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**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: ON WORLD AIDS DAY, MAYOR DE BLASIO, SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO
& CITY COUNCIL ANNOUNCE NYC COMMITMENT TO END THE EPIDEMIC**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Thank you. Brothers and sisters, it is so good to be with you today. This is a day of progress. This is a day of people coming together in common cause to keep fighting to make things better.

I want to start by thanking Guillermo Chacon for his extraordinary leadership, and what he has done – his work in organizing, creating the National Latino-Hispanic AIDS Leadership Summit, and the work he’s done to make sure that we will end this epidemic once and for all. Let’s thanks Guillermo for all he has done.

[Applause]

Now, isn’t good to be at the Apollo?

[Cheers]

Good things happen at the Apollo. They happened here all the time. They happen here because of this extraordinary gathering of leaders, activists, providers, people who’ve made a difference. I remember it last year, and it touched my heart last year to see how much all of you have achieved together. Now, last year we talked about some things we’re very proud of. We talked about finally moving forward on the 30 percent rent cap. That was progress because of you. We talked about so many things that were waiting to happen, and finally were happening, that this movement fought for, for years. Well, I’m proud to say, at City Hall, there’s a lot of people who see things your way and want to keep making these changes.

And this is a good moment to acknowledge two of them who are here, who really deserve such praise for what they’re achieving. First of all, our health commissioner, Dr. Mary Bassett – give her a big round of applause.

[Applause]

And second, our HRA commissioner, Steve Banks.

[Applause]

These are two folks who have stood shoulder to shoulder with you for years, and are making an amazing impact just in the two years they’ve been in their roles. I want to thank them. I want to thank everyone – all the advocates, all the community groups, and, especially the host of today’s event, the End AIDS NY 2020 Coalition. That name says it all. We have a mission. We’re going to achieve the mission, correct?

[Cheers]

Alright, and all the elected officials who are here who have been tremendous allies – Tish James, Gail Brewer, Gustavo Rivera, Brad Hoylman, Dick Gottfried, Corey Johnson, Jimmy Van Bramer. There is a unity among so much of the leadership in this city that we will end this epidemic. And this day is a moment for us to focus our energies because it's a day where we deal with the heartbreak, always. It's a day where we consolidate and focus our hope as well.

I have always been struck by the fact that so many people who saw a lot of pain, went through a lot of pain, lost a lot of loved ones, have turned that pain into such extraordinary, righteous energy for change. And that is something we all should be thankful for.

So, please, a round of applause for everyone here.

[Applause]

Now, this epidemic has gone on for too long, and New York City's been the center of it from the very beginning, but we are resolved to end this epidemic. We have the tools. We're committed to using them. There's no hesitation. There's no delay. There's no wanting to minimize the challenge. But we still believe fundamentally in our ability to overcome this epidemic.

Today, in this country, 1.2 million people living with HIV – nearly a tenth of them here in our city. That means almost 120,000 New York City residents. And that represents about 80 percent of all those with HIV in the state of New York. So, we're the frontline. We're the frontline, and we have to make the impact here. 120,000 – it may be less than what we once knew, but it's still far too many. We don't accept it. That's why we're determined to make change.

Now, we can see that a lot of the efforts that you all [inaudible] over years have had an impact. HIV diagnoses in our city are lower than ever before. We saw a decrease of 35 percent over the last 10 years, reaching a historic low in 2014. That is real and tangible progress that you've worked so hard to achieve. But we know we have to push harder. The time is now to end the epidemic once and for all. It's as simple as that. I'm proud to talk about the partnership we've reached with the City Council – an incredible partnership that gives us the surety, the certainty that we will end the AIDS epidemic here in New York City by 2020 – we will.

[Applause]

We're not just imagining. We're not just surmising a future without HIV and AIDS. We are altogether creating that future. Our plan to end the epidemic will fulfill the state's ambitious goal to keep new HIV diagnosis below 750 per year across New York State. But let's be clear, we want to keep driving down beyond that, every day. The state's task force did great work and made a number of recommendations on how to reach this goal, and we'll draw on many of them in our plan to end the epidemic. And we'll invest \$23 million dollars a year, every year –

[Applause]

We'll invest \$23 million a year to allow nearly 200,000 New York City residents to receive the prevention and healthcare services they need each and every year. That is our commitment.

[Applause]

And as so many of you have been calling for, for years, let's stop – let's stop this virus. Let's prevent people from getting it. Let's stop the problem before it happens, because we have those tools, but we haven't used them enough. So, we're going to make sure that prevention efforts reach New Yorkers who are at the highest risk for infection. We'll make sure that these New Yorkers, as well as anyone else who needs our help, can get

medication from our city's STD clinics to help prevent infection. Prevent – this is the name of the game. And we'll keep those clinics open longer so they can serve more people.

[Applause]

If someone is newly diagnosed – if someone is newly diagnosed, we'll make sure they can get the anti-retro – excuse me, anti-retroviral – viral, I can do this –

[Laughter]

Where's my cue card? Anti-retroviral therapy. Brothers and sisters, I'm about to present a metaphor for the movement – if at first you don't succeed, try, try again.

[Applause]

It's there – we can make a critical difference, in life expectancy and quality of life. So, we'll provide it. And our Health Department will work with community organizations to make sure patients have the support they need to take this medication consistently and correctly. That support makes a world of difference. We want to make sure that all who need it, get it. For those with HIV or AIDS, we must make sure that their basic needs are met too – a roof over their heads, enough food to eat – and healthy food to eat –

[Applause]

– And a way to get around to all the places they need to go. This is our commitment.

[Applause]

And we will work with the state and other partners to expand the vitally important HIV-AIDS Services Administration housing efforts – the HASA housing efforts, the nutrition efforts, the transportation assistance to all New Yorkers with HIV or AIDS.

[Applause]

Now, as you know, right now, HASA benefits are only available to people with AIDS and symptomatic HIV. So, how about we try something different? How about HASA for all?

[Applause]

Is it time?

[Cheers]

Mayor: The creation of HASA for all will mean those not showing symptoms can benefit too. That's up to 7,300 additional clients we will reach by the year 2020. So, we are going to reach people who need our help. We're not leaving them behind. We're reaching them. This is how we fight and end this epidemic. We believe that no New Yorker, with HIV or AIDS, should have to choose between medicine and rent – medicine and food. We don't think that's what people should have to live with in this city. We can do better, can't we?

[Cheers]

Mayor: World AIDS Day – it may just be 24-hours, it may be a moment to pause, but, to the credit of people in this room, we don't pause and then relax – become complacent. We pause to refuel, to recommit, to remember,

and to gain further purposefulness for the next good fight that we will fight every day, all year long. And this fight is not over until we end the epidemic. And I am convinced, brothers and sisters, we will do that. Right here, in this city, we will do that.

[Applause]

I think it's time for a little Español, don't you?

[Cheers]

Mayor: The movement speaks many languages –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

So, brother and sisters –

[Applause]

And now, I'll bring it back to English to summarize my Spanish comments, and you're going to help me with three simple words. Let's see if we can say them together. End AIDS now – end AIDS now –

[Crowd chants]

Louder.

[Crowd chants]

And we will do that. God bless you all. Thank you.

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