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**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO DELIVERS REMARKS AT PQC-HEP EBOLA
EDUCATIONAL SESSION**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Brothers and sisters, it is an honor to be with you today. It is an honor because of what you do, because of the way you care about everyone in our society, because of the way you serve, because of the things you believe in, because this union – and I thought the governor said it very powerfully – this union has always been big – not just in numbers – big in spirit, big in ideas, big in heart. You have never been small or narrow in what you do. You always think about where we need to go as a city, as a state, as a nation, as a society. You always think about what's right to do. Not many times you can get in a room with thousands and thousands of people and say about each and every one of them they think all the time what's the right thing to do and then they act on that. That's what you should be proud of. You not only think what's the thing to do, you act on it. And it is my honor to be with you – I honor that about you.

[Applause]

I'll be brief but I've got to say a few things about the people who are a part of today's gathering. George Gresham has not only been a friend to me, he has been a guide, he has been a counsel, he has been someone I turn to over and over again. He served on my transition team. We had to build a whole government for the city of New York – we turned to George constantly. And I've got to tell you, George is like the North Star. If you want to figure out what's the right to do, if you want to listen to someone who thinks from the heart and uses his mind at the same time, and thinks about working people every single day, that's George Gresham. You are blessed to have him for your leader.

He had a great predecessor and there's a lot of great things to say about Dennis Rivera. I just want to say, as Dennis now is on the national stage, and he's doing extraordinary work, just like he did here in New York – just remember, Dennis, everything you needed to learn, you learned at 1199.

[Applause]

I want to thank Ken Raske. This has been another challenge these last weeks, but we've had challenges before. The connection between 1199 and Greater New York – the connection between the City of New York and the Greater New York Hospital Association – has been constant, close, effective. It doesn't happen everywhere – here, it does, and that's because of Ken Raske. Let's thank him.

[Applause]

And we've had other great models of that kind of cooperation. I want to thank Bernard Tyson of Kaiser Permanente, the chair of the Partnership for Quality Care – another great example of how we work together for the betterment of all.

[Applause]

The team of leaders – we're not just taking on the challenge we face today but all the challenges we face in keeping people healthy in this most complicated of cities and states. We have leaders who actually, every morning, get up and figure out how to work with you to keep people healthy, no matter what's thrown at us. We have a fantastic health commissioner in this city, Dr. Mary Bassett. Let's thank her for what she does.

[Applause]

We have the biggest public health system – the biggest public hospital system – in the nation, and it has a great leader in Dr. Ram Raju. Let's thank him for what he does.

[Applause]

We have a fantastic partner at the State of New York. When it comes to health care, the state health commissioner has been with us every step of the way. When we call the state health commissioner, we are constantly in contact. We are constantly coordinating. Mary Bassett and Howard Zucker have a hotline, if you will. They're talking multiple times a day, because we want the city and state to be absolutely coordinated at all times. Let's thank Dr. Howard Zucker.

[Applause]

And finally, I bet – I bet I'm like you, in that, when the governor told that story about the woman helping to dig out the basement because she wanted to help her neighbor, I appreciated that story deeply and I appreciate that that meant so much to the governor, that he was there experiencing it, helping out himself. But he could feel what it was like to be a neighbor and what it was like to care so deeply for someone else – and that is the way he governs for the good of all of us. Let's thank Governor Andrew Cuomo.

[Applause]

You are blessed in many ways. Because, you know, a lot of people in life – a lot of people in life don't have a sense of mission. They wish they did, they yearn for it, they can't find it – but everyone in this room has a sense of mission built in. You believed in helping others. You're now doing it every day – and it's who you are. This is not a field of work for the timid or the weak. It's not a place someone goes for an easy gig. If you're in health care, you believe in something. If you're in health care, you care. If you're in health care, you work hard. Can we agree on that one? If you're in health care you work hard?

[Applause]

I want to know if you agree with this next statement. If you're looking for an easy, mellow job, don't go into health care.

[Cheers]

So, you self-selected – you decided on a life of meaning and purpose. You play it out every day. You do it – yes, you do it to support your families – you do so much for your families too, you care so deeply for your families – but you also chose a life of serving others, and it is noble, it is powerful, it is honorable, and it gives you something every day. Now a lot of people wish they had – they wish they had that sense of mission. It's a blessing. It comes with trials and tribulations, but it's a blessing. It's something to be proud of. You're our city's first line of defense against the challenge of disease of all kinds. We honor all types of first responders.

Some first responders are police or fire or EMTs. There's another kind of first responders – nurses, lab technicians, security guards. They're all first responders. You're all first responders.

You're here because you care. You're here because you're concerned. You're concerned for the people you serve. You're concerned, rightfully, for your own protection as well – and you have a right to that, because you can't help others unless you are protected too. And we are honored – all of us – to be gathered to talk about the truth, the things we have figured out to do together, the ways we can protect people in this work, and we can serve others. It is the right thing to do – to figure out together the best ways forward. In New York City, in New York State, we pride ourselves because we have this conversation up front, we practice, we drill. We try again. We try a new thing. We learn the best practices anywhere in the country, anywhere in the world – we bring them here. We take action. That is our nature. Have you noticed, we're a kind of energetic people? Have you noticed that?

[Applause]

We don't rest on our laurels. We don't wait and see what happens. We get ahead of the situation. Think about this for a moment. Look around this room – thousands of people together preparing – preparing in the best possible way. That is something to be proud of in and of itself. And today, you're going to hear a lot of truth – not hype, not the confusing signals sometimes sent in the public discourse – but the truth about what's working, the truth about what we need to do together, the truth about the precautions to take, the truth about how we will serve each and every person in need.

Now, I say that knowing what we all feel at the same time. We saw some people in this profession afflicted. The two nurses in Dallas – that pulls at all of us, that grabs at our heart. Like so many people in this room, doing the right thing, helping others, now facing a challenge – of course, our hearts go out to them and their families, our prayers are with them. But the truth is also – thank God – they're getting better. They are getting better – and that's a powerful statement.

[Applause]

It's a powerful statement because in this country, with every passing day, we're getting better and better at dealing with this challenge. This city, as you heard before, has been preparing and drilling for weeks and weeks. We're getting better at it. And we know that we're ready. And – thank god – not a single confirmed case of Ebola in New York City or New York State.

[Applause]

We have the world's strongest public health system here in this city and state. We have the best trained people. And because we have the best trained people, we keep training, we keep preparing. It's the nature of the best to keep working at being best. You know it. You know it – it's the way you think. We are here to get better today and better tomorrow and better the next day – and that's how we will continue to not have this challenge here in our city or our state.

Now, coordination and communication is key in all things, but particularly in crisis. City and state are constantly in dialogue, constantly adjusting strategies, working together, working with the CDC. Voluntary hospitals, public hospitals – working as one. Labor and management working as one. People talking – you see something, you have a concern, you have a question, raise it, because that's the best way for us all to move forward. And we want information to get to the top of the food chain quickly for the good of all. We're all in that ready mode. Every emergency room at HHC hospitals has been retrained in safety protocols. Training is being provided for all staff who work with high-risk patients. And again, we honor our doctors and we equally honor our nurses, our lab techs, our security workers – everyone who works in healthcare facilities, we honor equally.

HHC has been leading the way in implementing a buddy system. This is what's been proven to work. Health care workers monitor each other to make sure every protocol is being followed, because we're humans. And that buddy is going to watch, and be the check and balance, and make sure things are done right. That's a really fundamental advance. It's not a complicated advance – it's fundamental, it's simple, it's human, and it works.

So everyone is getting prepared. You know by your nature to help everybody in need, anybody in need, regardless of who they are, regardless of where they come from, regardless if they have the ability to pay, regardless of their immigration status – we will help them.

[Applause]

And it is so important, because you're also community members, to spread the word. Regardless of ability to pay, regardless of immigration status, we will help all. We do not want anyone suffering in silence. It's morally wrong, but it's also bad for public health. Anyone who might have a problem should come to their emergency room and get the help that they deserve.

And we know if we do – if, God forbid, we do have a patient with Ebola, there are clear protocols – very clear protocols – to diagnose, to isolate, and to treat. Every hospital in the city is working with those protocols and is ready. And we've taken special efforts to create at Bellevue the capacity for whatever situation is thrown at us. Bellevue has a special status in our hearts and in this city and it is ready in a particular way for this crisis.

And we know the goal is here is not only to serve but to limit the number of medical personnel who have to come in contact with any patient where there might be this challenge. We know how to do this and we will do this.

We've gotten great support from all over – city, state, nation. I had the honor, a week ago, of being in Washington with the homeland security secretary, Jeh Johnson, with the president's top advisor on counterterrorism, who is also playing a key role on Ebola, Lisa Monaco. The White House is focused. The Department of Homeland Security is focused. All federal agencies are working with New York City because they know we are one of the places at the frontline. So everyone is working on your behalf.

Let me finish with this. You know, I value and appreciate everyone in this room. I value what you do for all of us. It's our job to protect you and support you in the work you do. I want to say a special thanks, though – everyone matters, but I want to say a special thanks to our nurses.

[Applause]

As George indicated at the beginning, we're trying – all of us – to create a more just society. In a more just society, nurses will get all the recognition they deserve. We're working for that day.

[Cheers]

So I say to the nurses, because people listen – people listen to nurses – I've known a lot of nurses – they have a forceful way of communicating –

[Laughter]

– and God bless them for it – I want you to do one more thing, nurses and everyone in the room. Do one more thing for me that we need – and it's a simple thing. The governor is right. We've got to separate truth from fiction. We've got to get the message across of what we need to do. There's something very simple we can tell everyone to do who hasn't done it already that actually will help us. We can separate a lot of the cases that are

false alarms – we can separate those away if people would do one simple thing – if they’ll go get a flu shot. I’m serious – it’s as simple as that.

[Applause]

People should get the flu shot because it’s the right thing to do – parents should make sure their kids have the flu shot because it’s the right thing to do in and of itself – but it will also help us to separate so many cases that cause people great worry, but turn out to be nothing more than flu. Getting the flu shot will actually simplify this equation. So I need you to use your bully pulpit, the trust people have in you, and tell them – if they haven’t gotten the flu shot, this is actually something they can do that will help everyone – one small step that will actually greatly as we deal with the ramifications of this crisis.

We’re going to get through this. New Yorkers know how to get through anything thrown at us – history has taught us that. Anything thrown at us, we get through. We get through because of our extraordinary nature. We get through because it’s our inner understanding that we have that strength and resiliency.

I’ll finish with a simple point. You’re at the frontline. We all depend on you. We all respect you. We talk about the frontline in military terms a lot of the time. Now it’s a different kind of frontline. You know, the marines pride themselves in that phrase they use. The Marines like to say, “The few, the proud.” You are the many, the proud. You are the many, the proud.

[Applause]

You are the best. You are the best – and you’re going to help us through this. We believe in you. We thank you. And God bless you all.

[Applause]

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