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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Well, good morning, everybody. It's been a really tough time these last weeks. And, as your mayor, I've had an opportunity to really look closely at what's happened all over the city to feel what you're feeling and understand what New Yorkers are going through in all five boroughs. And it's been tough for all of us. But I have to also tell you, for me it's been an honor and a privilege to see the strength and the resiliency that all of you have shown in this crisis to look into your lives and see what's so good about this city. And, as New Yorkers, we are legendary for being tough and we're legendary for being self-reliant. No matter what else is happening around us, New Yorkers make things happen. We always find a way. This crisis has brought that out so deeply. The strength that people have shown, the creativity, the ingenuity. That self-reliance is part of what makes this city so great. And I think we have shown the whole world yet again why New York City is a very special place. So, I commend all of you for everything you've done. And for once again, affirming the beauty and the strength of this place. But just because we prize self-reliance, it doesn't mean we should go it alone. It doesn't mean that we have all the solutions here. We need help. And that's only right when you think about a virus that came to us from overseas, and unfortunately it made us the epicenter of this national crisis. We need help, we need help to get back on our feet. We need help to restart and recover. We need help to be whole again. And we need help to be the leader that we have been for so long in this nation, in terms of our economy, our cultural life, so many of the elements of New York City that are great, and also benefit the entire country.

So, there's literally no such thing as a city that could possibly stand up against a pandemic alone. So, for weeks and weeks now my clear demand to everyone in Washington D.C. is – understand what Washington needs to see – understand what New York City is going through, understand the fight that's happening here. Come to the aid of New York City so that we can be strong again. So that we can be the leader we have always been helping this entire nation. What we have needed is a clear commitment from the federal government for a massive stimulus plan that would put us back on our feet and make us strong for the future. And finally, we see the beginning of such a plan. Finally, we see a step forward in Washington that really responds to what all of us have experienced over these last two or three months, and all that we've gone through.

Finally, we see the beginning of an answer in Washington D.C. This is the biggest health care crisis, the greatest challenge that we've faced in terms of health care in a century in this city, in this nation. The biggest economic crisis since the great depression, and they're both happening at once. So, it's only right that we would see a proposal come out of the house of representatives that equals that moment. That actually speaks to the fullness of what's happening here. The

unprecedented health care challenges, and the disparities that have come up so clearly, and the unprecedented economic challenge at the same time. And it's scary to think about, but even compared to the Great Depression, and I always say, I remember so clearly the stories of the great depression from my older relatives and how vivid they were, and how much pain they went through, and how much I related as I heard their stories to what it must have been like to see your world turned upside down. Well, even compared to the great depression, some of what we're seeing now is even worse, where the hit that people have taken was even quicker, even deeper. The number of people unemployed, staggering in this city, in this nation, it's happened so quickly, even faster than it did in the Great Depression.

So, it is right that the Congress and the president act at a level that actually fits this absolutely unprecedented moment in American history. They call it stimulus four, and what we have seen now proposed by the House of Representatives actually lives up to the moment. I want to thank Speaker Nancy Pelosi for her extraordinary leadership. We've had a series of conversations over the last few weeks, and she has been resolute and clear, and understanding not just what New York City needed, but what cities and states all over the country needed to truly get back on our feet. I want to thank leaders of the House of Representatives from New York, including the Appropriations Chair, Congress Member, Nita Lowey, and one of the top members of the democratic leadership in the house, Congress Member Hakeem Jeffries. Both of them played an absolutely crucial role in bringing this proposal forward, as did all the members of New York City House Delegation who fought hard for us.

So, let's talk about this proposal coming out of the House of Representatives, because it really will be the game changer we need. First of all, in terms of the impact on New York City, and this is over two years and it really defines clearly what we need to be strong again. \$17 billion in aid directly to New York City over two years, \$34 billion in direct aid to the state of New York. Now, I think everyone knows this, but I want to put a point on it. The city, we've already taken a massive hit in every way. The human toll, first and foremost, what families have gone through the pain, the suffering of this continuing right now, the economic impact, the number of people that don't have a livelihood, the number of people don't know where the next meal's coming from. That's what matters most, the human reality that we're facing. But on top of that, the city government that's here to serve all of you to make your lives better, to take care of you. We've taken a huge financial hit, and it only gets worse all the time. So, to stabilize this city government to make sure that we can pay the bills and keep our public servants at the frontline doing the great work they do and build for a future when our economy actually comes back strong. We need to think about the year, this year, the next year, we have to think several years ahead and this plan by providing \$17 billion actually gives us the ability to move forward. But then there's the state piece, because remember the city depends on the state for so much support. Many, many areas, education's a great example, but there's many others where State funding directly State funding that comes via the state, but from the federal government. We need that State funding to be consistent, to be able to do everything that people expect us to do every single day in this city. The State's been going through a horrible economic crisis too. The State's been taking a huge hit on its budget. If the State of New York isn't whole, then the City of New York can't be whole, so that \$34 billion for the state of New York, a huge step to making the state whole, so that we can be protected as well so that everyone gets served. The overall

package, \$500 billion in aid to States, \$375 billion indirect aid to localities. This is exactly the kind of assistance that we need to get evil to move forward again.

Now, there are also specialized elements of funding of this, and it's so important. For the entire country, \$10 billion increase in food stamps, the SNAP program, and we see already how many people are going hungry because of this economic crisis. I want to remind you our estimate was before COVID-19 a million or more New Yorkers were food insecure. That means they were hungry some part of the year. Now, we think that number is 2 million or more, so it's doubled in the course of 10 weeks. That's the magnitude of this crisis that direct food aid from the federal government through the Snap benefits is crucial and more will be available to New Yorkers because of this new national allotment. Housing, I've said that we have four pillars of everything we're doing right now. Protecting your health, protecting your safety, making sure you have a roof over your head and food on the table. Housing continues to be a struggle always for New Yorkers, affordable housing, and that becomes even more true in the midst of a financial crisis and economic crisis. This legislation would add \$4 billion nationally for the Section Eight program. Section Eight vouchers that help people afford housing, one of the most successful affordable housing programs, \$4 billion nationally, that would unquestionably help New York as a piece of that. And then transit, we all know the city depends on public transit. We all know the MTA has taken a huge hit. All transit has taken a huge hit. This plan would have almost \$16 billion in national grants for mass transit. Again, this is something where we expect New York City and New York State to benefit very specifically and help us come back in the area of transit that we depend on.

So, that's some of the big picture impact. And again, all of it actually responding to the magnitude of the problem. But also, let's talk about our heroes. Let's talk about those who have served us so well. The health care heroes, the first responders, the essential workers who have sustained us during this crisis. The bill includes federal benefits for first responders, for those we've lost in the line of duty related to COVID-19. We of course want to make sure that every public servant lost in the line of duty is covered and not just first responders, but we're very, very appreciative that this action would take us a big step in the right direction starting with our first responders. And then the heroes fund, this is a crucial piece of this package to recognize those who have given so much on the frontline who worked through this crisis no matter what. Listen to this because this is again something that actually speaks to the moment in a meaningful way, \$200 billion nationally to establish hazard pay for essential workers and their survivors. This is something that people who are working right now who have fought through this crisis they deserve and it's coming from the place that can actually manage to do it on a vast scale, the federal government.

So, I have been for months now saying this is the kind of help we need. And again, Speaker Pelosi heard she listened to and she heard what New York City was going through and she heard what other Cities and States were going through and she with a Chair Lowey and with Congress member Jeffries and all the congressional delegation crafted a stimulus plan that actually spoke to our reality. They worked from a vision originally created by New York's own Senator Chuck Schumer that we saw in previous stimulus package and they built it out in terms of aid to Cities and States in such a powerful way. Senator Schumer also deserves our thanks, and he now has the very tough job of shepherding this through the U.S. Senate. And that's the fight ahead that

we'll be talking about a lot in the days and weeks ahead. Thank God Senator Schumer is in the role he is in as the democratic leader of the U.S. Senate and we're going to be depending on him more than ever. We need this vision that's come out of the house to get through the Senate. We know it'll be a fight, but we also know that Cities and States all over the country, it doesn't matter if you're a red state or blue state, zero small state or a big state and you're in the Heartland and you're on the coast, everyone's going through this. So, we expect that mayors, governors, Republican and Democrat, like we'll be fighting in their States for this package telling their senators, Democrat and Republican, both how important it is to get done. It's going to be a fight, unquestionably, but it's a fight we can win because it's the right thing to do because this whole country is feeling something going through something in common and because they're going to be so many voices and a clear bipartisan message that this is what our nation really needs.

So, I'm going to say it simply today. The difference-maker right now personally could make all the difference and ensure that this plan gets through the way it is. The way that would actually help us to fully get back on our feet is obviously the President of United States. And I'll say it simply today, Mr. President, we're looking to you. Your hometown is looking to you and cities and states all over the country. And again, we're not red America, blue America at this moment. We're one America trying together to recover. We need you. You say the word and the U.S. Senate will follow, it's as simple as that.

Okay. So, that fight will proceed in the days and weeks ahead. But right now, we're engaged in a fight, an urgent, urgent fight this very minute. And this involves our children and protecting our children. And we all remember that the whole trajectory of this horrible disease that we've faced, coronavirus, when it first hit here, we saw the horrible toll it took on the oldest New Yorkers. Horrible toll it took on people with preexisting conditions for a long time, thank God we saw very little impact on our children. Now, we see something different that we did not see in the beginning and the entire medical community is coming together to answer this challenge and we take it very, very seriously and I want everyone to take it seriously. And I keep saying to parents and family members, I need you to be vigilant to protect your children, all our children, because your vigilance will make all the difference in this crisis. Pediatric Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome. Again, Pediatric Multi-system Inflammatory Syndrome, PMIS we're going to keep updating you on it as we get more information. So first, the number of children affected in New York City, we now have 82 confirmed cases. This number has gone up consistently in recent days from a point where we had literally no acknowledgment of this problem because health care professionals weren't seeing it even just a few weeks ago to now 82 confirmed cases. 53 of these cases have either tested positive for COVID-19 or had COVID-19 antibodies. Now, a few days ago we lost a child, that's the first time we saw a child die from this horrible syndrome and we all have to work together hoping and praying that there will not be another child lost and that we can every child going forward. But again, that that vigilance is crucial, it's crucial in the whole health care system, which is why our health commissioner issued an alert to all health care providers to immediately both look for these symptoms in children and act on them, but also report any and all activity to the Health Department so we could understand better how to fight back this problem. But again, it comes down to all of us because the sooner anybody identifies in a child in their life, this problem, the sooner they get to health care, the more chance that a child can be saved. And I keep saying it, early detection matters here, we know this in health care, we know there are certain challenges and diseases where early detection can lead to full resolution. We

need early detection in this case because we know can make a huge, huge difference. Now, our health care professionals are learning about this syndrome as quickly as they can and there's still unanswered questions. There's things we don't know – we don't know what makes kids specifically susceptible, why some kids and not others. It's still, even though it's a striking number, it's a small number compared to the number of kids in the City or even the number of kids who have been exposed to COVID. Why are some kids susceptible? How long does it take for this syndrome to manifest in a child? What's the timeframe so that we know what we're dealing with, how much time we have to save a child? What is the likelihood of a child developing it going forward as we learn more about it? Again, that's what we don't know. What we do know is early detection, early treatment makes all the difference.

So, to aid in that effort, we're launching a citywide effort to inform parents to alert parents. We need public awareness to grow rapidly. This is something, remember it parallels the reality of COVID-19, the coronavirus, we had never heard of it. It didn't exist to human beings six or seven months ago and then it suddenly was something happening far away and then one day it was happening here, and everyone had to learn about it and we still don't have all the answers. Well here is P.M.I.S. Something that it was not evident in the beginning of this crisis now is we have to rapidly inform families all over the City. So, a digital advertising campaign will begin today and then over the next week or two you'll see a growing effort to inform people, to let them know what to look out for, to let them know how to act. TV and radio ads, ads and community and ethnic newspapers, bus shelters, new stands, you name it. You're going to see these all over New York City, we need everyone to spread the word. And again, we're going to keep talking about what to look out for a parent, a family member, a professional works with children. This is what you need to look for, persistent fever, rash, abdominal pain, vomiting, those problems, even one of them could suggest the syndrome, but in combination they especially are worrisome. So, when you see these problems, reach out to a health care professional immediately and anyone again who does not have their own doctor can call 3-1-1 get connected to a Health + Hospitals clinician and get to care that you need. The bottom line is we are going to do everything, everything to protect our children. Whatever it takes, we're going to protect the children of New York City.

Well, it all comes back to when it comes to protecting people, protecting our health. It all comes back to deepening our efforts to reduce this disease with the things that are working. Social distancing is working, shelter in places working face coverings are working. We see it every day, we see the facts, we see the evidence. We want to make it easier for people to socially distance, particularly as the warmer weather comes on and the open streets initiative is helping us to do that. We've been working with the city council and NYPD, DOT a real joint effort to keep building out the open streets vision. So, today we announced several waves of open streets opening up total of over nine miles by tomorrow we will double that total 12 miles more of open streets. We'll be opening tomorrow, Thursday. And this will be different types of open streets. There'll be streets managed by local partners like business improvement districts, streets supported by local precincts where the precincts will figure out a plan with community members to make sure the open streets are protected and that there's presence to make sure people are safe and then protected bike lanes. So, we've got a lot of partners in this and we're going to be showing you on the screen different places that they'll be and different people who have been partners and organizations. But let me take the opportunity now to thank all of our partners. The

business improvement districts, they've really stepped up here. I want to thank all the BIDs involved. You do so much good for your communities. Here's a time in the middle of a crisis where you found a new way to do something that really helps give people a new and help protect people. Thank you to all the business improvement districts, to all the local alliances that do so much for their neighborhoods, to the local businesses that have stepped up and said we want to be part of the solution in our community and we'll put time and energy into creating something safe and something helpful for the neighborhood. So, the local partner streets will be adding 1.3 miles of open streets in Queens, Brooklyn, and Manhattan – all will open tomorrow.

Now, I mentioned police precincts are getting involved working with community members, making sure that open streets are available to people, but are also safe. Precincts are working together with community partners to add 7.6 miles of open streets and that will be in the Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn, and Manhattan – all opening tomorrow and then, again that mile, that mileage, 7.6 miles. Then streets adjacent to parks; this is something that's very important, particularly as the weather gets warmer, people are gravitating to parks. We want to make sure there's ample space so there isn't crowding. We'll be adding 2.8 miles of streets around parks. This'll be in Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens and Staten Island all opening tomorrow. And then protected bike lanes; this is important, obviously many, many New Yorkers are choosing to use bicycles to get around more than ever as part of their everyday life. Many are using bicycles of course for exercise at this moment where people are looking for the right way to get exercise and the safe way to get exercise. We're adding 9.2 miles of protected bike lanes in Brooklyn, Queens, and Manhattan. The timing will be starting tomorrow; the bike lane on Broadway in Manhattan. The rest will be phased-in, in the remaining days of this month. And that's what we're announcing today; more will be added as we go along.

Okay, now, you know, when we gather every morning, we talk about so many things that are specific responses to the coronavirus – specific changes we're making, specific ways we're adapting. And again, all of you have done an amazing job of constantly adapting. That's another great New York City characteristic, that adaptability. But we got to remember at the same time, so much of life does go on as it did before and so much needs to go on. And so I bring you to something that is a joyful topic and one that I feel a special love for and that's what we do for our youngest children; to help them on their way, to help build-up who they are, to bring out their potential, to give them self-esteem and hope, and all these things come together in the world of pre-K. That image on your screen I think captures it all – the way that our youngest kids go into a classroom and blossom and it's part of what works in this city and it's part of what we want to celebrate because we know our kids have been through so much these last few months. I can't wait for the day when school resumes and our kids can go back into all their classrooms. And I have a particular joy when you go into a pre-K classroom and you see those four-year-olds full of life, full of hope – well, that day is coming again soon. So, the good news is that pre-K offers have been sent out to families of kids who will go into pre-K starting in September. We are preparing for the launch of the new school year. We're preparing to make it the strongest and best school year we've ever had in the history of this city and it begins with our youngest kids in early childhood education. So, the update for you – 61,790 students offered pre-K seats. And very good news, we have a record number of families that received an offer that was their top

choice – 77 percent of families got their top choice in these pre-K admissions. And then another record, 90 percent received an offer from one of their top three choices. So, the pre-K program has been getting better and better each year and I want to thank everyone who's a part of the pre-K initiative. It's a labor of love for everyone involved, but this is a great example of progress-getting more and more families their top choice or one of their top choices. Now, that's good news. One thing that's not as good news, it's not surprising though, is the number of applications were lower this year than in recent years and that is not shocking given that there's been an overlap with the exact timing of this horrible crisis – with the coronavirus, that has thrown off the normal admissions process. So, I want to remind all parents, all family members, it is not too late to apply. In fact, you still can apply for pre-K for your child. So, if your child was born in 2016, all you have to do is go online, [myschools.nyc](https://myschools.nyc.gov) or call 3-1-1 and you can put an application in right away. There are still seats available, every child – I guarantee it – every child benefits from pre-K. So, if you haven't applied yet, please do for your child.

Okay, a few more things. I talked about the hope and the joy I feel when I think about our pre-K kids – well, when you talk about hope, you think about faith, you think about our extraordinary faith-based communities in this city. And I cannot say enough, I cannot praise enough the faith leaders of this city – of all faiths – who came together. This is a kind of consensus, a kind of unanimity that you could rarely find anywhere in the world, but here in this beautiful city, people of all faiths came together and their leaders did something extraordinary and said in common - it won't be easy - it will be painful in many ways for people not to have their normal faith services. It was particularly painful around the holidays, the major, major moments each year that have occurred in so many faiths just in the time of the Coronavirus, but our faith leaders did it. They said, look, there is nothing more important than saving lives and we will take the lead. And they did the tough thing and they said, we can't have our services until this crisis is over. And what they did was heroic and what they did changed the history of the city for the better because their leadership helped us to move into this time of shelter in place and social distancing so effectively, so well. I had the real honor last night of calling together faith leaders of every tradition as part of our Advisory Council from faith communities; hearing their concerns, hearing their ideas, hearing their commitment to the city. And it was a fantastic exchange and a very life affirming exchange and a reminder of the extraordinary role our faith communities play in this city and particularly the strength that these leaders have shown in this crisis. So, I just want to thank and commend all the faith leaders of New York City; special thanks to those who are serving our advisory council to help us figure out how we restart the city, how we create a fair recovery, how we address the material and spiritual needs of the people in this city, how we do things at the right time to keep people safe; a very, very powerful discussion and a very tangible discussion. So many of the faith leaders are concerned to make sure members of their congregations get the food they need and they're partnering with us and they've always partnered with us in so many things including helping homeless New Yorkers and so many other people in need. So, it was a great indicator of another strength in New York City, that our faith communities are present and accounted for in this fight and we are all working closely together to fight back this disease and get to a better place.

Now, I mentioned homeless New Yorkers. I want to keep updating you on the efforts to reach homeless New Yorkers related to this new plan to clean the subways each night and amplify the opportunities for our homeless outreach workers to reach homeless people and get them to safety and get them to a better life. Here [inaudible] the results from last night – 370 homeless individuals were engaged, 213 accepted help, 178 went to shelter, 35 to hospitals. Again, I've said it enough times and not going to repeat it; unprecedented results and the trend continues now for over a week very, very consistently. And this, if we can sustain this, it's going to have a very long-term and positive impact reducing homelessness in New York City.

Before I get to our daily indicators, I want to offer some thanks. I've seen so much greatness in the city. I've seen so much strength and I've also seen so many instances of people stepping-up. We talk about all the heroes in this fight and then we have so many people come to the aid of our heroes, come to the aid of everyday New Yorkers; many companies, many organizations, some of them in New York city, some of them in other parts of the country, some of them in other parts of the world keep stepping-up for us. So first of all, so many organizations have focused on getting us the protection that our heroes need, the PPEs, the Personal Protective Equipment. So, I want to thank them today. That's what I'm going to focus on with my thanks today; the folks who have done so much to provide PPEs. So, AmeriCares has provided 550,000 N95 masks, 13,000 surgical masks, almost a thousand packages of disinfectant wipes. The China General Chamber of Commerce has provided 100,000 surgical masks. Ford and Troy Design Manufacturing has provided 30,000 nonsurgical face shields. A great, great New York City institution, Century 21 – Century 21 stores are providing 20,000 square feet of PPE storage space and help with delivery of PPEs to the residents of public housing. A special thank you to our own Century 21. Anheuser-Busch – well, when I first saw this, it said Anheuser-Busch and it said bottles so I was wondering where we were going with this, but it's actually not beer, it's hand sanitizer – 23,000 bottles of hand sanitizer donated by Anheuser-Busch. Thank you very much. The Urban Assembly Maker Academy has provided 24,000 nonsurgical masks. Tivuna, construction company in Brooklyn has provided 14,000 coveralls to protect our health care heroes. The American Chinese United Care Alliance has provided 20,000 disposable masks, 3,000 pairs of gloves, and 500 KN95 masks. Finally, Public Health Solutions has provided \$14,000 to help us acquire PPEs. All of these organizations, businesses, institutions, doing something so great to protect people in New York City, particularly to protect those who serve all of us and protect all of us.

Now, for the daily indicators – well, we got a mixed bag today. Again, I want to see us get to consistent progress and this is another reminder, we still have a ways to go. So, indicator one, daily number of people admitted to hospitals for suspected COVID-19, that is up from 51 to 78. And again, 78 is a hell of a lot better number than where we were just a few weeks ago, but we need to see that number go down and stay down. Daily number of people in ICU use in our public hospitals for suspected COVID-19, that is up. It's up by a small amount – 550 to 561 – but still up. And, again, that base number is higher than we want it to be, that means actual people fighting for their lives in ICU. So, again, an area where we have to keep doing better. The good news today is to percentage of people who tested positive for COVID-19 citywide, that is down

from 14 percent to 13 percent. So, again, a sea change from where we were a few weeks ago. That's the good news today. Overall trends continue good. Today's results not what we're looking for. Let's double down on the things that are working so we can have more of the good days and start to string them together and move towards the first steps in our restart.

To conclude, a few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, we will turn to our colleagues in the media. And please let me know the name and the outlet of each journalist.

Moderator: Hi, all. Just a reminder that we have Police Commissioner Shea, Health Commissioner Barbot, Social Services Commissioner Banks, Transportation Commissioner Trottenberg, and Senior Advisor Varma on the phone. With that, I will start with Rich Lamb from WCBS News radio.

Question: Hi there, Mr. Mayor. Can you hear me?

Mayor: Yeah, Rich. How are you doing?

Question: I'm doing okay now. I'm just wondering now – I have not been on these calls, but I'm wondering whether you and your senior staff are being tested regularly for COVID. I know that the White House has come in for some criticism. They say they're daily testing down there. If you are being tested, how frequently is it and what does it consist of?

Mayor: Thank you very much for the question, Rich. No, I haven't been tested this whole time and we, certainly from the perspective of City Hall, there's not a regular testing program. We do our best to, you know, take the precautions that we talk about with everyone. And, you know, there's not a regular testing protocol. There is a devotion to trying to be careful. We have a skeleton staff here. Obviously, City Hall is usually – you know well, Rich, a place that buzzes with activity, and it's really quiet nowadays comparatively. There's a core group of people here doing a whole lot of hard work and working closely with our colleagues and agencies all over the city. But no, there has not been a need for testing on any greater level.

Moderator: Next we have Julia from the Post.

Question: Hey, good morning, everyone. Two questions. One for Commissioner Shea. The Department has not held its own press conference for the media with you and your executive staff since before the start of the pandemic on March 5th. I'm wondering why hasn't the Department made itself available for questions about crime and other topics, especially considering the recent rash of videos, disparities and social distancing enforcement. And, you know, reporters can come on this call who covered the NYPD, but they often don't get their questions in. And then another crime related question – more than a hundred inmate inmates cut loose from incarceration on Rikers over the coronavirus concerned in late March have had run-

ins with the law since being released. Looking for reaction to that, and any concern from the Mayor or the Commissioner.

Mayor: I'll start, Julia. Thank you for the questions. On the first point, I think it's fair to say that business as usual has not been the way we're doing things since this crisis escalated. And so, our focus has been on addressing the issues related to the coronavirus and this has been the main venue. And obviously, we're doing the vast majority of days of the week. Over time, we're certainly going to be re-establishing some of our previous habits. So, one thing we did every month was to go over crime statistics and we'll certainly reestablish that at the first available opportunity. But we know that overwhelmingly we've seen the challenge we face, of course, being first and foremost the coronavirus. Second, we know that in so many ways crime has gone down directly related to the coronavirus. But the Commissioner will speak to it, but I want to affirm that things like those monthly press conferences will certainly resume at the appropriate time, and many other things we used to do will resume. But, right now, we've been doing everything through this crisis mode. On the question of the releases from our jail system – again, I think this was an example of New York City leading in a crisis situation. The fact that we had to do something from a perspective, a humanitarian perspective, a health care perspective, working with the leadership of Correctional health, deciding what was the right way to keep people safe in our correction system – the people work there, the people who are inmates there. And the plan was put together on the basis of specific health challenges and dangers and, of course, referencing what kind of offense people committed. That effort involved the City directly in many cases, in other cases required decision making by the State or the district attorneys. But I am convinced it was the right thing to do because we were thinking about the health and safety of everyone involved and looking to save lives where I'm disappointed in anyone who was shown mercy and then turns around and commits an offense. But everything will be dealt with in the long-term because any offense will meet with its consequence. And, again, when this crisis is over, anyone who is awaiting trial who needs to be reincarcerated will be. So, this was the right approach. But, again, I am absolutely disappointed when anyone doesn't act in the spirit consistent with the mercy they were shown. With that, I'll turn to the Commissioner.

Police Commissioner Dermot Shea: Hey, Julia. How are you? Thank you for the question. You're right. I mean we've certainly curtailed our press conferences over the last couple of months intentionally, you know, due to this pandemic. But I would just point out that, you know although we have a DCPI that, like the rest of the Department, is running a little bit of a skeleton crew. We're certainly fielding questions on a daily basis, incoming and outgoing, trying be as responsive as possible. We've been doing a lot more, I think, pushing information out on social media. We've been doing live social media, whether it's questions that are coming in and we try to address anything there. And in terms of the crime statistics, I think the Mayor hit it on the head that, you know, I think we've, through a number of outlets, put out, and through these very press conferences, the fact that crime has been pretty significantly down in the early stages of this pandemic. We're starting to see some concerns recently. But we've put all of these statistics out, including the end of the month for April through a press release. So, I think we're covering most bases here. There's no plan immediately right now to jump back into the, the "routine," end-of-month press conferences. We had a standup this week and with that terrible incident in Staten Island, but that would be probably the exception rather than the norm at this point. Just erring on the side of caution and we'll use other means to get the word out.

Regarding the releases from Rikers – look I've said a number of times, whether it's releases from Rikers Island or – you know, we have a serious concern recently with paroles. I mean, we're seeing that core issue that we've seen for a number of years that, you know, 8.6 million – 8.6 million people and most of them commit absolutely no crime. But we have a core group of people that unfortunately do commit a disproportionate amount of crime. And it's usually a challenge to keep that under check and to do it as efficiently as possible, being fair etcetera. But you know, we'll get a handle on it. You know, we'll be fluid and adapt to conditions as more people start coming out. You know, we'll probably see crime rates ebb and flow in different areas and we'll be ready to respond accordingly.

Moderator: Next we have Al Jones from 1010 WINS.

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

Mayor: Good. How are you doing?

Question: Getting by, getting by. This has to do with schools in the fall. You know, Dr. Fauci kind of ruled out any possibility of a vaccine or treatment. So, with all the unknowns about COVID-19 and the inflammatory syndrome, how can schools safely open in the fall? How do you convince parents that their kids can go to school every day and that it's safe, because short of – it seems like short of testing every kid every day, I don't know how the schools could be considered safe.

Mayor: Well, I want it to – I appreciate the question. Look my kids went to the New York City public schools and I think like a parent all the time and I can immediately empathize with the concerns that parents are going to have as we prepare for school. Now, we are most of four months away from school reopening. So, that's a long time. We need to see, of course, how successful we can be at beating back this disease, limiting the number of cases, using all the strategies we've been using already – shelter in place, social distancing, face coverings – but then also amplifying the testing and tracing strategy, and that's a big X-factor here. You've seen the number of cases steadily decline. Testing and tracing is going to bring a whole new sort of offensive thrust to this that could really change the trajectory further. So, let's not discount the element of time here. What is the world going to look like when you get into July and August when we'll be making the ultimate decisions and there'll be based on the facts. We do anticipate more and more testing in general and specifically focused on schools, and lots of methodologies for keeping people safe – the cleaning regimens, for example. And we're going to have a plan-A, which is to open the schools fully as normal. And then as I've said, and the Chancellor said, we'll have plans, B, C, D, different types of options if we don't feel it's safe to open schools fully. But, for now, with this much lead time, my goal is a full reopening with any number of protections in place to give confidence to parents and give confidence to educators and everyone who works in schools. That's what we're planning on. That's what we're going for, but it will all be about the facts and, you know, the proof of what we can do. That's what's going to determine the final decision.

Moderator: Next we have Debralee from Manhattan Times and Bronx Free Press.

Question: Good morning, everyone. I wanted to follow up on the conversations about social distancing and the arrest. The question really is for both of you, Mr. Mayor and the commissioner – Commissioner Shea. Given the interest and the focus on how there have been emerging patterns of what seemed to be racial disparities and how these arrests are being executed, are you looking, Mayor, to change anything, specific guidance for the department? And for that matter, would you consider appointing a social distancing czar or someone on that level that would actually focus wholly on this as we continue to, sort of, go into the summer and perhaps [inaudible] more and more of these kinds of arrests – someone specifically focused on this kind of policy when you're looking at policing specifically, particularly as you're talking about a more just recovery for all communities. Secondly, and related, you haven't spoken about former Commissioner James O'Neill in some time. I know that he was plugged into the pipeline for supplies and for materials that were coming directly into the response, the medical response. Would he be someone you'd consider for this kind of post if you were to consider it to begin with? And secondly, what is he doing these days as we talk about the city and its recovery process?

Mayor: Thank you, Debralee. First of all, Jimmy O'Neill – boy, what an amazing positive story of just when we needed help, he showed up at just the right time. And remember, in his day job, working for Visa, he was based on the West Coast, and when the crisis hit, he relocated back here and then step forward to volunteer. And he and the team he put together, working with our colleagues at Emergency Management did a fantastic job improving the distribution of PPEs and supplies and equipment and making sure they were distributed more effectively and consistently. That work has continued. But I really want to say, at the crucial moment, the moment of greatest danger that Jimmy O'Neill and his colleagues did something outstanding to help the city. And it made a big difference. It made a big difference to protecting our health care heroes and then their ability to save lives of other people. So, job well done already. That work still needs to be completed, because we're not entirely out of the woods by any measure. We still need to strengthen our PPE supply and have the ability to project it forward into the future. And, obviously, we've talked about we're building a strategic reserve. We are always vigilant for any possible boomerang of this disease, so there's still work to be done on that front. Meanwhile, as I said, Jimmy has a day job and he has to attend to that consistently as well. So, the – what we're going to be doing long-term in terms of his role, we'll have more to say on the coming days, but, right now, that's the focus. And again, more of his energy has to go back to his day job as that company is starting to resume more of its activity.

On your first question, and then I'll bring in the Commissioner – look, again, we need to recognize that getting social distancing right, ensuring there are not large gatherings and gatherings where people don't observe social distancing, this is crucial to protecting people's health and saving lives. So, all the other considerations that have been raised are obviously tremendously important, but I keep coming back to job-one is to save lives. And having the NYPD there as part of that plan, as part of the enforcement when needed is crucial, and that's not going to change. Now, that said, the NYPD is really very rarely had to enforce. When you really look at the facts, again, on summonses, fewer than 10 a day for the whole city. So, I'm sorry, people keep raising the question and I keep saying, you've got to look at it in perspective. If it's fewer than 10 a day for the whole city during this crisis, that is light touch to say the least. But

it's very important to people understand, if they don't observe these rules, that summons is something we will use when needed, because there has to be consequences here. Again, arrest as the – you look at more and more of the details – very, very rarely utilized and typically for other extenuating reasons. The Commissioner can speak to that. So, the restraint has been there and it will continue to be there. As we go forward, I mean – we have not honestly thought about the notion of a social distancing czar. It's an interesting idea. I would only argue as we think about it that let's not undercount what New Yorkers have done, Debralee, that, you know, without generally needing a lot of enforcement, they really have done an outstanding job of following these rules. I know people think it will get harder in the warmer months. I think that's fair. But I also think the impulse here, people want to do the right thing, they want to protect themselves and their family, they want to get back to normal, they don't want to contribute to the spread of this disease. I think people are pretty locked on now about why this matters and why they need to stick with it. So, that's an interesting suggestion, we'll certainly consider that. But, right now, I think the goal is more and more education, more and more presence out in communities. Our ambassadors and that group has grown to over 2,000 civilian employees will be out there, talking to people, educating them, giving them a face coverings. We're going to engage – I talked to the faith leaders last night about this – more and more faith communities going out in their own communities, educating people, giving out the face coverings. You going to see much more of that grassroots piece come into play. But PD will always be there to back it up. Commissioner?

Commissioner Shea: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Thank you, Debralee for the question, because it gives me a chance to address this narrative that I've been hearing for the last week or two and I think it's very important that I do address it as the Police Commissioner. You know, there's been a lot of talk recently about disparities, about racist policing and quite frankly, and then it's followed generally by a press conference, or maybe even a demonstration about how the NYPD is acting. And I think if we step back and be honest here, you know, I think we can all agree what we've seen on some of those videos is incredibly disheartening, it's not what we want to see, and it's quite frankly disturbing. When you have a situation – if the police is wrong in an instance, whether it's on one of these videos or not, there has to be accountability. I think there has to be transparency and that's my job as the Police Commissioner to make that happen. And quite frankly, if that's not happening, I shouldn't be in this position. We also have to recognize that police officers are human. They are you and they make mistakes, they're not infallible. So, that's the backdrop. But I will push back strongly on any notion that this is business as usual for the NYPD or that this is “racist police.” I think this could not be anything further from the truth. Let's remember, we are a minority-majority police department – fact. We make fewer arrests than we ever have – fact. We make fewer summonses issued and that's whether it's in a pandemic or not in a pandemic. Our record over the last six-and-a-half years is there for anyone to see in how we police this city with the lightest possible touch. You can continue this discussion regarding civilian complaints, use of force, stops, firearms, discharges – all of these things are either at or near historic lows. I don't think anyone would say that we're racist when we're delivering food to elderly victims that are shut up in their apartments or when we're playing with kids and looking for having things to do in summer through parts of this great city which is going on planning as we speak or when we're visiting the victims of domestic violence or when we're working with homeless or the mentally ill and bringing them to the hospital.

Now back to disparities for a moment. We have issued a small number of summonses, even fewer arrests tied to COVID. Are they mostly to minority members of this city? Yes, they are. And I think you knew that answer before you asked the question, but no one is talking about the disparity of the last ten homicide victims in New York City, and I think that should be spoken about or the victims of robberies across the city. Disparities exist in every facet of life, not just in New York City but in this country and it's rooted in much deeper issues than the New York City Police Department. So, I would urge caution to everyone now to honestly, before a press conference is held on a ten second video of a street brawl in the middle of the day in Brooklyn in broad daylight, by the way, before it's turned into an agenda for a press conference. it is dangerous and I will repeat what I said, I think it was back in January where words matter. We saw this in December of 2014 with Officer Ramos and Liu. We saw this with Miosotis Familia. We saw it this January where two cops were almost assassinated sitting in a police car in the Bronx and then the next day a madman walked into a police precinct and tried to shoot more cops. And now in the last week we have had death threats on police officers in New York City and their families, over ten second videos where the police officers are dealing with individuals that quite frankly fight, not with the police department, they fight with everyone. They fight with their significant others. They fight when they go to court, they have open gun cases, they are gang members, and we expect our police officers to do the best they can. That is exactly what they are doing. So, I would, again, urge caution. Accountability is what we must have from this police department and I, as the Police Commissioner, will not stand for excessive force nor will I stand and defend indefensible actions, but I will also not have my police department called a racist police department. Thank you very much.

Mayor: Thank you, Commissioner. Very happy that you shared your feelings with everyone and put everything in perspective there. I think you laid out the big picture that people needed to hear. And I hope everyone is considering these issues and they're very, very real issues. You made a point there about the history that hangs over us. There's a history of institutional and structural racism that afflicts the city and this country still. We have to weed it out in every way. And as Debralee said, how does this all fit with a fair recovery? We have to continue to improve policing in this city as part of a fair recovery. We've got a lot more to do, but it is also really important to recognize the distance that we have already traveled and the changes that we have made. And the fact that we have made those changes is proof that we can make more changes. So, Commissioner, thank you very much for your comments.

Moderator: Next, we have Mark Morales from CNN.

Question: Hi, everybody. How you doing today?

Mayor: Good, Mark. How you doing?

Question: Good. Good. So, I had a question I was hoping that you and Commissioner Shea could respond to this. The first was regarding line of duty designation. I know that a lot of the members of the FDNY and NYPD have been asking in different scenarios about this designation. And I know that this ends up becoming a legislative issue up in Albany and there's an Assemblyman working on this right now and there's possibly a Councilman who is working on this right now, but I wanted to get an opinion from you both first and where do you stand on line

of duty designation? Where should it go, how quickly should it be implemented? That was the first one. And the second one was about reopening as it applies to policing. And at this point, you know, there's more people coming out on the streets, but stores are still not open. Does policing change in any way with an expected ramp up of people heading outside, for instance?

Mayor: Okay. On the second part of your question, we'll turn to the Commissioner, and I'll preface before that. But on this question, on line of duty – look, we want to make sure that families are taken care of and we want to honor those who have served valiantly in this crisis and honor their sacrifice to us. The legislation that came out yesterday was a major step in the right direction with the federal government potentially – and obviously we have to see this get through the Senate and be signed by the president – but the federal government stepping up in terms of line of duty benefits. In a different area but very important the Hero's Fund as well. So, we would need to see the maximum federal involvement in supporting line of duty families and more to say on this as we get a better sense of what is going to happen in Washington. But the goal is to make sure families are protected and are whole, and to make sure the federal government really steps up to its responsibilities. This is not business as usual. I just want to emphasize that, Mark, this is an international crisis, this is a pandemic that came to us from overseas, this is a federal situation, not day to day life in this city. We need the federal government to step up and honor these families and support these families with the resources that the federal government has. But we'll have more to say as we get a better sense of what's going to be happening with this legislation in Washington.

On the question of policing going forward. I just want to remind people and it picks up from the Commissioner's powerful remarks, that we do expect in the warmer months, different activity, unquestionably, but I don't want to discount how much there is a consensus in the city, the vast majority of people understand why social distancing matters, why avoiding gatherings matter, why face coverings matter. You can see it with your own eyes. When all of you in the media report on something abhorrent, which is the nature of the media reality, of course it gets attention, but then we have to remember all the times when the everyday is happening and the everyday is that the vast majority of New Yorkers have already adapted. And, yeah, in the warmer months it'll come with its challenges, no doubt. But people know this is about their own safety, their family's safety. Everyone who wants to get back to work, everyone who wants to get back to normal, knows that this is part of it now, abiding by these rules. So, I think you're going to see that as the main point. When people are convinced of something, it is more powerful than anything the government can say or do or any form of policing, when people themselves are convinced of something.

We always need enforcement as a fallback. But I do think the die is cast already in many ways. And we obviously have seen a reduction in crime and that's very meaningful, but we will be ready for anything and everything going forward. But it all begins with continuing what has worked, which is the deep devotion to communication. The NYPD of today, working with a neighborhood policing philosophy, is focused on communicating with communities and working with people and notwithstanding some incidents that are very troubling, the vast majority, talking about 99.9 percent of the interactions, are positive and the way we need them to be. And that's where we move forward with that devotion to communication and respect and working on a neighborhood level. Commissioner.

Commissioner Shea: Mr. Mayor, thanks for the question. We've lost 41 members of our family. We still have a number of people in the hospital, some that need your thoughts and prayers from – that's a message to the public. I start every day and I started this morning wanting my executive staff and right down to the precinct commanders, you know, to be resilient and continue to wear masks. We had a couple people in the last day that were admitted to the hospitals, which ticked up a little bit. We had been doing so well over the last month. So, this is first and foremost on our mind. And regarding the line of duty designation, it is – I would echo what the Mayor said in terms of this is a, you know, you would liken this really to what you saw on 9/11 in some regards with the sheer number of people affected. And I could tell you that just in the Police Department, we have uniformed members affected, we have the majority of civilian members each with different benefits. We have unpaid employees, auxiliary members that have lost their life during this terrible time. So, their family's future is at the top of what we are concerned about. And we're working – having discussions with the union. This is paramount on the unions' minds, I can tell you rightfully so. And I think it's an evolving situation, but nothing to us is really more important than making sure that the families of those that suffer during this crisis are taken care of.

Regarding the policing and whether it's social distancing or traditional crime, I think that like many parts of the city I would expect there to be changes after this. And it's something that's just evolving. We'll have to be very responsive and fluid in terms of our workforce being able to adapt. Whether it's ridership coming back on the trains to what level of businesses opening. You know, we'll be ready for it. I can tell you that the men and women of the Police Department will be ready. Thankfully on our uniform side, we are very close to our normal levels, if you will. So, that's some very positive news. And we are literally monitoring whether it's 3-1-1 calls, 9-1-1 calls, crime reports. Day by day, I can tell you that there's been a drop off, for example, like in people visiting precinct station houses. But as the warmer weather comes out, and as we move further into this, I think that things are gradually going to get a little bit closer to normal and we'll be ready for whatever is thrown at us

Moderator: Next. We have Henry from Bloomberg.

Question: Hello, Mr. Mayor, how are you doing?

Mayor: Good. Henry, how about you? How are you doing?

Question: I'm good. I'd like to ask you a question about the schools and particularly about really young children. The city has been operating a program for several years, been pretty effective from what I understand, in offering therapy to young kids who were developmentally delayed in one form or another – occupational therapy, various speech therapy. And it's pretty intensive. It's, from what I understand, it's one-on-one visits with these kids. They're at a very vulnerable age, obviously. And I've been told that these are pretty valuable experiences for these little kids in rushing their development and helping them catch up. Of course, this has probably been suspended during the time. Since it's one-on-one and it doesn't really involve the risks that would be involved in you know, which would require social distancing, why has the City not moved to increase or restart the service?

Mayor: Thank you, Henry. First, to your characterization, I want to affirm it energetically. The efforts, like the early speech therapy, can work wonders and the occupational therapy, and this is really important and like so many things in life, if you reach a child at the earliest years, you can have the most profound impact. So, these are initiatives that really do work. I want to always tell you when I'm certain of something or when I'm not. I don't know exactly how the DOE has managed these services during this crisis. I imagine some of this actually can be done virtually, but I don't know that for a fact. So, I need to get you a very specific answer. But clearly, we want to keep providing kids the help, if it can be done virtually. One [inaudible] confirm to you if it is being done and to what extent or what it would take to bring it back, if it can only be done in person, in some cases, when we think we can do that safely. But there's no question about the value and there's no question about our focus and this conforms with everything we feel about early childhood education, which is why we did Pre-K for All and why we're on the pathway to 3-K for All, and all the mental health efforts that are being focused even as early as the pre-K level. Everything is about early support for children and the greatest impact that you can make if you get to kids earlier. So, we will get you an answer on where it stands now and how we think it can evolve and how we're going to make sure that as many kids as possible are reached even in the middle of this.

Moderator: Next, we have Anna from the Daily News.

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor. First, I have a practical question. Does the City put any thought to providing clear masks or masks with a clear opening for the mouth for deaf New Yorkers? I know that obviously many deaf people read people's lips. So, I'm curious if that's something that you guys have thought about. And I also wanted to see if you would address the fact that the New York City district attorneys aren't prosecuting most social distancing arrests and maybe Commissioner Shea can also address that as well.

Mayor: Sure. Again, on the arrest issue, there's been very, very few and the Commissioner can speak about the difference between an arrest that's directly related to social distancing versus an arrest that is related to something else, some other kind of extenuating circumstance. But any way you slice it, this is a really, really small part of the picture over now, you know, ten weeks of this crisis. And I'll turn to the Commissioner in a moment on that. On the issue of the clear mask – it's a very interesting suggestion and I had not heard that previously, so, I don't have an immediate answer for you. I think it makes sense that we have to be sensitive to deaf New Yorkers and support them in every way we can. But let me talk to our team and see what we think makes sense and how we can address it, and we'll come back to you with an answer on that. Commissioner Shea, do you want to speak about the other piece?

Commissioner Shea: Yeah. Regarding social distancing and arrests. I mean, I think I've been pretty clear on that. There really hasn't been a lot of arrests. Again, when we encounter groups, we ask them to disperse, we ask them to comply with executive orders, and all over the city we've gotten overwhelming compliance. That's a fact. Have there been some occurrences? Yeah, there have been some occurrences. Occasionally we've had to write summonses. We've gone through these numbers. It's not a significant amount when you pull out about 10 incidents, where there was a lot of summonses written. And then when you talk about arrests, you're really not

talking about the same thing. It's arrests for other offenses. There might've been a few that started as social distancing, but it's really such small numbers. You know, when you look at the district attorneys and what they have to deal with, I do feel for them.

You know, five of them throughout New York City, and including, you know, our partners in special narcotics part. They've had to turn their lives upside down during this, dealing with processes up-ended. I think they're doing the best they can in circumstances. Do I agree every time? No. Do they agree with, you know, everything we do? No, but we have a great working relationship. If I was concerned about anything during this, it would be that small number of career criminals that are committing more serious crimes, like burglaries and things of that nature. And you know, why I'm concerned about it is because it's additional victims. I mean, that's what it always comes down to with me in trying to prevent people from being further victimized. But I think all in all, you know, it's a tough situation when you look at grand juries, when you look at court proceedings, when you look at what the whole city has had to deal with. And I think, you know, we'll probably learn a lot from this and be better prepared next time, but I think everyone is doing the best I can.

Moderator: Next we have Gersh from Streetsblog.

Question: Mr. Mayor, how are you doing?

Mayor: Good, Gersh. How are you doing?

Question: Two words, virtual schooling, but that's enough on that. Anyway, I got two quick questions on open streets. First is the 9.2 miles of protected bike lanes, are those because of budget cuts, the full list of what we're going to see the DOT accomplish this year. And the second question, the restaurant industry is calling for far more open streets so they can serve the public in a socially responsible manner once the pause is over. I know there's a City task force on this, but do you personally see a time when hundreds of miles of NYC streets could be taken away from drivers and for storing cars for socially distant dining?

Mayor: So, on the bike lane issue, I'll say I'll turn to Commissioner Trottenberg in a moment. Again, everything's evolving, Gersh, to say the least. I think this'll be the understatement of the year. Everything's evolving. Our budget situation is evolving. Obviously, horrid right now, could be deeply, positively affected by the stimulus, but we don't know what level the stimulus is going to reach, when it's going to happen. So, a huge number of question marks. We know the House proposal is exactly the right direction, but we don't know what happens next. So, the budget side of the equation is a question mark, the health side of the equation is a question mark. Steady progress, but still a long way to go before we know what more we're going to be able to do when. So the Commissioner can tell you the vision as of this moment, but I will preface by saying that there's a huge amount of unknowns here.

On the Open Streets look, I'm certainly intrigued and I've begun to have this conversation with folks in the restaurant industry. Intrigued with what we could do with more outdoor dining. We're not there yet in terms of figuring out what that means, how far we could go with it, when we could do it. But it is an appealing idea. It's an idea that may offer some real options. But I'm

always going to be cautious in saying, you know, I don't want to theorize and raise hopes unduly. I want us to really lock down step by step what we're going to be able to do to restart when, how it affects each industry. But at least I can say it's a really interesting idea because it stands to reason that if we could move more of that activity outdoors, it would be safer for everyone involved. Give us time to figure out, you know, if we think that's workable and to what scale. Commissioner Trottenberg, do you want to add on the bike lanes?

Commissioner Trottenberg: Right. I mean, look, I'm excited with the nine miles you've announced today, Mr. Mayor, particularly Fourth Ave in Brooklyn and 38th and 39th, another crosstown route in Manhattan. We would like to do more lane miles this year. We'll, you know, we'll have to see working through that. And one of the requirements we have to work through, we have a Council requirement. These bike lanes are temporary because we have to give the Council a 90-day notice period before we can make any bike infrastructure permanent.

Mayor: Thank you.

Moderator: Next we have Ashley from the New York Times.

Question: Good morning. Good morning everyone. I wanted to ask you two questions, one for my colleague Jan Ransom and one based on the NYPD data and the Commissioner's remarks on this call. First for the Mayor or whomever can answer the question. How many people who went to the hospital while in DOC custody have died from COVID-19 within hours or days of their release from custody? We've become aware of two cases that are not included in the Riker's COVID death total. But we're wondering if there are more and if you're tracking that? And then the second question first a bit of context. I think part of the frustration with using the police to enforce social distancing is that it's a nonstarter because that distrust that you put neighborhood policing in place to fix didn't suddenly disappear in the pandemic. And that same distress is also an impediment to solving the shootings and murders that the Commissioner mentioned earlier. And that's part of why the City has brought on the Cure Violence groups. So I'm wondering if the Police Commissioner can tell us how many shootings and murders this year have been solved with an arrest? And how the NYPD is tracking social distancing encounters and determining which summonses and arrests to include or exclude from your totals?

Mayor: Okay. Let me start and then I'll pass the Commissioner. Thank you for the questions, Ashley. On the Department of Correction which I want to make sure – I believe I heard DOC, so I want to make sure we're not mishearing here. DOC, Department of Correction? Right? Okay. That, we are going to have to get back to you. We've tried to be very transparent about everything that's happened. Obviously, the strategic decision was to do a substantial number of releases. That number now is about 1,600. And as you know, the jail population is now down below 4,000 for the first time since the 1940's. So that was a humanitarian decision, a strategic decision to protect the lives of everyone in the Correction system, the employees and the inmates alike. And I think that will prove to have been the right thing to do on so many levels. But in terms of anyone who passed away in DOC custody, we want to be absolutely transparent about that, wherever that happened. And so, we'll make sure to get you information today. If there's any outstanding questions, we'll resolve it.

On the question of the Police Department and social distancing before turning to the Commissioner, I appreciate the frame of your question because clearly the entire vision of this administration has been to fundamentally change the relationship between police and community and fundamentally change policing. And Chief Monahan said it the day he was sworn in in his role as Chief of Department that we've been inventing an entirely different type of policing here in New York City. And it's in its infancy. There's going to be much more development in the years ahead. And a lot of when we talk about fair recovery, we have to keep changing and improving policing. What has started now is only a beginning. But I don't want to lose the fact – I think this is really important. This may be almost an ideological issue where there's going to be differences and we should just surface them and be honest about them. When you say, and I know you say it with a whole heart, when you say non-starter, I just couldn't disagree with that more. Because it is not as if the question of improving the relationship between police and community is existing in a vacuum where there is no coronavirus. Of course, we want to keep deepening the relationship between police and community. We want to weed out injustice in every form. We want accountability. Everything we've been doing has been moving that agenda. But saving lives in an unprecedented context, in a global health crisis, there's nothing that compares in a hundred years in this country. Saving lives is the first responsibility and it's different than what you do in day to day policing in normal times. We have got to make social distancing work to save lives on a vast scale. And you can see it in the statistics because social distancing has been working and shelter-in-place has been working, a huge number of lives are being saved. So, I just call out the quote unquote, non-starter point because I just disagree with it. The NYPD has to be part of this equation. That is my decision. That is what we're doing. Because we cannot have a situation where social distancing comes unglued because there's no enforcement. Enforcement is part of human life. I'm a progressive and an optimist that people again will do a lot of good things on their own. And I said earlier, overwhelmingly New Yorkers have. But enforcement or the potential of enforcement is part of what keeps people devoted to the right rules and the right approach. You can't take enforcement out of the equation, but you can use it very sparingly and you can use it with a light touch, which is what the NYPD has been doing.

And I absolutely agree to your reference to grassroots element of the equation. We are going to use more and more civilians. We are going to engage more and more faith communities and community organizations to be the front – the sort of leading edge of the effort to educate people and remind them and give them face coverings with the PD only when necessary, playing an enforcement role. But I'm not taking that enforcement role off the playing field because we have to save lives in this unprecedented moment. And finally, you can do enforcement in a smart, communicative, respectful way. And that's what happens the vast majority of the time. And the videos of these improper activities which will be dealt with, are very much the exception, not the norm. Go ahead, Commissioner.

Commissioner Shea: Hey Ashley, how are you doing? Ashley? Can you hear me?

Mayor: Yeah, she's there. You keep going.

Commissioner Shea: Yep. Okay. So, I mean you bring up probably what I would say Ashley, is one of the most important things that we think about every day in policing. And it speaks to

neighborhood policing. It speaks to transparency, it speaks to the relationships and why we do what we do. And it's trust. And you know, this is not unique to New York City. I think this is what police executives across this country talk about when they start talking about, you know, strategies in fighting crime and dealing with communities and having relationships. Everything is built upon a foundation of trust. And if you don't have it, you're in big trouble. And we recognize this. This is again, what's behind what we've been trying to do the last six and a half years, and everything that I said before. And the quandary that we're in in law enforcement, and I think this is well-recognized. That you – you know, it's like a bank. You make deposits and you build up trust, but you can lose it awfully quick. And I don't think that that's a bad thing. That's just a fact. It's a reality and we're aware of it and it's why we work so hard and do what we do in all the facets of planning with this police department every day. And you know, one or two bad incidents or public incidents can really set you back. And it's the last thing that we want. And it's something that we're aware of. It's something that we work towards every day. And you know, when we get to that place where we have you know, the nirvana if you will, of police and community working together, community viewing the police department, not as the police department but their police department. That's where we really get to where we want to be. And it's an ongoing process and it's something that we are committed to. It's why we instituted neighborhood policing.

It's why one of my big regrets with this pandemic besides the obvious, is that, you know, the first week we had to cancel the implementation of a youth coordination officers. I think that's, I still think that's the next big level of really making a difference in this city. And we had 200 youth officers in training and we just couldn't go on. There's been a lot of changes Ashley in the last two months. People working out of positions, people picking up the pace, people filling in, whether it's in detectives or police officers or executives for that matter. But no matter who is filling what role, the mission remains the same. It's keeping New Yorkers safe. Doing it in the most fair manner to everyone. And moving forward and getting the heck out of this situation of this pandemic all together as quickly as possible.

You mentioned you asked about five questions there. The one that stuck in my head was the one about the, you mentioned shootings, I believe, or clearance rates? My language, not yours. I can tell you that we were, on March 12th we were up 23 shootings. We really had a drop in shootings towards the beginning to the middle of this pandemic. It's unfortunately started to climb a little as you do have ebbs and flows. So we are now up 29, I believe as of this morning. So it's a slight increase from the beginning. It's way too high, because we don't want any increase. We want to decrease. But that's you know, that's what we are with the shootings. And you know, our detectives are doing amazing work. They continue to work the cases. And I have no doubt that as time goes on now they'll continue to do what they've been doing for the last five or six years -- identifying who's doing it and continue to drive the shooting and violence level down.

Moderator: Last two for today. Next we have Yoav from The City.

Question: Hi everyone. I wanted to ask about the new cases and particularly the new hospitalizations that are coming? Is the City doing any kind of analysis to understand whether there's a particular group of people who are comprising the majority of new cases and new hospitalizations? Whether it's a particular group of workers, or people in a particular living

environment like a nursing home? So, are you doing any of that work? And if so, what is it showing? And separately, I wanted to ask about the three public health milestones. Are those a guide to when the city might begin reopening or are those absolute must meet targets? And if they're the latter, what can we expect on the day when all three are met? Currently in the description of them, it says once all of these indicators reach their milestones, the City will likely begin to lift restrictions gradually. So, if you can give any sense of what that would look like exactly, that'd be helpful?

Mayor: Thank you Yoav. I'll turn to, excuse me, Commissioner Barbot and Dr. Varma on your first part of your question in a moment, in terms of what analysis and what we're seeing about who is continuing to get sick. But I'll start on the indicators. The indicators, I'm glad you asked because I thought we had said this a bunch of times, but it's always good to clarify. We're taking them literally. We need to see them go down in unison. We need that to happen for 10 to 14 days. When we see that that's when we're at a point to talk about relaxing restrictions. Obviously, there's also the State's indicators and we're all working together because we want to see all of the above achieved. By definition that's going to put us into June. Now there's no guarantee that everything comes together in June. We got to keep doing what we're doing. Everyone's hard work, the shelter-in-place, the social distancing, the face coverings, all the work that's being done has to continue to be done to make sure we can keep driving down these numbers. And as I said, the test and trace initiative is going to help us even more. And that's coming online in the next days.

So we take these indicators literally, and then when we get to the point we need to get to, we'll take all the information we have from our own indicators, the State, everything we're seeing in the health care data and we'll make a decision about what a relaxing of certain restrictions looks like. We'll certainly be talking about that in the coming days to give people a flavor of it. But the final decision will be based on the details of what we're seeing at that moment. And you can't rule out, unfortunately the things don't start to go in the wrong direction, which means we would delay any relaxing in restrictions by definition. So, take them literally and let's keep fighting to get them to all go down in the same direction. On the question of what we're seeing amongst those who are getting sick lately. Dr. Barbot, Dr. Varma, what do you say?

Commissioner Barbot: So, Mr. Mayor, we look at the data on a regular basis and what we're seeing recently isn't particularly different than what we have been seeing all along in terms of the distribution of cases. I think one of the bright spots is that the number of new cases continues to go down and you know, it's a sort of a testament to the work that New Yorkers are doing every day to stay home, use face coverings and adhere to the preventative guidance that we've been giving. But we're going to continue to look at the data on a regular basis and help to then ensure that we use that data to drive the further reduction of transmission as we go along.

Mayor: Dr. Varma, you want to add?

Senior Advisor Varma: Yeah, I would just also note that one of the important outcomes of the Test and Trace initiative that's been announced will be that we will also begin to have a much clearer understanding of who is getting infected and what the risk factors are. One of the real important outcomes of hiring you know, up to a thousand and possibly more, people who can

contact every case is that we're going to get much more finely tuned data. And so, I think we are going to get a better understanding over time, over where people are getting infected and most importantly, how we can make sure to reduce those infections.

Moderator: Last question for today, Jake from Gothamist.

Mayor: Jake? I think we could hear your voice echoing. Let's try – we sure got Jake?

Moderator: Jake, are you there?

Question: I'm here. Can you hear me? Hello?

Mayor: Yeah, we can hear you. Jake, can you hear me?

Question: I can hear you now. Yep. So, my question is for a Commissioner Shea who said a few minutes back that there has to be accountability and there has to be transparency. I'm wondering if Francisco Garcia, the officer who was seen beating a bystander and kneeling on his head has been fired yet? If not, why not? And will the NYPD commit to sharing updates on all officers who are facing investigation for social distancing enforcement? My second question is there are reports of an off-duty NYPD officer who may have fatally shot someone on Long Island. A spokesperson for Nassau County PD told us to ask the NYPD about that. Can you speak on that, either Mr. Mayor or Commissioner Shea?

Mayor: Yeah, I don't know about that, case Jake. Let me have the Commissioner speak to that. And the case of Officer Garcia.

Commissioner Shea: Yep. So, I'll start with the first question regarding Officer Garcia. The Ninth Precinct incident from the Lower East Side a couple a weeks ago. As I stated before within an hour or so, he was removed of his firearms and placed on modified duty pending the outcome of the investigation. And our Internal Affairs officers, Commissioner Joe Reznick coordinating very closely with the Manhattan DA's Office as that case proceeds. We will have more to say when that case is, when that investigation is done.

Regarding the incident last night, or yesterday evening late. In Nassau County an NYPD officer discharged a firearm. That case is being investigated by the men – Nassau County District Attorney's Office as well as the Nassau County Police. I would refer any questions regarding the investigation to the Nassau County DA's Office on that. I can tell you he was a NYPD officer that discharged his firearm. As a result of that discharge, an individual was struck in the head and killed and it's an ongoing and very early part of that investigation. But we were conferred with almost immediately last night. And that is an active investigation and as we work closely with the Nassau County authorities, we will have more to say.

Mayor: Thank you very much Commissioner. Well, as we conclude today many, many topics have been discussed in the press conference today and there's many things going on in this city. But I want to bring our attention back to the thing that will really determine so much of our future and that's what will happen in Washington even in just the next few weeks. We don't

know exactly what day the US Senate will take up the stimulus package. We do know that the Senate and the President now have to make a decision about the future of New York City and cities and states all over this country. We do know the difference between a restart and not having a restart lies in that stimulus plan. The difference between a recovery or something much less, lies in that stimulus plan. We know we cannot get back on our feet without that stimulus. The hit this city has taken is simply too much for us to recover anytime soon without federal aid. And that is true for cities and states all over the country. And again, red states, blue states, red cities, blue cities alike. So all the action now goes to the US Senate. But it's actually even simpler than that because it's really one man who gets to make this decision and it's the President of the United States. The fact is that if President Trump acts, if President Trump speaks out, the Senate will follow. So Mr. President, here is a chance to do something so good, so important for your hometown and for cities and towns and states all over this country. Here's a chance to get it right. Here's a chance to actually build the recovery we all need. Here's a chance to put aside partisanship and do something for the whole country to bring us together as one. So we know you hold the power and we know when you raise your voice, the Senate will follow. All we're saying, Mr. President, speak up. Speak up for the stimulus so we can actually move our city and cities and states all over this country forward. It's in your hands and what we need to hear is your voice so we can move forward together.

Thank you very much. And thank you, everyone.

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