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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY**

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Good morning, everybody. I am going to always talk about the amazing energy and discipline, focus that New Yorkers have brought to the fight against the coronavirus. But I also hear from a lot of New Yorkers that they are worried about where things go in the future. They're seeing what's happened around the country. Everyone keeps hearing about this danger of a second wave, a resurgence. There's a lot we need to do to keep deepening our progress. New York City right now is being looked at all over the country as an example of an extraordinary comeback in terms of the coronavirus. But there's more we have to do to deepen that progress, and we're going to talk about that in just a minute, but first, of course, Tropical Storm Isaias, what a powerful storm it was, and even though it was only here for a few hours in New York City. As you can see on your screen, I was out in Astoria last night, I saw just one of many, many examples of the destruction that this storm caused.

Now, here's the truth. This is turning out to be one of the most serious weather events since Hurricane Sandy – highest winds recorded at Kennedy Airport, over 70 miles per hour. So, extraordinarily powerful storm, very brief, but very intense. We saw a very large number of downed trees around the city, that also in many cases caused horrible damage, and most horribly we lost a New Yorker to a falling tree in Queens, other New Yorker very seriously injured in Brooklyn. We saw a lot of damage to homes and property. Obviously, a lot of power outages caused primarily in the areas where the falling trees knocked down power wires. So, at the peak over 130,000 customers had lost power. That number has improved now, but a lot of work is going to be done today, first to clear streets to secure the situation, make sure there's no danger, and then to keep restoring power. I talked to the president of Con Ed last night, they're doing that work now, but job one is to make sure there's no additional danger to human life, and to make sure that cleanup is done safely and quickly.

Overall, as big an event as it was we did see less flooding than expected. That's a very good thing, and our City agencies were out there from the beginning preparing to minimize the damage. I want to thank everyone in Emergency Management, Environmental Protection, Fire Department, Police Department, Parks, Transportation – all these agencies were out there early in the days before, in many cases, and throughout the day yesterday, protecting people. Also want to thank everyone that works at 9-1-1 and 3-1-1. These are City workers who don't get enough credit. They have a really tough job. They got a huge amount of call volume yesterday – to everyone who works at 9-1-1 and 3-1-1, thank you for the crucial work you do for this city, and they managed to keep the system going under extraordinary strain. At one point over a hundred calls per minute, were going into 9-1-1 at the peak. Same with 3-1-1, many more than usual, but extra staffing had been put in place, the system held, even though there were real

delays. So, I just want to thank everyone for the intensive effort, and again, we're going to really offer appreciation to our Emergency Management team, Commissioner Criswell and her whole team, who did so much to prepare New Yorkers and inform them. Thank you for all your great work.

Now we've talked about the storm and the approach to the storm was a focus on safety preparedness, being ready for any eventuality. That's the same approach that we're taking when it comes to health and during the coronavirus crisis, the whole approach in this city is to throw everything we've got at it – all different City agencies, the people of New York City, most importantly, and this is one of the things we've learned in this crisis, how important the people are, the buy-in of the people and the people that city, all of you have done an amazing job, and here is a fact that is striking. Since June 10th, fully eight weeks ago, New York City has been under three percent for our citywide infection rate the entire time. It's two full months. So that's extraordinary that we've been able to maintain that level. I expect us to maintain that level and in fact, drive it down further.

Now we don't need to dwell on the national situation. It is not encouraging the lack of federal support. We still don't know if there's going to be a stimulus. We certainly haven't seen the federal support on testing. We've got 35 states now that have dangerously high infection rates. There's a lot to be concerned about. What we need to do is do everything that we have learned to do in New York City and do that right, do that consistently. But also, we have to focus on people coming in from outside New York City, when you've got 35 states with a problem, I think it couldn't be clearer why it is so important that there are clear rules in place for folks traveling in or folks who have gone out of the city and come back, and they've been in one of those 35 states. New York State was right to put a 14-day mandatory quarantine in place. We need to make sure that quarantine becomes stronger every day, that that law comes to life more every day.

So, starting today, we're going to do something new in New York City. We will have checkpoints at key entry points to the city. Travelers coming in from those states will be given information about the quarantine, they will be reminded that it is required not optional. They'll be reminded that failure to quarantine is a violation of State law, and it comes with serious penalties. In fact, under certain circumstances, the fines can be as high as \$10,000. So, this is serious stuff, and it's time for everyone to realize that if we're going to hold at this level of health and safety in this city and get better, we have to deal with the fact that the quarantine must be applied consistently to anyone who's traveled. So, this checkpoint effort is going to be a new, important piece of that. And here to tell you about it, and someone who's doing an outstanding job protecting New Yorkers and to him and all of his team at the Sheriff's Office, extraordinary work. Sheriff Joe Fucito.

**New York City Sheriff Joseph Fucito:** Thank you, Mr. Mayor. The Sheriff's Office in coordination with other law enforcement agencies will undertake quarantine checkpoints at major bridge and tunnel crossings into New York City. As Sheriff, I understand the absolute serious nature of this pandemic. We need to ensure visitors and New Yorkers returning home are taking the necessary precautions to limit the spread of this disease. The entire team will strive to ensure that the deployment balances the critical public health and welfare needs of the residents of the city with the legal protections, entitled to all people. For further transparency, I wanted to

go over the parameters of our actions. The primary purpose of the quarantine checkpoints are to address a legitimate public safety objective. Compliance with the quarantine is our objective and checkpoints are an effective means of ensuring travelers are on notice and can take precautions to protect our beloved city. Our team has developed a uniform procedure that will be applied to all New Yorkers. Procedures are in place to protect New Yorkers rights while limiting intrusions on the privacy of motorists.

**Mayor:** Thank you very much, Sheriff, thanks again to you and your team, and look we've got to do this in a way that really makes clear to people how important this is, but the idea is we don't want to penalize people. We want to educate them. We want to make sure they're following the rules. We want to make sure people who need support, they get support, and this is so important. Most people, of course, haven't quarantined in their life, and if they're thinking about it, maybe they're wondering, well, how do I go about it? How do I get help? What if I need medicines? In fact, one of the crucial elements of the Test and Trace Corps is having that ability in place to protect people and get them the support they need. So, here to talk to you about how the Test and Trace Corps plays a crucial role in our efforts to quarantine folks traveling in from other places, the Executive Director of Test and Trace, Dr. Ted Long.

**Executive Director Ted Long, Test and Trace Corps:** Thank you, Sir. We've all been working incredibly hard to drive down the new cases of coronavirus in New York City, and we've been very successful. But as we sit here today, a fifth of all new cases of coronavirus are from travelers coming into New York City from other states. We want you to come into New York City, but we need you to safely separate for two weeks, when you arrive to keep New York City safe. In order to help you do that, we're going to give you a call. When we call you, we're going to start with talking about what the mandatory two-week quarantine period is, and then we're going to ask you, how can we help to get you through that two-week period? We're going to offer you things like free food delivery, help with medications, direct connections to doctors by the phone, or even a hotel stay. These are really critical pieces that we want to do to, in order to educate you and to help you get through that period of time.

Now, in terms of what you can expect from us when you're buying your plane ticket, when you're arriving in New York City, when you're checking into your hotel, or when you're buying a ticket to come to one of our destinations here, there's going to be an online required link for a traveler form. The reason that form is important is that's how we get the information to be able to reach out to you and call you and ask how we can help. We're also going to be deploying our teams. Tomorrow, we're going to be deploying teams to Penn Station to stop travelers, to ensure that they've completed the travel form. And if they haven't, to walk them through it and to complete it with them right then and there. We at the Test and Trace Corps are working as fast as humanly possible to set up a system to support you to get through that two-week period. We've made more than 86,000 phone calls to travelers coming into New York City from the designated high-risk states. And we've sent more than 20,000 text messages to date. And if we can't get through to you on the phone, we've deployed teams that are now knocking on your door to check in with you and to make sure that you're safe. We know that it's not easy to get through a two-week period of safe separation, but it's incredibly important. And we are going to do everything in our power to help you. Thank you, Sir.

**Mayor:** Thank you very much, Dr. Long. Well, everyone look, the bottom line is we're all in this together. As always, New Yorkers have done an amazing job fighting back this crisis, this disease. But look, here's one more thing you can do. If you yourself traveled to one of those 35 states and come back, quarantine. If you know someone in your life who has gone to one of those states or coming in from one of those states, tell them how important it is to quarantine. If anyone needs help, they can contact the Test and Trace Corps. It's as simple as calling 3-1-1. There is so much help available, but the one thing we all have to do, including just talking to people in our life and saying this quarantine is serious. This is how we protect ourselves and each other. So, everyone let's get that message across to people in our life. Let's do what we've done already. All of us together, fighting the disease back. And let's do that with the same spirit that's taken us this far.

Now, speaking of how far we've come, looking ahead, important milestone today, 90 days until the election. So, literally I will say it with no fear of contradiction, certainly going to say it for my life, that this is the most important election in our lifetime. And it's crucial that everyone gets involved, that everyone participates. Sometimes people have said, Oh wow, you know, it doesn't make a difference, why should I bother? There's never been a more consequential election. There's never been a more important time to participate. So, everyone register to vote. If you haven't already, register to vote. If someone in your family or your life hasn't registered, tell them to register to vote. And make a plan to vote. Let everyone you know, know that they have the power to make a difference. And this is an unprecedented moment. Let's get everyone involved in deciding the future of our city and our country.

With that we'll turn to our indicators. Number one, daily number of people admitted to hospitals for suspected COVID-19, the threshold is 200, today's report, 66 patients. Number two, daily number of people in Health + Hospitals ICUs, threshold 375, today's report 286. And number three, percentage of the people testing positive citywide for COVID-19, threshold 15 percent, today's report two percent. That's the number we've been at for most of these last two months. And it's a very good number. A few words in Spanish —

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that let's turn to our colleagues in the media and please let me know the name and outlet of each journalist.

**Moderator:** Hi, all we have with us here today, Sheriff Fucito, Executive Director of the Test and Trace Corps, Dr. Long, DoITT Commissioner Tisch, Emergency Management Commissioner Criswell, and Senior Advisor Dr. Varma. With that, I'll start with Emily from NY1.

**Question:** Good morning, Mayor de Blasio.

**Mayor:** Hey Emily, how are you?

**Question:** I'm well, thank you very much. May I please ask you to contrast your relationship with Commissioner Shea and the NYPD with that of Dr. Barbot and the Health Department? Mr.

Shea has been very critical publicly, and yet he has a bit of a better relationship with you than and Dr. Barbot who's had more of a behind the scenes tension with the Mayor's Office.

**Mayor:** Look, Emily. What I'd say is the most important thing here is we can dwell on the past, but I'm much more interested in the future. We've chosen, as Health Commissioner, someone just with an exemplary record, Dr. Dave Chokshi. The focus now is going to be on getting ready for opening schools, getting ready for reopening our economy more, making sure we don't have that second wave. Dr. Chokshi is someone who is focused on building a real team effort with all City agencies. And that's what we need going forward. I'll only say about different commissioners, what I ask of all of them is communication. What I ask of all of them is to work with me to figure out the best way to address and solve problems. And that's what we need. And of course, teamwork. We need all agencies working together and, you know, that's the standard I hold. And that's what allows us to do this work for the people in New York City. Go ahead, Emily.

**Question:** Mayor de Blasio, I hear you. And, of course you're underscoring the need for teamwork, especially as we faced these many challenges. But Commissioner Shea has been openly critical of your policies. I don't know that that exemplifies teamwork either?

**Mayor:** Well, Commissioner Shea, I want to clarify — there's nothing he has said that I took personal offense to. We have talked constantly. When he has a concern, he raises it forthrightly. When it's something that I understand he thinks is important to talk about publicly, he and I talk about it first and we come to agreement on the right way to address things and handle things. So, it's been a very collegial dynamic. He has also, to his credit, really put a focus on working with other agencies, other leaders of the administration in a collegial manner. That's what I value.

**Moderator:** Next, we have Juliet from 1010 WINS.

**Question:** Hello. Hi, good morning, Mr. Mayor. Good morning everyone. How are you doing?

**Mayor:** Hey, Juliet. How are you?

**Question:** Actually, I did want to ask, first of all, about your now checkpoint program. How are you identifying people in cars? Is it just going to be by license plate or are people going to be pulled over and asked for ID? How does that work?

**Mayor:** It's a great question, Juliet and I'll turn it to the Sheriff. But I want to emphasize, look, we do have two separate challenges. Folks who are visiting New York City, for whatever reasons, visiting family, you know, just coming to visit in general, coming here for some appointment, whatever it may be from one of those 35 states, who live in one of those 35 states. And then the other problem is New Yorkers who go visit family or go visit friends or whatever in one of those 35 states. We have two separate realities that we have to address. Important thing is that the checkpoints I think, are going to send a very powerful message that this quarantine law is serious and important and crucial and people have to follow it. So, even if we're not going to be able to reach every single person with a checkpoint, I think it's going to help really get the message across. But Sheriff, why don't you describe the approach?

**Sheriff Fucito:** Hey, Juliet, how are you? So, I think it's important to note that we're not looking to target out-of-state residents. In fact, what we're looking to do is educate people who have spent time at COVID-19 hotspots, regardless of their residence, when they come into New York, whether they're returning or they're going to be staying here for a period of time. The only way to have an effective checkpoint is having a random component to it. The courts have looked at checkpoints for public safety reasons, for regulatory reasons. And that seems to be the standard that they're looking for to avoid discrimination. It is so many vehicles, like, let's say it's every sixth vehicle or every eighth vehicle. We determine something in the beginning of the day and we stick to that pattern throughout the day. And that is how the checkpoint would be conducted at different locations.

**Mayor:** Go ahead, Juliet.

**Question:** Okay. So, just to follow up on that, would it be then at random locations, or would you have them at locations regularly? Are you concerned that there'll be like a backup of traffic if you're doing this in the same place on any regular, you know, on a regular basis?

**Mayor:** Yeah. It's a very fair question. And I'll start again, turn to the Sheriff because I know he's thought a lot with other agencies, with DOT and others, about how to position this. We certainly do not want to back up traffic in a major way. And we are definitely talking about moving around locations, limited periods of time. But enough to both reach a lot of people and to send a powerful message to many, many more. But we wanted, you know, it will be a constantly moving situation. Sheriff?

**Sheriff Fucito:** Sure. Juliet, of course traffic is also an important component. We don't want to back up traffic when it's unnecessary. So, with the Sheriff's vehicles, we have, many of them have license plate reader technology so we can identify a vehicle. Let's say it's the eighth vehicle that crosses the bridge and we identify that vehicle. And the deputies would conduct a stop, introduce themselves and explain the nature of the stop. And go into what's needed to, the information that they need to file. And information they need to know about the quarantine when coming into New York. So, there is a random component and we're looking at a full-fledged checkpoint where it is viable. And we're also looking at individualized stops where we think it would be more suited to avoid having a traffic condition.

**Moderator:** Next, we have Henry from Bloomberg.

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

**Mayor:** Good Henry. How are you?

**Question:** I'm good. I'm good. I want to ask you a couple more questions about the quarantine. How many people are going to be deployed around the city to do that? I'd like you to fill out the details of this quarantine a little bit. Are you going to cover all the bridges and tunnels? Are you going to — how many people are going to be deployed doing this? And you're going — and if I'm not mistaken, you're going to offer hotel rooms and food delivery to people to lock themselves up for 14 days? Can you explain this a little more?

**Mayor:** So, I'm going to separate that into two pieces. The first with the Sheriff and the second with Dr. Long. So again, this is a new approach and we're going to use it for as long as we think makes sense. And as extensively as we think makes sense. But I think to begin with having people see that these checkpoints are starting to happen around the city is going to send a powerful message. But it's something that we will start at a certain level. If we think it's an important tool and it's really reaching people effectively, we might keep expanding it. If we think the word has gotten across and we're really seeing a high level of compliance, we might need it less. But we're going to have to do it for a while to see what makes sense. So, let's go to the Sheriff first in terms of how much of a deployment you're doing, how many days a week, etcetera, go ahead Sheriff.

**Sheriff Fucito:** Sure. In the beginning, when we are obviously deployed, we are going to be very visible, but with any law enforcement model, we have to be flexible. The Sheriff has many responsibilities as you know. We do certain things involving bar and club enforcement in the evenings. We have our court duties. So, it's a balancing test. We have to make sure that we assign the right amount of resources. So, at certain points during the day, we may have 20 Sheriff units assigned to doing checkpoints. That number may reduce as the evening progresses. It may increase. So, flexibility is what we're going to be working with because that's the model that we worked with for many years.

**Mayor:** And then to Dr. Long, just to give a quick summary of the kinds of support we provide to someone in quarantine.

**Executive Director Long:** We want to give you anything that you need to get through this two week of mandatory quarantine period as easily as possible. That includes things like food delivery, help with figuring out your medications and getting them delivered, a direct connection to a doctor on the phone. Or even a hotel stay, if that's what you need to safely separate to keep your family and New Yorkers safe.

**Mayor:** Go ahead, Henry.

**Question:** Well, I had a second question about a different topic, but I still don't feel like I — how are you going to enforce this? If I arrive on the George Washington Bridge, how are you going to know where I'm spending the next two weeks?

**Mayor:** Henry, I'll start and then Dr. Long will add if he wants. Look, there is no question, you know, first of all, this is a nation that balances individual rights and privacy with realities like public health needs. So, we always have to honor that balance. We're not going to be in everyone's apartment monitoring them. But what we can say is, one, let's look at the history of New York City. People really have heeded the warnings here. And this is a fact. We have seen it in terms of the most important thing that we can talk about, the results, the facts, the low level of number — the low number of people who are testing positive right now. The clear improvement in the health care situation. The very few number, very small number of people going into hospitals with serious COVID problems. And the fact that it's been going on for most of two months. This is because New Yorkers listened and are following the rules. And I think the more

people hear how important it is to quarantine, the more people will do it. The more people who hear that there is support, the more people will feel more comfortable with it. But undoubtedly Henry, we've got, you know, we've got to be aggressive about getting the word out. We've got to make clear to people there are consequences. And that's another piece of the equation. No one wants to be fining anyone in this environment, but if we have to, we will. I think as with most things in life, if people think and see more and more activity, more and more reminders, more and more people that they know are paying attention to it, understanding it's serious, understanding we have an obligation to each other. Understanding there can be penalties. All of this adds up to create more and more adherence to the law.

**Moderator:** Next we have Brigid from WNYC.

**Question:** Good morning, Mr. Mayor.

**Mayor:** Hey Brigid, how are you?

**Question:** I'm doing okay. Glad that storm is passed.

**Mayor:** How are the Rockaways, Brigid?

**Question:** Really, really very windy, extremely windy, huge waves, pretty scary. But okay now. I'm following up on your announcement yesterday, you know, Dr. Barbot was among the highest ranking Latinas in your administration. She was forced to make a public apology to the NYPD for a conversation that was reported in tabloids. One of the only members of the administration to publicly apologize for a mistake during the pandemic. Is there anything you regret about how she was treated?

**Mayor:** Look, I have a lot of respect for Dr. Barbot and I appreciate what she did for this city. That the bottom line is if someone, anyone says something that wasn't the right thing to say, it's important to just clear the air and move forward. And that's what happened. But I think the bottom line of this administration is we've all gone through an incredibly tough situation, arguably the biggest crisis in the history of New York City. Everyone contributed to moving forward, but now we got to look to the future. The past is in the past, we got to look to the future. And we have huge challenges ahead to consolidate our progress on the coronavirus, to get through what's going to be a lot more activity in the fall and still keep the coronavirus at bay. And then eventually make the transition to something more normal. We've also got flu season coming on, which is a big challenge. We need to be ready for those things. I have not a question in my mind because I've seen his work, that Dr. Dave Chokshi is going to be the person who can lead us forward and get all the different pieces of the government coordinated in common cause. And that's what we need to focus on.

**Question:** And you've often talked about the implicit bias training that members of the NYPD have to go through. I'm wondering if you have done that same training or your team at City Hall to address your own implicit biases? And to learn how you know those micro and macro aggressions impact your own behavior and decision making?



**Mayor:** I think it's something that every one of us should be thinking about all the time. It's certainly a conversation that Chirlane and I have had for years, Brigid, about how this society has coded us all in very negative ways that have to be weeded out. One of the things that I determined early on was that this administration had to represent New York City. So, majority of New Yorkers are women. Majority of the senior roles in this administration by far are women. We have to have strong representation from all of the different communities of this city. Whether you're talking about racial or ethnic background or the five boroughs, or you're talking about people from the LGBTQ community, whatever it is, we need strong representation. We have worked really, really hard to create that throughout the administration. We can always do better but that has been, to me, one of the ways to address the biases that exist and that we've all had foisted upon us, it's to keep building more and more diverse leadership, to keep listening to each other and having the tough conversations, constantly ask our own selves about any biases we may have, and work on it all the time. I think that's the way we move forward.

And one last point that there's been questions in recent days about the meaning and power of the symbolism around Black Lives Matter. And one of the things I've said is, the fact is we have to make this an official statement of the City of New York, and we have to emblazon it all over the city to address 400 years of Black people being told they don't matter in the society. We have to counter that in both word and action. And that's part of why we also will be, very soon, instituting a Commission on Racial Justice and Reconciliation to formally identify the racist realities in so many of our institutions and agencies and identify the specific policy steps, laws, other changes we need to foundationally fix it. And that will include, I think, a greater use of implicit bias training throughout. So, a lot to do to address these problems going forward.

**Moderator:** Next, we have Derick from ABC-7.

**Question:** Hi, good morning.

**Mayor:** Hey, Derick, how are you?

**Question:** I'm doing well. And I just wanted to ask about reopening because I actually spoke this morning with the CEO of a major gym chain here in the city, and he was, you know, basically expressing some frustration that they're still closed. And he mentioned that they've actually spent a ton of money on this air filtration system that can remove coronavirus particles from the air, similar to what, you know, the Governor's talked about with malls reopening. Does that change the calculation here? I mean, at some point, when do you think gyms can reopen, especially given that they're taking these steps, like removing the particles from the air, what do you think?

**Mayor:** It's a fair question, Derick. I appreciate the question. Look, we don't want to see any business have to be closed that doesn't need to be. We don't want to see people out of work. Obviously, you know, gone to a really great extent to try and help a lot of businesses back. There are certainly indoor locations that historically have been particularly sensitive and I'll turn to Dr. Varma, but I'd say this, I think one of the things that we need to work with the State on, because I think both the State and the City are both very worried about the ramifications of certain indoor locations and we're still trying to perfect what those ground rules would be going forward. I do think it's a fair question. If there is a particular air filtration system that might be the game

changer, we need to leave space for that consideration. So, that's something we can look into and come back with a more specific answer, but Dr. Varma, why don't you speak about, you know, how we strike that balance going forward and what kinds of things we'd be looking for before we make such a decision.

**Senior Advisor Dr. Jay Varma:** Great. So, thank you for the question. I mean, I think I want to emphasize that we are consistently open to learning new information both about how the disease is transmitted, but even more importantly, how best we can prevent the disease. One of the challenges that we face with what we call engineering control, air filtration systems, ventilation systems, ultraviolet light, is that they absolutely can be effective at reducing the transmission of viruses like coronavirus, but it doesn't prevent the most common way in which the infection is transmitted, which is close face to face contact or distance within or around six feet of somebody else. Because, again, the virus goes directly from one person to another person, that doesn't pass through the air system at that time. So, air filtration and purification systems in the current technology are really meant to prevent transfer of the virus over a longer range. So, we need to learn more. We need to see how these devices work in real world settings, whether in fact they do help prevent a little bit of these other forms of transmission. But until that time, we also have to go with what we know, which is that the highest risk settings are anywhere where people are indoors and in close contact to each other for a continuous amount of time.

**Mayor:** Go ahead, Derick.

**Question:** Just so – one follow-up question, I don't know if you've had any conversations recently with Governor Cuomo about the timeline for some of these indoor places that were originally included in phase four for reopening. For gyms, for example, do you think it's going to be weeks or months?

**Mayor:** Well, first, Derick, I'd say there's absolute unity between the State and City on the things from phases three and four, where there were exceptions made. We're not ready on indoor dining. We're not ready on gyms. We're not ready on malls. So, it's the exact reason I think Dr. Varma laid out, they're just – these are the most sensitive elements of the equation and we have all worked so hard to get to the point where we have one of the lowest infection levels in the United States of America. No one wants to risk that especially, Derick, when we're about to see a huge uptick in activity after Labor Day. There's real concern about that. To your question, and it's a very fair question. Is it weeks or is it months? There's not a specific timeline. I can say that much with assurance. I don't think we're talking about the next few weeks by any stretch. I think it's a post Labor Day reality from my point of view to assess it after we've seen what happens after Labor Day. And I think the specific point though to your – to the person you talked to who said they had that specific equipment, that piece we should process in the next few weeks with the State, are there exceptions that can be made if those filtration systems really are extensive enough? I think that's a fair question that we should try and resolve in the month of August.

**Moderator:** Next, we have Mark from CNN.

**Question:** Hey, Mr. Mayor, how are you doing today?

**Mayor:** Good, Mark. How are you?

**Question:** Good, good. So, I had a couple of questions related to Dr. Barbot. Was this a situation where either you or someone in your staff asked her to resign and if she didn't, would you have fired her?

**Mayor:** Look, Mark, I always prefer, if we've gotten to a situation where we got to make a change that there'd be a real conversation with someone. Everyone's mature adults. Some things just don't work out. Sometimes it's time for a change in leadership, especially as we're getting ready for a whole host of new challenges. And that's the point we got to this weekend. And I think, you know, always the gracious thing to do is to ask someone if they would prefer to do something in terms of a resignation. So, I believe in that. The important point here was I knew with Dr. Dave Chokshi that we had someone who could hit the ground running and help us move forward and address the things we had to address going forward. So, you know, you always wish things would work out perfectly, but we're human beings. And in professional life, just like in the rest of human life, sometimes things don't work out. The important thing is to respect what someone has contributed and then focus on the future. That's what New Yorkers want. Obviously, Mark, they want to know if the work is going to get done and the product's going to be there. They want to keep that infection level low. They want us to keep moving forward in our restart. And whoever's going to get that job done, that's what they need, and I know that's Dr. Chokshi.

**Question:** Thank you, Mr. Mayor. The other question I had was, again, also on Dr. Barbot, if you're saying it's time to make a change, what specifically did she do wrong or did she not do? And were any of her decisions that have come over the last few months, did that result in any negative effects like loss of life or an increase in infection rate?

**Mayor:** I'm looking at it that way. And I don't – look, again, I respect Dr. Barbot. I named her Health Commissioner. So, let's begin at the beginning. I named her. I think she did some important work and some good work. I need a series of things to happen a certain way for where we are now and where we're going. I determined that it was important to have new leadership and, again, any chief executive gets to that point at some point with some agencies. It's just part of life and it's part of running a huge operation. I have 380,000 employees. There's going to be times when you decide it's time for a leadership change, but you can also have a lot of respect, and I do for Dr. Barbot and her contributions. She's a very devoted public servant. Her whole career, starting as a pediatrician in public health, has been about serving people and helping people. But this was about where we go from here. So, I think that is just a normal thing that one does as a leader is determine, which people make sense to run which agencies, what kind of team dynamic, how are you going to move forward? And then you act on it. And what was very important to note was we had gotten through stages one, two, three, four, or phases one through – two, three, four. We had gotten our city to one of the lowest infection levels in the entire country. It was the right time to make a change

**Moderator:** Last two for today. Next, we have Dana from the New York Times.

**Question:** Hi, Mr. Mayor.

**Mayor:** Hey Dana, how are you doing?

**Question:** I'm all right. First question for you is regarding the CCRB. They say there are more than 500 investigations on hold because officers won't submit to remote interviews, even though the City Charter requires the PD to make sure its officers comply with investigations. The NYPD has also refused to discipline those who don't comply. Given your promise that the discipline process would be up and running soon, what are you doing about this issue?

**Mayor:** Yeah, it's a real issue and I appreciate you raising it, Dana. We have to cut through this. There are – look, there are individual rights issues and due process issues here. The remote dynamics have been a challenge throughout all parts of the criminal justice system that rely on due process, but we've got to get the CCRB process going aggressively. I'll come back to you with a specific timeline and very importantly, our Corporation Counsel, Jim Johnson, I want to understand from him, you know, where that boundary is between respecting due process and individual rights and our obvious need to get this going. So, we'll have an update on that soon, but I think there's a legitimate balance issue that we're trying to address there.

**Question:** Thank you. And then a second question, and this one is for the Sheriff – I'm just curious, given the end of the eviction moratorium tonight, you know, if you have any plan regarding evictions, if you've gotten any guidance from the State about when to resume them.

**Mayor:** I'll just start before the Sheriff and say this – you know, I think it is such a mistake to not have clear guidance that we should avoid any eviction that is for economic reasons. Look, if someone is getting a steady paycheck and they can afford the rent and they're not paying the rent, that's one thing. If someone's destroying property, that's another thing. But the vast majority of people right now are folks who can't pay – the ones who are having a problem are folks who can't pay because they don't have a paycheck. I, again, call upon the State, whether it's through legislative action by the Assembly or executive order to affirm that anyone in that situation where they simply can't pay should be allowed to create a payment plan and pay back their landlord in the future when they have the resources over time. Because if people are evicted for solely economic reasons, we're going to end up with potentially thousands of people who, unfairly, have their home taken away, and then guess what a lot of them end up in our homeless shelters, which is not fair to anyone. So, we need bigger action quickly to avert this crisis, but Sheriff, go ahead on this specific question.

**Sheriff Fucito:** Sure. So, just a little clarification. Although the sheriff is authorized to do evictions in New York City, most of the evictions done in New York City are done by City marshals. The evictions that the New York City Sheriff's Office conducts are usually ones involving public safety. Even during the pandemic, we conducted evictions where buildings were in danger of collapse and the tenants, for whatever reason, refused to leave and they had to get a court order to remove them. So, obviously this was not about them paying rent, but it was about public safety. And as the Mayor said, any of the types of orders involving public safety will continue. When it comes to economic reasons, the courts are being very, very sensitive to all the issues related to COVID-19. The sheriff or the marshal is at the very end of the process. Talking to me about a problem like this is like talking to your mailman about who sent you the letter. We

are at the very end of the process. The people that need to be involved in the dialogue are the judges and the landlords, the people that are pushing the process are in charge of it. And that's really where the dialogue has to begin. Judges have to be more understanding, but I can't tell the judge what to do, but the court system is recognizing it. The State Legislature has to be understanding. They may have to put limitations on how evictions should be done. These things have to be done way upstream. We, the sheriff or marshal, is very, very much at the end of the process.

**Mayor:** Thank you.

**Moderator:** Last question for today. We have Ayana from PIX-11.

**Question:** Hey, happy Wednesday, Mayor. How are you doing?

**Mayor:** Ayana, I think you're the first person to ever say happy Wednesday to me. So, I appreciate it. And it is a beautiful day. So, thank you.

**Question:** You're welcome. My question is following up on the eviction moratorium that is set to expire – do you have an update on the City's Landlord Tenant Mediation programs? Are those centers getting up and running? And just overall resources available from the City to help folks out who's still struggling to pay the rent.

**Mayor:** Thank you, Ayana. Such an important question. Yeah, the mediation effort we talked about just, I think, a week or two ago, that was something that was pre-existing and we're building out to be bigger. So, that's right now available to people. But also, I want to emphasize, if you are facing eviction and you do not have your own lawyer or you do not feel you know the facts, please call 3-1-1 because our Office of Tenant Protection can provide people with a lot of different types of support. If someone needs a free lawyer or legal advice, we can get it for them. I really think, Ayana, we need a bigger solution here, which would be for the State to enact that payment plan approach with a clear mandate that anyone who has a roof over their head right now and just can't afford the rent should not be put out on the street, give them another alternative. But in the meantime, the City will always be there for people in any way we can. There's certain different types of services we can provide, there are some narrow situations where we can get some financial assistance, but definitely the legal help is always there just by calling 3-1-1. Go ahead, Ayana.

**Question:** Thank you, Mayor. Thank you.

**Mayor:** Okay, thanks so much. Well, everybody, look, going back to this key question, how do we keep ourselves safe? We have come so far – again now eight full weeks where we've kept the level of infection below three percent in New York City. Look around the country, all of the states, all of the cities that at one point were belittling New York City or looking at us as the place that couldn't handle the challenge, well, unfortunately for everyone, the tables have turned. Now New York City is the place that is showing everyone else how it is done. And that is because of New Yorkers. That's because New Yorkers stepped up and showed incredible strength, resiliency, teamwork, compassion for each other. Now we need to do the same when it

comes to people who are traveling. Look, if you're a New Yorker and you go to one of those 35 states to see family or whatever it might be, and you come back, show the same strength and discipline you've shown in so many other things, do this for yourself. Do it for your family, do it for your neighbors. Quarantine. If you need help, we'll give you that help.

If you're someone visiting, we always appreciate when people come to our city. We're always an open, welcoming city, but I want to say this to any visitor – be as good as New Yorkers, be as devoted to the health of other people as New Yorkers, respect our laws. We have a very clear law that says you must quarantine. If you come here, you must quarantine. It is not optional. We do not want to fine you. We do not want to penalize you. In fact, we want to help you quarantine. But if you don't respect our laws, we will penalize you because this is about protecting the health and safety of New Yorkers. So, if you come here, please respect what the good people of this city have done. Join us in fighting back this disease. Thank you.

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