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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON CNBC'S THE EXCHANGE

Brain Sullivan: All right, let's stay now with the vaccine story. New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, out with a new op-ed today saying that every company involved in current vaccine production should stand down on enforcing its patents in order to mass produce vaccines. The Mayor joins us now with more on that idea and more. Mayor de Blasio, thank you for joining us on CNBC. I guess your idea is this, that basically if XYZ pharma wants to start making more of Moderna's vaccine, they should be able to do it so that we can double, triple, quadruple production.

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Brian, exactly right. And look at the problem you just talked about, the new variants that could take our progress and reverse it if we don't act quickly. But we've got pharmaceutical companies here in America that could be producing the vaccine right now. The notion of standing by patents and corporate differences or rivalries or any of those other business-as-usual considerations, when we're in a war time crisis, it makes no sense. So, President Biden is using the Defense Production Act. That's crucial, but I think we need the federal government and the companies to get together. We've identified 27 pharmaceutical companies and biotech companies, all of whom could contribute to a true universal vaccine production effort and could get ahead of the assault we're getting from these variants.

Sullivan: And have you heard that anybody is going to do it? And where do you stand right now on supplies for New York City?

Mayor: No, I'll tell you, Brian, I'm promoting this idea because I want to see companies in life sciences, companies in the pharmaceutical sector stepping forward and saying, we're ready, we'll do this for our country, we'll do this to save lives. And I want to see the companies with the patents open up that situation, the federal government coordinate. That's what I'm fighting for. But in terms of New York City right now, Brian, we have a situation that I could only tell you is backwards. We've got the ability now to reach as many as half a million doses in one week – that's what we can administer in New York City – but I've only got about a quarter of that supply on hand from the manufacturers. And I got these variants bearing down on my city. So, this is, to me, just a classic example of let's get that federal leadership to sort of break through all the normal lines, all the normal roadblocks, because really – I'll give you a great example from wartime, in World War II, you had a case of Lockheed getting support from Boeing to create Boeing designed planes for the war effort. They took Boeing's patented design, Lockheed produced. Pratt & Whitney had aircraft engines. Ford didn't make aircraft engines. But for the war effort, Ford took the Pratt & Whitney design, put it on the production line. We got to do that with vaccines right now in this country.

Sullivan: Do you have the number of people to actually deliver the jab, to deliver the – it can't just be random people injecting others. There has to be trained professionals that are, I think, certified to do it. Do we have the people, and do we have the locations? Because that logistical bottleneck – I've been on the road, Mr. Mayor, in Louisiana, Texas, and Florida, I've seen it – the logistics are part of the problem.

Mayor: It's true, Brian. We're hiring about 2,000 additional vaccinators, but right now we have a really ready supply of folks who are trained, who are able to do it. As you know, it's not that different from – when you administer it, it's not that different from a flu shot. We got the refrigeration issues we have to deal with, but we have the sites right now in this city, hundreds of hundreds of sites, we could open a lot more if we had supply. I am telling you, this is the key for this whole country. Places like New York City could be doing half a million a week but can't get anywhere near the supply. Let's change the terms of engagement here. Just get the full might of these industries on one page to get the supply to jump forward.

Sullivan: Is this – very quickly. Mr. Mayor – is this one of the reasons that restaurants will start to reopen February 14th at 25 percent capacity indoors? And why not tomorrow? Why wait until February 14th?

Mayor: You know, Brian, I heard you say earlier, schools – and I'll make the parallel. Our schools are open in New York City because we are able to take all the precautions needed to keep them safe, to do the testing and the PPE, everything we needed. Restaurants, it's going to take some work to get ready, to really make sure they're going to be safe. The State of New York decided February 14th. I think it's great that our restaurants will come back, but we need tight protocols, regular inspections to make sure people are safe.

Sullivan: Mayor Bill de Blasio of New York calling for more open production of the COVID vaccine. The faster we go, the faster the Big Apple can start to come back. Mr. Mayor, thank you very much for joining us. Have a good weekend, sir.

Mayor: Thank you, Brian.

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