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CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON THE BRIAN LEHRER SHOW

Brian Lehrer: It's the Brian Lehrer Show on WNYC. Good morning, everyone. And I think we're going to begin as we usually do on Fridays with our weekly Ask the Mayor segment, my questions and yours for Mayor Bill de Blasio. But our line to the Mayor is not yet connected. So, you can give us a call at 212-433-WNYC with your questions for the Mayor. We assume this will be rectified momentarily in the socially distanced world here. 212-433-9692 – or, you can tweet a question, just use the hashtag #AsktheMayor. And the Mayor is here now. Mr. Mayor, welcome back to WNYC.

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Thank you very much, Brian.

Lehrer: And, you know, before we get into the latest news and next round of policy decisions, can we take a moment together to simply acknowledge on this Good Friday, day of the crucifixion, whether it's historical or not, and, you know, with the universality of human suffering that it's supposed to represent, at very least to Christians, of a situation behind the numbers. Today, we're likely to hit 5,000 New Yorkers dead from the virus, but that's 5,000 individual lives with therefore tens of thousands of New Yorkers in mourning and who can't even grieve together. It's hard to have the words, but how have you been finding them to express the humanity behind the numbers?

Mayor: Brian, thank you. Thank you for what you said, because I think we're all in the middle of fighting. It literally feels like fighting a war. The number of people we've lost feels like a wartime reality. It's far surpassed the number of people we lost on 9/11, and that's seared in our memory, all of us, that day. And so, I think we're all struggling to make sense of it in the most human terms, because, at this point, you know, every one of us knows people who are suffering from this disease or have suffered. Many, many of us, most of us know people who have passed away, and their families. And it's very personal now. And I think, somehow, we have to – there's this sort of – some struggle going on in all of us to figure out how to acknowledge that humanity while fighting this war, because everyone's in this, everyone is in one form or another trying to save each other and help each other and help their families, because even a person who, you know, goes out with a face covering on, or a person who makes sure everyone around them is socially distancing, or any of those things is contributing to finally pushing back this disease and saving lives. But, at the same time, we all are in, like, a suspended state of grief, because it's so intense, it's so total, it's hard to even make sense of. It's so, just, constant, and it grows. And so, I think the holiday season is a very, very important prism to understand this, because when you think about Passover, when you think about Good Friday and Easter, there is an eternalness to

the messages that come with those days and the faith that tell us of people's struggles and how they overcame them, and tell us of people's values, sort of, triumphing over the adversity and the pain in the world. So, I think it's – this whole episode has been so horrible, but the fact that it is overlapping these holy days and these days where people really, kind of, dig deep into their faith. And someone said it a few days ago, that we're all almost being pushed back toward what our ancestors lived in those biblical times, in the sense of there's scarcity, there's fear, there's so much less, and yet people are holding on to their faith and their values and each other and supporting each other. So, even in this pain, there's like – there's something noble – there's something noble in this city.

Lehrer: That's a good thought. Thank you for that.

Mayor: Thank you.

Lehrer: I read you're now saying social distancing will continue until at least mid-May and it'll take widespread testing of New Yorkers to safely reopen things very much. Is that scenario, widespread testing for the virus or antibiotic antibodies to the virus, of the general population by mid-May, not just people who are sick at that time?

Mayor: So, there's basically two phases here. We'd be very lucky if it's mid-May. I want to first level set for the people of this city.

Lehrer: That's new isn't it?

Mayor: Well, no. I think some heard my remarks yesterday where I tried to really put a lot of guardrails on it and cautions on it and they sort of jumped in the most optimistic version. So, I've been saying – unfortunately, I've had to say it for weeks, you know, expect a very tough April. And for a while there it looked like May might even be worse. Knock on wood, Brian, it's looking like May could be better than April, but we just don't know enough yet. We've had some good days of progress in terms of what's happening in our hospitals. At the same time, as you said, we're losing a lot of people, you know, who had gotten infected earlier. So, it's just not time to get in any way to assume we now have like a clean, clear picture of what's going to happen in the next few weeks – that's premature. But what is possible, what is possible is to go through April into May and see enough progress to start, you know, thinking about and start acting on some changes to take small steps towards normalcy. But they'd get to the testing, we would need a lot more testing to get to that next phase. So, the three phases we talked about are right now this kind of community transmission, widespread, which is what we're experiencing right now. Low level transmission is the stage we need to get to next where it's much less frequent and we can actually trace each case, and this is where the testing, you know, must be available on a broader level than anything we have now to be able to do deep – you know, that disease detective work we talked about in the beginning of this crisis. And it was possible when there were only a few cases.

We need to get back to that level where we can trace every single case, find everyone who might've been exposed, test all of them, contain them, give them a quarantine if they need it. And then, that pushes us down to the point of basically no transmission, where there's basically no new cases except for occasional ones that come in from people traveling into the city or traveling

out of the city. That's the sequence we have to go through. That last part, to sustain it, you need really widespread testing to be available. And that's what we saw to some extent in South Korea, that was part of what they used to overcome this, or, at least, to, you know, have some success. So, Brian, right now, the history of testing is just so painful here. If we had it in the beginning, it would have changed everything. It might've allowed us to really contain this disease. We all know the federal government was, you know, not doing what we needed them to do, did not provide the testing here or anywhere else. And we still don't have it. We still don't have it on the level we need even to get to that next phase to really be secure, that we can trace every single case as they come up while protecting our health care workers, while protecting our first responders. So, we need more and we need everyone to stay tight, tight with the social distancing, with the shelter in place in the meantime to really double down on it to get to that next and better phase, somewhere between May and June.

Lehrer: And I read that you'll begin to publish real-time information on COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations beginning Monday to better track data that will determine when coronavirus restrictions can be lifted. The Daily News has that, maybe others – will you be putting out new kinds of data?

Mayor: Yeah, so what we're doing is in some ways new and in some ways we think clearer and more reliable than some of what has been available previously. And this has been how – this crisis, someday we're going to go back and understand that how little time passed between it being just an initial crisis we were all trying to make sense of and then being in the thick of it. It was literally just a few weeks. And the data, although crucial, was not always accurate and consistent, because data collection, obviously, was a lot less of a central point – a central focus, I should say, compared to saving our hospitals, saving the lives of people who needed the ventilators and the doctors and the nurses to be where they need them to be. But now, because we've had a little bit of a pause here, a little bit of an improvement and it's allowed people to regroup, we will be putting out data starting Monday. It'll be very clear about COVID-related or suspected COVID-related hospitalizations, ICU admissions, and percentages of people testing positive. And looking around the city, it's quite clear it will portray the disparities that we're already seeing. There's no question about that and that's very sad. But what is important strategically, Brian, is that we've said if those three indicators – this is what our health leadership believes very, very strongly – if those three indicators go down in unison for, say 10 days to two weeks consistently, that is when we can start to discuss changes in the restrictions we have. But even then, it's partial, it's careful. We're not going to – no one is saying “go back to normal.” I don't even know what normal will be after this and I think we're all going to have to work to define that. And I'll be talking to New Yorkers about that in the coming days. But the point is, you're going to see it very publicly, daily, three indicators. If they're moving unevenly, if some are going up, some are going down or they're only flat, not enough. All three have to go down in unison for at least 10 days to two weeks to be able to see our way to the next phase.

Lehrer: So, that's a good frame for our listeners to know how to begin to watch the numbers, starting next week. And also, a good warning for how long it's going to take. Gideon in Englewood, you're on WNYC with Mayor de Blasio. Hello, Gideon.

Question: Hello. Hello, Mr. de Blasio. I wanted to ask you a question about the subway system in the city.

Lehrer: And Gideon, forgive me, just for the reference for the context for our listeners. You told our screener, you're the director of a medical clinic in Brooklyn?

Question: Yes, I am.

Lehrer: Okay. Go ahead.

Question: Okay. I'm a doctor. I direct a medical clinic in Downtown Brooklyn and every single member of my medical staff and clinical staff – a total of 14 people – use the subway system to get to work. And also, many of my patients, the ones who can't be seen by video, have told me about intolerable overcrowding on the subway platforms while waiting for long periods of time for the trains, which are routinely packed with passengers as well as containing homeless people who are lying down on the benches occupying multiple seats. This makes your mandate to observe social distancing impossible, Mr. Mayor –

Lehrer: Whoops, go ahead. Finish that thought.

Question: And endangers dangerous my staff of essential workers and often medically impaired patients of advanced age – makes as social distancing impossible.

Lehrer: And let me get you a response, Gideon. And, Mr. Mayor, I'm sure I don't have to tell you that we've been getting calls like this. I'm sure you've been getting reports like this with the subways running as infrequently as they are now largely because of staff shortages because of subway workers out sick. The subways are actually not a good place to do social distancing and these are the people who have to go to work or are sick.

Mayor: Yeah, Gideon, thank you for the call and it's very, very painful to hear. And I don't think we're getting the whole truth on this one. I'm very frustrated by this because I spoke to the head of the MTA, Pat Foye, I think it was actually after the show last week, I believe, when these issues came up as well. And I know him a long time and I respect him and he affirmed to me that this was a very limited problem. And I don't understand how we can say that when I have all through the week heard these reports. Again, look, we have got to be clear here, this is a crisis and we all have to work together. The MTA is run by the State of New York. I'm going to immediately go back to Pat Foye, to the State, and ask them how on earth if people are experiencing this, how come it's not being more clearly acknowledged so we can act on it together?

Lehrer: And what could be done?

Mayor: Well, look, I mean, I think we've got to, all of us, work together to figure this out, but it begins with if the frequency of the trains is a problem, is there anything that could be done? I mean, at this point, it's horrible what everyone's going through, but, you know, is there any way to run more trains where they are needed? It may not, of course, be everywhere. It may be certain

times a day or certain lines, but if that is what's going to protect people, we should do that. If the trains can't be run, can we run buses on those lines as an alternative? Again, I don't run the MTA, I can't speak for them, but I can say that the solutions to me would be either more trains in the right places or more personnel to avoid the overcrowding and make sure people are spread out, or more buses. Now, I've told the NYPD I want them to be a part of the solution to. This is the part of the equation I do a control, that the NYPD needs to be where there are problems. For example, I know there were certain stations in the Bronx, 149th Street, as an example, where there were specific problems and my instruction to Commissioner Shea was send the NYPD in to make sure there is not overcrowding on the trains or the platform. Spread people out, tell people, you know, don't get on that train yet, hold people from getting into the station of the stations too crowded – the kinds of things that can be done if there's leadership and supervision on site.

Lehrer: [Inaudible] have to wait for an hour and a half to get on a train in that scenario?

Mayor: It's horrible, Brian. But look, we are talking about protecting people's lives. And I know a lot of that people on the train are health care workers, first responders, people we need to get to work, but we also can't endanger them and everyone else by failing to practice social distancing. And it's like – it's literally, to the extent where you're seeing any progress, and we are seeing some, it is because people took social distancing and shelter in place seriously. So, we cannot break out of that without endangering – one of the things, Brian, I really warned people about yesterday morning when I went in detail over these phases and where we're going is, if we are not careful, this is a disease that can reassert and you can have a resurgence and that's the worst of all worlds. So, we have to practice social distancing. I would say, I'm going to talk to Pat Foye at the MTA, can they increase service on certain lines, especially I would assume, during certain hours or shift changes of medical workers and other folks? Can they – if subways are not a good option, can they do buses and really publicize that that will be available. If they need more PD help, we will provide it where they need it. The homeless piece is very real too and we have sent out our outreach workers even in the midst of all this to try and get homeless folks to come into shelter, and some have, but there's some that, unfortunately, you know, because of mental health and other reasons are very, very resistant. But you have to have enough space, for example, on the subways, really clear limits to how many people can be in each train. So, that has not been done yet. I think to do it more clearly, that there should be no more than whatever it is – 20 people or whatever it is – is the right number on a subway car that allows proper distancing. I'll talk to the MTA about making that standard clear and more public, because I think it's got to be abided.

Lehrer: Okay. Amir in Jackson Heights. You're on a WNYC with the Mayor. Hello, Amir.

Question: Hello. Good morning, gentlemen. How are you today?

Lehrer: Okay.

Question: So, I have a couple of – I have two points. So, last week I called in and I asked you, Mr. Mayor, about having – canceling rent. You see, this should have been in my opinion, priority number one, two, and three.

Lehrer: If you got on with the Mayor last week, I just want to say, you're a lucky guy on call-in roulette. We might have to start a quota, so lots of New Yorkers have access to the Mayor on different weeks. But go ahead and ask your follow up.

Question: So, I called and I tried to – I asked you about having a canceling the rent. You're telling us that this might go on until May – excuse me, I'm a little sick – this might go on until May. And I feel like we need to have to cancel the rent. That's just my first point, I want to see where we are on that. And then two –

Lehrer: And you're a NYCHA residents, so this is why your question goes to the Mayor – not a private landlord, correct?

Question: Exactly. So, my second point is, how about trying to get the rent canceled for NYCHA residents at the very least? [Inaudible] suffering, I lost my job, I still have to pay rent, and I'm just wondering why can't we get that? At the very least, NYCHA residents are some of the poorest residents in New York City, the most vulnerable residents in New York City. Let's get the rent canceled for the very least until June.

Lehrer: And Mr. Mayor, we get one form or another of this question for whatever public official is on every single day.

Mayor: Of course, you do. And it's – so, first of all, Amir, I want to start at the beginning, you said you were sick. I want to make sure you're okay and, you know, that you have the information you need and you know what to do if your sickness has anything to do with the symptoms of coronavirus. So, I just want to check, are you okay?

Question: I'm fine. I'm taking the quarantine seriously and staying home and wearing a mask. So, I'm fine. I had a little fever a few days ago, but nothing life-threatening so far so good. I'll be here to call you next week.

[Laughter]

Mayor: Amir, if there's any problem, and if you have your own doctor, that's great. But if you don't, you can call 3-1-1 and get connected to a doctor at Health + Hospitals if you need any guidance. Okay. So, there's a broader idea of a rent moratorium. That's something that the State only has the power to act on. There's this specific idea of a rent freeze for the over 2 million New Yorkers who live in rent stabilized housing. I think that's an idea that makes sense. We're working through how to act on that because that's something that has been done in the past in times of economic distress. Clearly, this is the greatest economic crisis since the Great Depression. I think it's quite clear why a rent freeze makes sense. And then on NYCHA, it's a really good point. NYCHA is obviously, Amir struggling in general to keep going because of all the history of disinvestment over decades. So, what I will do is get an answer today. It's a very fair request. It's against the backdrop of, you know, an organization that 400,000 people are depending upon for their housing. And it's something I'm pretty certain we could only do with federal approval because all the public housing is chartered by the federal government. But it's a very, very fair request and I'll get an answer on that today.

Lehrer: And Amir, thank you for your call. We may block your next week, but thank you for your calls. I'm glad you said that thing about 3-1-1, if you don't have a primary care physician. Because the WNYC and Gothamist report this week that I know your administration has noticed, that the number of people dying at home has gone from about 20 a day to 200 a day in the city. Presumably a lot of that is because COVID patients who aren't in the hospital are succumbing at home. And I have a theory about that, which is that people who don't have private primary care physicians, who are there to be attentive to them and give them the warning signs about what they're walking or breathing might feel like for when it's time to go to the hospital or take that next step toward going to the hospital. People who don't have those primary care physicians might be primarily the ones who are dying at home because they're not going for in person medical attention quickly enough. I don't know if that's the case, but I have that theory. So, I think that it's important that people know that 3-1-1 is a last ditch option for getting to a primary care physician.

Mayor: Yes. And let me, you're making a powerful point. I'm just going to take a second to explain this. You're right on the money that there are so many New Yorkers, let's be clear. You know, a year and a half ago I announced that we were doing guaranteed health care for all New Yorkers and it really brings out the larger facts here, the disparities that we're talking about that are underlying this crisis. So, a year and a half ago, the number was 600,000 New Yorkers who had no insurance at all. And about half of them were because they're undocumented folks who could not legally get health insurance. What I put in motion then was a plan that's been growing since then that everyone gets coverage. If you can afford health insurance, we came up with lower cost and easier options. If you couldn't afford it or you didn't qualify because you're undocumented, you could get an NYC Care card, get assigned a primary physician at our public hospitals and clinics and get regular care like everyone deserves. So, it's a version of universal health care.

And I think what's happening in this whole horrible tragedy with COVID-19 is that we are seeing just how devastating it is when a country does not have health care available to all, regardless of income and regardless of documentation status, that people are made very, very vulnerable. So, I think you're exactly right. Brian, I think it's one part people who don't have a primary care physician. I think that's another part, people who are immigrants, undocumented or documented, who have been made afraid by the actions of the Trump administration, they're afraid to go and access services that were, once you know, much more common for them to turn to. We have things like the horrible public charge rule and of course the ICE raids that have contributed. And I think a lot of people have gotten into a culture of understandably, a culture of fear where they hold back. And I think its endangered lives.

So, the answer, first and foremost, to the point you raised about can people turn for help? Yes. You can always turn to 3-1-1 and if you say, you know, I'm in danger. If it's a right now danger, you're going to be transferred to 9-1-1 and an ambulance will get sent. If it's a danger where you're trying to get help from a doctor, see if it might be a situation where you're in enough danger, you might need to be tested or hospitalized, then 3-1-1, we'll plug you in, we'll sort of patch you through right away, live to a Health + Hospitals clinician who will talk to the individual and they can do it in multiple languages, to see if they need immediate care or coach

them through. Now, we announced a few days ago and seeing all these disparities fully documented now and clear and the Latino community, unfortunately particularly bearing the brunt and then the African American community. That we're doing a new plan that's going to involve a lot more grassroots outreach in multiple languages, to educate people, get them support. But also try to much more deeply provide that calling capacity, that a person can talk to a clinician. I want this to be much more widely available because I think a lot of people need answers, need coaching, need to just, need reassurance. But they also need to be able to ask questions and have a trained person answer them in real time. And I think that's going to help protect folks who otherwise are just living with a lot of fear and confusion and they need a trained person to help them through it.

Lehrer: Good. I'm glad we got that out clearly and in a little more length. We're getting a number of tweets from people in the Streetsblog community asking why you can't close miles and miles of streets to allow for easier social distancing while walking? They say Oakland, California did it. I know I've had the experience walking around in my neighborhood with, you know, me and my neighbors bobbing and weaving around each other on New York City streets so we can keep six feet. And most people are trying to do it. And not everybody is as attentive to keeping the six feet from the people in their neighborhoods. So it is a challenge when you go out, you know, in a lot of parts of the city, even if everybody's trying to do it, to keep that social distancing. So, can you do something like that or what would the impediments be?

Mayor: So, it's a very fair question. I'm not familiar with the Oakland model. I'll look into that today. The original proposal was to have – sort of based on the Summer Streets, where certain ones were closed off that people would use and, in many ways, congregate around. That, although it was a noble underpinning to that idea, the fear that I had and the NYPD had, and our folks at Emergency Management and our Health people, everyone was worried that we would create new focal points for gathering. And that we couldn't properly enforce it. Because remember, in the beginning of social distancing, we were really trying to teach people a new way of being. And we had to focus on all the places that people go. I mean you just told the story of the subways, which is very distressing and so we need to keep enforcement because enforcement is crucial here, focused where there are problems and we only have so much enforcement available. And obviously, you know, the NYPD had a lot of personnel out. They are starting to come back in bigger numbers, thank God.

But it's been a challenge where there's been a lot of enforcement to do and fewer people to do it with and a huge city. So, the original concept of having those Summer Streets, we tried it. We didn't get a great control model because of weather, but we also realized it was taking up a lot of enforcement. So, we said this just can't work at this moment, certainly with NYPD and other agencies depleted. But I do get the point like wouldn't it be great if just there was lots of space for everyone to walk around? It would be great if it did not cause gatherings and therefore create new problems. And it would be great if there was not the problem of all the stuff that still has to keep happening. Obviously emergency vehicles are being called on constantly. All the food deliveries, the things that have to keep happening. We have to be careful that we cannot create a situation where we clog all of that up. So, I'm going to look at the model further, but to date the answer is, and I'm going to hold with this answer today -- it is not enforceable, the way we need it to be. And it disrupts other things we need desperately in this moment. And finally, Brian, I

think people are going through the bobbing and weaving. I've done it. Everyone's doing it. I know it's inconvenient and strange and some people are not perfect at it, but I've seen really, really good follow through by New Yorkers. I said the other day, New Yorkers are the heroes of why we're seeing this change. The fact that we've seen even a few days of progress is because 8.6 million people in unison, actually stuck to, overwhelmingly, the overwhelming majority stuck to shelter in place and social distancing and learned an entirely new way of life in a matter of weeks. And they're doing it and they're doing it with just tremendous decency and kindness. So, we can make it work under current conditions. But I'll always be looking at, you know, any other innovations going forward that would help us do it better.

Lehrer: One more call Mustafa in Harlem, you're on WNYC with the Mayor. Hello, Mustafa.

Question: Hello. How are you doing? Good morning Mr. Brian, good morning Mr. Mayor.

Lehrer: Thank you for calling.

Question: Thank you very much. Long time listener, first time caller. [Inaudible] pass away, God bless them. [Inaudible] I live here in Harlem. I was homeless for the last three years. [Inaudible] Everything is closed now, so I [inaudible] very difficult time. I know it's difficult to talk about that but I will need help. I'm 60 years old. I just don't have [inaudible] but that's my problem. Okay. [Inaudible]. Too many people die. I said God bless. [Inaudible]

Lehrer: And Mustafa I hear your concern for the whole city. Is your concern for yourself that you're homeless and with the restaurants and stores closed where you might've taken some shelter before, you have nowhere to go that isn't too crowded like a City homeless shelter where you'll be in close quarters with people? Is that your question?

Question: Yes. Like I said, I was homeless for last two years, it's a long story. I used to [inaudible] my homelessness without problem because everything is open. I could go to the mosque, you know the [inaudible]. But when COVID came, everything is closed. I have no more chance to [inaudible] I need help. I am a 60-year-old [inaudible].

Lehrer: And what a New York story, Mr. Mayor. He was managing, his words, if you couldn't hear him, managing his homelessness well enough for him over the last several years through the mosque, through stores. Now, he has nowhere to go that isn't crowded.

Mayor: Mustafa, thank you so much for calling and please, please stay on the line. So WNYC can help us find a way to reach you today. And we can, two nights have you in a safe place. We have right now, we've made sure there is a lot of safe, clean places available for people who are struggling. And I want you to be in a safe place tonight. I want our people to follow up with you today. Come find you and get you the help you need. I think what Mustafa said and thank you for your concern Mustafa, for everyone else too. I heard your words and they were very powerful. But I also think Brian, it is a New York story and it's a – there's a bigger point here I'm feeling as I listen, which is, here's Mustafa, who obviously is a very heartfelt, a decent human being and an intelligent person who, you know, whatever has happened in his life, whatever way he ended up being on the street, we have to help him back from the street permanently.

And this is something that we were working on before this crisis. We announced a vision called the Journey Home to end permanent street homelessness. There's no reason anybody who's been on the street for a long time like him should be when we now have Safe Havens and permanent affordable housing we can get people to. But it takes an intensive effort to reach people and convince them that it will be safe for them and it will work for them. But what a comment that someone like this who is so composed, so clear in what he's saying, somehow something that his life led him to the street. It should not be that way. And the one thing I can say in this crisis is we have a place for everyone. I guarantee you we have a place for everyone. More than ever, we have gone out of our way to make sure there's more capacity for anyone who needs a roof over their head. No one will be turned away. And we need -- and then going forward out of this crisis I want us to end that long term, that permanent street homelessness. That has been a horrible feature for decades in the city. As we think about the future, as we think about rebuilding and recovery, we need to disrupt the patterns of disparity that have dominated this city for generations. And it begins with not allowing the street homelessness that somehow became a norm over decades. It should not be a norm going forward

Lehrer: And Mustafa hang on. We will take your contact information off the air or in, you know, with whatever it takes, put you in touch with the Mayor's Office so you can take that invitation to get personal help. And we're over time. Mr. Mayor –

Mayor: Just one point, Brian, about Mustafa who – when your people talk to them, tell them to say exactly where he is. Our people will be calling you right after this. And we want to send outreach workers to him right where he is right now.

Lehrer: Great. And we are over time, but one policy follow up to that is I know that advocates for the homeless have been calling on you to open 30,000 of the 100,000 vacant hotel rooms, estimated 100,000 to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among both homeless New Yorkers and shelter staff. Can the City make those 30,000 hotel rooms available to them? That's from Vocal New York.

Mayor: Yeah. There's, clearly first of all, the first reality I want me to clear - what are we doing with hotel rooms? We are creating hospitals for the potential that we're going to have a real massive surge still in this disease. We are making sure that hospital workers and first responders have a place to be if they need to be away from their families. But that is to say that, you know, we have some immediate needs we must take care of to protect this city and protect all the people in this city. But we also have to make sure of course, that we ensure that any time there has to be a use of hotels to keep people safe who are in shelter, we'll do that. We have in shelter now, a lot of specific procedures have been placed to protect people. We should be careful that in moving large numbers of people around, there are their own challenges. And we have to be really smart about that. And I think Commissioner Steve Banks, who's been a champion for the homeless for literally 30 years or more, he is the person managing this and making sure that where we need to use additional hotel space, we will. But there are other cases where that would not be the best thing in terms of keeping people safe. And we need to be really balanced in that approach. So, where we need beds, we'll use them. I trust Steve Banks and the people at Homeless Services to figure out when they need them, when we can keep people safe where they

are. We don't want to artificially move large numbers of people around because again that creates its own dangers in a time of social distancing and shelter in place.

Lehrer: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I hope you and your family find your ways to enjoy Easter and talk to you next week.

Mayor: And the same to you Brian. Same to all New Yorkers. A happy Easter. Let's find a way even though it's not a happy time, let's find a way to celebrate each other, people of all faiths in this holiday season and support each other.

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