elmhurst, Bellevue, Lincoln, so many others, and that's where they'd gone and they'd been absolutely outstanding. The personnel coming in through the Medical Volunteer Corps, which is a city function created by our Department of Health, our folks who bring a wide variety of medical skills, they are being distributed out to independent hospitals that need help and to – including obviously thinking about hospitals on Staten Island – at any hospitals, whether they're a part of a bigger system or they're independent, but the ones that need help the most we have found are the independents and two nursing homes that need help. And that system, again of wide variety of health care professionals, we're applying that wherever the need is greatest.

But I think the simple point here is, which we've talked about before, Sydney, and I know you're advocating for Staten Island, I appreciate it. The hospitals that bore the brunt of this overwhelmingly were those public hospitals, that's where we sent the help from the military. Obviously I'd like to see a lot more help come in and then we could expand it more broadly. But we have been able to get that medical volunteer group, which is a lot of the same exact medical professionals in terms of training out to a broader swath of the city and our health care institutions, our nursing homes, and we're going to keep making adjustments as the need is clear. I think that's the central point and again, I appreciate the advocacy, but it's really going to come down to us as where are the gaps that we need to fill and we will move people according to the gaps. Whenever we see a situation where, you know, someplace just doesn't have enough personnel and another place has more than they need, we're going to move them around accordingly to address that need.

**Moderator:** Next, we have Gloria from NY1.

**Mayor:** Gloria?

**Question:** Can you hear me?

**Mayor:** Yup. Can you hear us?

**Question:** [Inaudible] thank you. Oh yes, I got you.

**Mayor:** Go ahead.

**Question:** I wanted to follow up on our report that we got this weekend about three men who were discharged COVID-19 patients and they were sent to the Hilton Garden Inn in order to isolate from their families. They – the three of them have passed away. I wanted to see if you had an update on that specific situation and if there's anything you would tell us about these, why these men were discharged, and how was the city monitoring this and what happened here?

**Mayor:** So we are doing a review right now to understand what happened. My understanding very initially and it's obviously tragic, I mean as I understand it, Gloria, these are three people



who were in hospitals for COVID-19, got care, recovered and were released. And my understanding is one was from a Montefiore in the Bronx, one was from Maimonides in Brooklyn, one was from Harlem Hospital. And then we – you know, all three have passed away and we need - we're doing a full review right now to understand what happened. If they were all discharged and all from different hospitals, something doesn't make sense here, and why are these people – why have they lost their lives? So we're doing a full review to understand that.

We're also going to add as an abundance of caution, add additional medical personnel and other personnel to do more checking in with people even if they've been discharged. You'd think if someone has been discharged from the hospital, it's all clear and the reason they're in a hotel is simply transitional, particularly if they happen to have a family situation that's not conducive to go back to or something like that. But we're going to add additional personnel to ensure that everyone is being very closely watched and supported. But I don't know – we don't know yet what happened here and why it happened and when we do, we'll certainly let you know.

**Moderator:** Next we have Brigid from WNYC.

**Question:** Thanks Mr. Mayor. First I just want to follow up, I have two questions, but I want to follow up on Gloria just to clarify the hotel where those three individuals were staying, you know, wasn't like isolation hotel. So I'm curious if the city is planning to increase any screenings for the other guests who are still there beyond just a wellness check? And then my second question relates to the Governor's announcement over the weekend about statewide antibody testing. I'm wondering what your thoughts are on the plan and how the city fits into it?

**Mayor:** Yes. On the first point, yes, I tried to say – I'll say it better that we absolutely are going to check on people more deeply in that facility because we want to know that hotel – we want to know exactly what's going on and we're confused how this could have happened. And again, don't know if there's a connection between the three deaths or not. We just don't know enough yet to give you a definitive answer. But we again, we'll be beefing up the amount of personnel devoted to consistently working with people who are staying in those hotels. You know want to make sure we're constantly checking on them and if people need something, it's evident, real quickly enacted on.

On the antibody tests, again, this is an area I think we can say where there's some real promise. There's also a lot of open questions. There's different kinds of tests of different kinds of quality level and quality levels and accuracy. We'll have more to say very soon because our goal is to do more and more testing, both the PCR testing, you know, the kind of main coronavirus tests. We want to see that on a vast scale as part of our recovery. We need a lot right now, but we want to see it. It's prerequisite to making a recovery. But the antibody testing could play an important role too. There's still some open questions, but we do anticipate using it in a substantial manner and as soon as we have the specifics worked out, we'll be announcing that hopefully quite soon.

**Moderator:** Next, we have Javier from Queens Latino.

**Question:** Good morning. I'm Javier Castano for Queens Latino, and in Queens, Corona, Jackson Heights, Elmhurst, [inaudible] of undocumented immigrants are waiting for the money

from the Open Society Foundation. They don't have the money to pay the rent, to buy food, or even to pay for [inaudible]. So when and what they [inaudible] New York City is going to distribute those dollars?

**Mayor:** Javier, just to keep the line open there so I can make sure we're saying the same thing. You're talking about the money that we announced a few days ago from the Open Society Foundations?

**Question:** Yes.

**Mayor:** Yeah. Yeah, as I said that money is flowing quickly. Community based organizations that work closely with immigrant communities will be providing that support to people who need it. And again, given the nature of what's being done here to help folks who have not gotten federal support and obviously have often been mistreated by the federal government, we're going to be very careful about handling this, and the best way to think about is, the money's going to flow quickly. It's going to be available at the community level through these grassroots organizations that work with them in immigrant communities and we have faith in them having worked with them in the past that they'll know how to get the word out to their communities rapidly and make sure the money gets in people's hands who need it. And that's the smart way to handle this.

**Moderator:** Last two for today, we have Reema from Chalkbeat next.

**Question:** Hi, Mr. Mayor, can you hear me?

**Mayor:** Yes, Reema, how are you doing?

**Question:** I'm good. How are you?

**Mayor:** Good, good.

**Question:** Good. I just wanted to follow up on something you said earlier about students needing mental health support right now and especially into the following school year. Given the need for those supports, but schools also facing potential big budget cuts, how do you sort of reconcile those two? How are schools – I mean, schools might need to potentially cut counselors and social workers. So how will schools be able to support – schools that lose that, you know, those staffers – how will they be able to support students going forward?

**Mayor:** Reema, look, you're asking a very, very important question because it kind of frames the whole discussion we're having now about how are you going to have a functioning city? How are you going to have the largest city in the country that the entire country depends on? How are we going to have a recovery if we cannot even provide the basics? And that's the danger right now and this is why the federal support from the stimulus is so crucial. I mean, how are you not, if you can't even have enough personnel for your schools, you know, that does not look like a restart and a recovery to me. So what I would say in the here and now, the mental health support that kids need right now, families need right now, I put that under the category of emergency

COVID expenses. You know, mental health is part of health. We know there's a crisis happening. We have to support those kids.

We'll be talking more in the coming days about the ways we're going to do it. Just like we're doing, you know, distance learning. Just like we're trying to help the seniors who we hope will graduate by providing them extra support from guidance counselors. And we know there's a lot of traumatized kids out there and we have to help them, now, we will. But going forward, you know, if we don't get support, we're going to have a really big challenge ahead. So we're going to do whatever it takes right now. But you know, again, this is another one of many, many examples of why folks in Washington should not, you know, toy with this city and other cities that are simply trying to fight our way through a crisis and get back on our feet

**Moderator:** Last for today. We have Yoav from The City.

**Question:** Hi, Mr. Mayor, I wanted to ask you about the small business loan program. The \$20 million interest free loans the city put together and just wanted to ask you – we just heard about a lack of communication from SBS for the applicants once they submitted. There's been no word. And I'm also curious if you have a handle on whether any of the businesses have received the funding yet, and if so, how many?

**Mayor:** I don't have those numbers at my fingertips. I do know we expanded the loan and grant program and it ended up being almost \$50 million. I do know that both those programs, all applications went in, a number have been funded for sure, we can get to exact facts. I'm certain there were more people applying than we could necessarily reach, but we can get the exact details on how many we were able to reach. But knowing that that resources have been flowing it's a great question. You know, what exactly is still outstanding and are other people that have had problems, what we can do to help them.

So, the – we will get you the facts as they are today and Yoav if you know of folks who had a particular problem, we want to follow up with that and see if it's someone that, you know, we still can reach with this effort. So please, if you are getting reports of people who applied and did not get communication, we want to know about that. We want to follow up with them, but we'll also get you the overall status where we stand with the grants they've gone out and the loans that have gone out.

Okay. Well, everyone, look as we conclude just to say this you know, again, I take solace from the fact that this is a situation we will work our way out of. I take solace in the fact that unlike some horrible, horrible moments in history where people never knew if there would be an end in sight, there is an end in sight here, thank God. And I take a lot of solace in the fact that New Yorkers have done such an amazing job during this crisis. I have absolute faith that New Yorkers will fight their way through. I don't have such faith in Washington D.C. and I'll keep coming back to it. I just want the people in Washington to try and be as good as what they see here. I want our elected leaders to be as honorable as New Yorkers have been, as diligent as New Yorkers have been, as devoted to others as New Yorkers have been. Folks we elect in Washington are supposed to help us in a time of crisis. The President has to step up. Senator McConnell has to step up. Their silence is deafening. So, imagine for a moment a government as

good as the people, and that's all I'm asking of the President and the Senate Majority Leader. Just try to be as good as the people of New York City and help them out in their hour of need as we all fight through this crisis together.

Thank you, everyone.

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