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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Well, good morning, everybody. Happy Sunday to all. Every day I get the honor of watching the people of this city fight back against this disease and it's 8.6 million people working as one. It's really quite extraordinary how much people have banded together to fight this disease as a common front. And what our job is, here at City Hall and all our agencies, is to keep strengthening that fight, giving you more and more tools to fight with, more and more ways to support the efforts that everyday New Yorkers are doing to help us overcome this disease. And one of the things that's been really gratifying, really amazing is all the businesses, all the organizations in the city have stepped up in extraordinary ways to support this fight. We've had some amazing partnerships with the private sector. I've talked to you about over the last few weeks, New Lab and Boyce Technologies, two of the companies that got together to create the ventilators built right here in New York City. Something that was not created here and suddenly it was because of the ingenuity and the commitment of these individuals. All those companies, dozens of companies who got together on the Brooklyn Navy Yard and other places to create PPEs, – didn't do them before, they found a way to do it. Right now, in New York City, so many things were being produced to protect our health care heroes, our first responders, everyday New Yorkers because other New Yorkers stepped up, cared, made something happen.

But the biggest challenge throughout from day one has been testing. I don't need to say again how frustrating it's been that we've never had the partner we needed in the federal government when it came to testing. And this is the central question of this whole dilemma we've been through – where has the testing been? But again, when the federal government doesn't come through, when the international markets don't come through, what do we do? We do it right here in New York City. We make something happen. So, we have a new partnership today that's going to be a difference maker in our effort to get more and more testing to the people of New York City. And the place we turn is to the largest urgent care company in this city, CityMD. And I want to thank everyone at CityMD for their commitment to making something very important happen here. Really appreciate that they've come forward to help this city. They care about this city. They're doing something extraordinary.

So, we've been working over the last few weeks and found a way to come into partnership on a very, very big scale. This is the diagnostic testing, the PCR testing. It will be available at all CityMD sites all around New York City and that's a lot of sites – 123 sites. I'm going to say it again – 123 sites across the five boroughs. We predict to begin, 6,000 tests a day at the sites, 6,000 more tests per day. These are walk-in sites. They're open seven days a week. The hours differ somewhat by site, but basically, it's 8:00 am to 8:00 pm Monday to Friday, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM Saturday and Sunday. You can get locations by going to CityMD.com. Now, obvious

question, does it cost you anything to go get this test? Well, if you have insurance, they'll simply bill your insurance. That's fine. That's easy. If you don't have insurance, CityMD will cover the cost. And I want to thank them for that. That's an extraordinary commitment to the people of this city. They are stepping up and saying, if you don't have insurance, they'll be there for you. And this is consistent with our commitment from day one, whether it's testing or health care, whatever the people of New York City need, we will get it for them regardless of your ability to pay. So, big deal. Thank you, CityMD, big step for the city. And I want everyone to know this now puts us ahead of our goal. We had said we wanted to get the capacity for 20,000 tests per day by Monday, May 25th. I can tell you we have now hit the goal a week early. We are at that capacity now and we're going to keep growing. So, with 20,000 a day, you're almost at 150,000 tests a week. Our goal is to continue to build that rapidly and CityMD's really helped us take a big step forward.

Now, you need tests and then you need the tracing to go with it. And to do the tracing, we need an army of tracers, and there's also progress on that front as we keep adding more and more contact tracers. We have 500 tracers who have now completed their training and another thousand on top of that have started the Johns Hopkins University training, gold standard training. And again, thanks to Johns Hopkins University and Bloomberg Philanthropies for helping us to make this happen and happen quickly. So, in the week of May 24th those who have been trained by Johns Hopkins will go out and do their field training. The field training literally involves preparing for over a hundred different scenarios, getting ready for real life choices that have to be made quickly and then we'll have a thousand tracers ready on the playing field, helping the people of this city by the end of this month. We'll have a group of a hundred tracers that will lead the way starting on May 24th, a week from today. They will start their work in the field doing the case interviews and then hundreds more will join them in the days after that. That first group of a hundred tracers will work with those who have positive at the health + Hospitals testing sites. We believe they'll be able to trace almost 2,000 cases just between May 24th and June 1st. So, it's going to be a great start, the others coming right behind them. In the next literally two weeks, you're going to see a vast testing and tracing operation come alive like we've never seen before in the city and this is just the beginning.

As I've said, we expect the army of tracers to grow to at least 5,000, could be between 5,000 and 10,000 before this is all over because we want to be able to reach everyone who needs that connection, that support, that ability to find out what's happening in their lives and the people that they are close to it. We need to find those people, get them to the support they need. So, this vast army is coming together very, very quickly and thanks again to everyone involved in this extraordinary test and trace effort. We're asking a lot of everyone, we're asking you to move very quickly and very effectively and you're doing it. We are very, very appreciative. Now, as I've said before, once you test someone and then you find the contacts and you test them and you're going to find people who need to be kept separate from their families and we use the word isolation and it's not a perfect word, it gets the point across, but we got to think about how to explain this in a more positive light. The goal is if someone needs to be in a place other than their home, their home is too crowded, they can't be supported properly in their home, that's what the hotels are for. That's why we have a whole effort, not only to say, okay, we're going to help you evaluate whether you can properly stay in your home, if you've tested positive, if you're symptomatic, to help you figure out if that can work or you need to be someplace else. But if you

need to be someplace else, to get you there and get you all the support you need while you are in that setting, getting through the disease, making sure you're not infecting the other people in your life.

This model has shown tremendous impact in many parts of the world. We're going to do it on a grand scale here with all the support that people need and to make that happen by June 1st we're going to have individuals all over the city who are helping everyday New Yorkers who need that facilitation, who need that support to get to a hotel and get all the help that goes with it. And these folks will be our resource navigators. So, we're going to get community-based organizations in all five boroughs to help us do this, who know communities around the city, who understand what people need and how to help them. And with these community-based organizations, we'll hire between 200 and 300 resource navigators and they'll be the go to people, understand communities of the city, speak the languages of all the communities in the city, understand what their neighbors need. They will be there and the resource navigators will help make sure that people get that transportation to the hotels, get the food they need, the medication they need, everything, the laundry services, you name it. If people need mental health support, whatever it may be, there'll be, obviously, medical professionals also constantly working with the people in the hotels. But we want an everyday connection with anyone who's in a hotel, in isolation so they get whatever support they need for the period they're there. So, folks are going to know who to turn to at all times and have that personal connection to get the help they need.

Now, when we think about test-and-trace and we think about all this big apparatus being put together, that's what the diagnostic testing, the PCR testing first and foremost, but all pieces of the equation are important and the antibody testing is important, too. And we've said many times antibody testing isn't perfect, but it is helpful. It at least tells you if it's a good test, if it's a quality test, it tells you if you've been exposed to the disease previously and obviously you've been able to beat it, that's evident. So, it tells you something important. It does not tell you to let down your guard or that you can never be once again infected by the disease. But it does tell you you've shown before you could overcome it. That's very, very important. So, in these next weeks we're going to reach 140,000 New York City first responders and health care workers with free antibody testing and another 140,000 everyday New Yorkers also with free antibody testing. So, combined, more than a quarter million people will get this testing. New Yorkers in all five boroughs can start signing up for antibody testing right now. It is by appointment only. And remember, it's not just so that you get the results which you deserve and is important, and of course it's free, but on top of that, it helps the medical community and the City of New York to understand better what's happening with this disease here in the city. The survey that's part of this will help us to fight this disease better. So, you'll be helping yourself, but also helping everyone else with the information that will be gleaned from all this testing. So, we have five locations – in the Bronx at 4006 3rd Avenue in Claremont, in Brooklyn at the NYPD Community Center in East New York, which is an amazing facility. I have visited and very, very appreciative to the NYPD for their partnership here. In Manhattan, Manhattanville Health Center, obviously in Manhattanville. In Queens at 3409 Queens Boulevard, Long Island City. In Staten Island, at the St. John Villa Academy in Concord. To make an appointment today, go online, nyc.gov/antibodysurvey or call (888) 279-0967.

Alright, so that's testing, tracing, all the things that we're doing to fight back, all the partners we brought into play, all the ways we're trying to help you and protect you. And now we need you to help protect everyone in this city because everyone in this city who is able to give blood can give blood and make such a big difference. And right now, we have a challenge with our blood supply. This has come up in recent days. We need to address it. And so many New Yorkers are saying in this crisis, what can I do, how can I help? One thing you can definitely do, one thing that will help for sure, is to give blood in this moment of crisis. What we know happened here is that traditionally in a regular year where people gather together, companies and organizations, there's blood drives, that adds up to a lot. We do them at City agencies, too. But this year for the last few months, blood drives have been disrupted. It's now having a real impact on our blood supply. We need to make a comeback quickly. So, the New York City Blood Center now has only a few days' supply. We need to make sure that we strengthen that supply. That supply of blood helps all our hospitals, they're not in a position to resupply them until they get more blood from people's donations. Each hospital has some blood on hand as they need it for emergencies, but – and they're all practicing very carefully right now, conservation practices. I know our public hospitals, H + H, are doing this. But unless we have a bigger supply of blood some surgeries cannot move forward. Obviously, things that are immediate and lifesaving will, but others can't until there's more of a blood supply.

So, for all those good people out there, so many of you have said, how can I help, what can I do? Right now, you can help, come forward if you can give blood – and obviously some people cannot, but if you can give blood, we need you to make an appointment today at the New York Blood Center, and this is an appropriate reason to leave home for sure. You'll be helping your fellow New Yorker and helping to keep people safe. You can go online – NYBC.org or call (800) 933-2566. So, again, NYBC.org or (800) 933-2566, something very important you can do right away to help your fellow New Yorker.

Okay, now let's go to a tough issue we've been talking about these last days and every one of us who is a parent, every one of us who has children in our lives, we are really concerned about this pediatric multisystem inflammatory syndrome. PMIS. The number of cases continues to grow, 137 confirmed now, 66 of those cases, there's a positive test for COVID-19 or antibodies detected. And as I've said for days, we lost a child to this syndrome and we never want to lose another child to it. So, we're doing a huge outreach effort citywide. We're coordinating with health care providers and particularly pediatricians all over the city. We want to make sure that there's constantly the latest information flowing to our Department of Health, learning what we can about the demographic dynamics of this disease so we can act more quickly. And everything we see gives us information to act on. We see, certainly, initial indication of real transparent – excuse me, a real disparity. I'm deeply concerned about that. We have only, thank God, a small number of cases, but if we continue to see evidence of disparity, we have to continue to adjust our strategies to address this. But right now, what we need the most is to protect every child. So, every parent, every family member out there, if you see those symptoms of fever, rash, vomiting, if you see any of them particularly in combination, please immediately call your doctor or your health care provider. If you don't have one, call 3-1-1 and you'll get connected to a Health + Hospitals clinician. Early detection saves lives of children. So, please, if you see anything unusual like that in your child, call immediately so we can make sure your child gets help.

Okay, now, turning to something that is both about our health and safety but also about this time of year. Everyone is feeling – this weekend we had some beautiful weather already. We're feeling the pull of the outdoors. We're feeling the seasons changing. We all want to be out there. We all also understand we're in the middle of a pandemic and we have to do things differently. The idea here is to put health and safety first. No one has to be reminded, we are the epicenter of this national crisis with the coronavirus. Some places in this country haven't been affected much. Other places in this country were actually affected a lot and for whatever reason decided to reopen quickly even if there wasn't a lot of evidence it was safe, and tragically we're seeing in some of those places a huge uptick in the disease. There are places that have been hard hit but no place has been hard hit the way New York City has. We are going to be always putting health and safety first. We're going to be careful and cautious to get it right and so even though it's beautiful weather, even though people want to be out there, we're going to be really smart about what we allow, what we don't allow for the foreseeable future.

So, there's obviously a huge interest in the beaches and the State of New York has said that different localities can make different choices and some are deciding in the metropolitan area to open beaches for Memorial Day, the traditional start of the beach season. I've said it before and I'm going to say it again we are not opening our beaches on Memorial Day. We are not opening our beaches in the near term. It is not safe. It is not the right thing to do in the epicenter of this crisis. So, that decision I did not make lightly. We thought long and hard about it but continuing to watch our indicators which don't have us where we need to be yet, we are going to be very smart and careful about this. So, what's going to happen is we are going to take it week and day at a time to figure out where we're going. I've never ruled out the possibility of beaches being open later in the summer but we're not ready yet. And the scene you see there, that is a typical beach day when things are normal in New York City. That cannot happen anytime soon and that's what we're guarding against. Because right there you can see a lot of people in danger and a lot of spread of the disease and we're not going to let that happen after all the progress we've made, you've made fighting back this disease. We're not taking that chance.

And by the way, that's just the beach. Imagine the scene on the A train with people going out to the Rockaways or any other train where people go to the beach, or the buses. We're not going to allow that crowding to happen. So, the word is no, not yet, not now, beaches are not open for swimming. They're not open for all the normal things people do in beach season. So, there will not be swimming, it will not be allowed. There will not be lifeguards on duty. We're going to treat this immediate phase the way we do through the times of year when beaches are not open. For now, we're going to leave it the way it is that if someone wants to, from the local community, walk on the beach, that's okay. We're going to let that happen for now but if we start to see people congregating, if we start to see people swimming, if we start to see people doing things that literally go against everything we've talked about in terms of health and safety, then we will take further measures. We're putting fencing in and in reserve that could close off the beaches if needed. It's certainly not something I want to do or my team here at City Hall wants to do. I know the Parks Department doesn't want to do it. But we will be ready if we have to.

So, what you'll see in the coming days is fencing put in place, ready to be implemented. In the meantime, a lot of NYPD presence, a lot of Parks Department presence and you could go,

everyday New Yorkers from the neighborhoods around the beach, just like you are now, you want to walk along the beach or sit on the beach for a while, fine. No swimming, no parties, no sports, no gatherings. We're going to give people a chance to get it right, and I believe in New Yorkers, I believe in everything you've done. If people don't get it right, if we start to see a lot of violation of those rules, up will come the fences closing off those beaches. No one wants that but we're ready to do it if that's what it takes to keep people safe. In the meantime, we will prepare for better times. We don't know the day yet when in the future we might be able to open the beaches the right way, we will have our lifeguards trained and ready, we will be ready for that eventuality. But we are not there yet.

Okay. Let me do the daily indicators and again, this kind of makes the point progress but still not enough progress. Yesterday, we definitely had a good day, but not a perfect day because two indicators down, one indicator up, but only by a little today. A good day. Still not a perfect day, but definitely a good day. Two indicators down, one unchanged. So indicator one daily number of people admitted to hospitals for suspected COVID-19 unchanged 77 to 77. Number two, daily number of people in ICU across Health + Hospitals for suspected COVID-19 down and down in a very big way. This is really, this piece of the news is just playing good news and very important for all those folks fighting for their lives down from 506 to 469 and the percentage of people are testing positive for COVID-19 down from 13 percent to 11 percent so a good day, particularly in terms of ICU, but we want even better days and we want to see him strong together consistently. A few words in Spanish.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that we turned to our colleagues in the media. And please remind me of the name and outlet of each journalist.

Moderator: Hi all. Just a reminder that we have Deputy Mayor Dean, President and CEO of Health + Hospitals, Dr. Katz, executive director of test and trace core, Dr. Long and senior advisor, Dr. Varma on the phone. With that I will start with Abu from Bangla Patrika.

Question: Hello Mayor. How are you?

Mayor: Good. How are you doing?

Question: Thank you so much for asking. I have just two questions. Small two question. Number one, the doctors and you know, the people who understand that kind of disease they're always warning that this disease can come back again. So, I would like to ask you if it's come back again then how New York City prepared to face the kind of epidemic again? And number two, the you know, we face a huge crisis because of the COVID-19. And what is the best lesson you get personally in that crisis?

Mayor: Well, I think the lesson has been the power of the people, Abu. We asked the people at city to do something extraordinary and difficult and unheard of for New Yorkers and they've done it overwhelmingly. So, I think in the end we have to remember that the power in a democracy resides in the people and the ability to change things for the better resides in the

people. And this is what I believed all my life, but I'm seeing it much more vividly than ever in this case, you know, the greatest crisis we've faced in generations. People are making the difference, and I think, you know, leveling with the people about what's going on and empowering them to act is the best way to actually achieve our common goal of overcoming this disease.

On your other question, what I refer to as the boomerang the disease reasserting, we are every day concerned to stop this from happening, that's why we're making cautious, careful decisions. But we also are constantly preparing both for times to get better but we're also preparing for bad scenarios and that would mean tightening up the restrictions. If we have to do that, we could don't anticipate it, but we'd be ready. So, I think it comes back to what people do every day. I want people to take it personally. When you follow these rules, the shelter in place, the social distancing, the face coverings, you're speeding up the day when we can open up more. If you don't follow these rules, unfortunately there's a danger of that boomerang and even more restrictions. So that's the balance we strike all the time.

Moderator: Next we have Shant from the Daily News.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor, wanted to ask about reporting from over the weekend that New Yorkers were flocking to locations from bars on the Upper East Side to Coney Island and elsewhere. Just want to get your thoughts on that and if you're contemplating any steps to handle that. On a separate issue, I understand the City Council is going to try to pass the bill requiring a hotel room for every single homeless person. Will you veto that if that passes without a veto proof majority? And any other thoughts on that bill?

Mayor: Look, Shant, on that bill. We're working with the Council. We're in constant dialogue with them. We're all trying to get to the same place in the end. We want to protect people, we want to keep people safe. We also have to figure out what's going to be best in all senses for homeless people, including their mental health needs and other needs. How they can get the services they need. We want to use the facilities we have and when we need others, we'll bring them into play. We also have to think about, you know, the costs involved. Everything has to be looked at. But, in the end, it's about health and safety first. And so we're working closely with the Council and I think there's been a good track record of us working through issues and ending up in a good resolution.

On the bars and the beaches on the beaches the report I've gotten from yesterday is there were people walking on beaches and there were very few instances of a problem. But again, we're going to have a lot of NYPD, a lot of Parks Department out to address anything. And if people, you know, if we have sporadic problems, that's one thing. If we have consistent problems then as I said, we will use the fencing on top of all those patrols. Don't want to do it but we're ready to. But the reports I got about beaches yesterday were overwhelmingly that there was compliance and that enforcement was honored.

The bars is a different matter. We are waiting for a full report cause obviously this is from last night, but I'm not comfortable at all with people congregating outside bars. It's the same rule. If you start to form groups of people and then you know, two, three, five and then it becomes six, it

becomes 10, it becomes 15, that violates what we're saying about social distancing. I put lives and that puts lives in danger. So the Police Department will be out, the Sheriff's Office will be out watching very carefully on the Upper East Side in particular. I know we had a particular problem there, but everywhere around the city and we're not going to tolerate people starting to congregate. It's as simple as that.

Moderator: Next we have Katie Honan from the Wall Street Journal.

Question: Good morning, happy Sunday. Mr. Mayor, I wanted you to do to, I guess, expand upon the beaches plan, this new update, particularly about lifeguards. I'm curious, I've spoken to lifeguards. They said they haven't heard of anything about when they'll begin training. When will the training begin? How long will it take? Will it be different? I know it usually involves CPR classes and swimming and in the, you know, in the various lifeguard pools. I don't know if that's capable. And I know you've mentioned a few times this morning that you will allow people who live in the communities to walk on the beaches, but are you suggesting people shouldn't travel, you know, shouldn't go from Manhattan out to Coney Island or elsewhere in Queens to Rockaway? We're in. Is that one way you want to, I guess, try to limit the amount of people on the beaches?

Mayor: Yes, Katie. Exactly right, Katie. The point is we're still – look, nothing's changed in the status of New York City in the last few weeks. We do not want to see non-essential travel. We want to see people keeping things as modest as possible. Get your basic exercise in and get back home, go to the store or go to the pharmacy, whatever you have to do to get your basic goods and go back home. This is working. We want to keep it that way. So we certainly do not – again, I don't want a lot of people on a train. I don't want to allow people on buses going to Orchard Beach. I want us to recognize we still have to fight back this disease. It won't be forever, but we have to fight it now. So yeah, the point is we don't want to take away from the local communities. A lot of people live – hundreds of thousands of people live near our beaches. We don't want to take away from them the right to just walk on the beach. But again, if we start to see abuse of that, we're going to take tougher measures.

In terms of lifeguards. We'll start them in training immediately. As I understand it, it does take several weeks. We'll get you an exact date. But, certainly, by the time we would honestly consider reopening beaches with all that comes with that, the lifeguards, they'll be ready.

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

Question: Good morning, everyone. Can you hear me?

Mayor: How are you doing Debralee?

Question: I'm well, thank you. This is the question, Mr. Mayor, regarding last week's reports on tension and discord within the Department of Health and specifically with Commissioner Barbot, who's again not present for today's lineup. I wonder if you could speak – last time we left off, you said he was going to speak to her over the weekend. If you could apprise us of that conversation. And are you concerned that our continuing absence will continue to undermine the

efforts of the administration to provide accurate guidance that [inaudible] follow from the city in a unified way on what they should be doing to combat the virus? And then also, I wanted to speak to the degree to which community-based health centers are being involved or not in the testing process here. I know that the State has lined up a number of federally qualified health centers, but we're not really hearing from the City the same kind of collaboration as regards testing, tracing, that kind of one-on-one service with these already established centers on the ground. Can you speak to that?

Mayor: Absolutely. Yeah, we're – look, as you've seen today, the testing effort is growing all the time. The first and most straightforward way to do this was with the Health + Hospitals clinics and all the capacity at Health + Hospitals that already exist out in communities. That was the most obvious go-to. We're going to keep building from there. The CityMD – 123 locations – an amazing, you know, single effort that now brings so many places into play – very, very high impact. But we're going to start working with community health centers of all kinds. I've talked to you all about the ways we're starting to coordinate with them. We want them to play a bigger and bigger role as this goes forward. And obviously, they can be important places for testing as well. So, we are going to be doing more with them on testing and everything else – announcements to come.

On, Dr. Barbot – again, I don't want you to in any way compare what happens at a press conference to the overall work of our agencies. The work of all of our agencies continues every single day. Press conferences, we put together different lineups each day for whatever the purpose of that press conference is. The Health Department is doing its good work regularly. I spoke to Dr. Barbot yesterday. We had a good and constructive conversation. We talked about the concerns that I've raised and others have raised about her conversation with Chief Monahan. I told her I thought it was important for her to address that publicly. I believe she'll be doing that soon. And the work needs to continue, and we talked about how to deepen the work of all of our Departments as a single team and a unified effort for the good of all New Yorkers. And it was a good conversation. I am convinced we're all going to do important and good work, going forward, to keep fighting back this disease. So, a positive conversation and we're all moving forward.

Moderator: Next we have Myles from NBC.

Question: [Inaudible] on the Upper East side, it was more than just being people outside of bars. You had people doing dine-in at some of the Thai places that are just a few blocks from where you live. And it was a different scene that we saw at Domino Park or at the beach. The beach was packed, but at least people, you know, were spread out. This was a different situation and when our cameras went there the people were defiant, they yelled at our photographers, and it just – is it that people just don't understand what's going on?

Mayor: Well, defiant and yelling at your photographers, I'm sorry that happened to you guys. But, again, I think there's going to be a different reality when the sheriff shows up at NYPD shows up and that's what's going to happen, and all the other agencies. When we first – you know, I made the decision – and I remember the day I did it, I spoke to Dr. Fauci for guidance and made the decision to close the bars and restaurants in this city, only allow them to do takeout

and delivery, and we've kept to that ever since. And, overwhelmingly, we've seen a lot of compliance. If we have instances where there's not compliance, I want to know about, I want to know about from you telling my team, I want any New Yorker who sees any place allowing a dining in, call 3-1-1 immediately, and they will be visited immediately with inspectors and there'll be serious fines. And if we have to shut places down, we will if they're starting to violate these rules, because it's about health and safety. And the same with congregating outside – look, if a bunch of people are congregating, that's a gathering. What did I say the other day? The NYPD is going to focus its enforcement on gatherings. So, please share with us those locations and we will deal with them immediately.

Moderator: Next we have Luis from New York [inaudible] –

Question: [Inaudible] antibody test tomorrow, it's part of that new survey. There was basically no criteria for us getting the appointment for our test, but looking at the CityMD site, I see the criteria needing to be met in order to get a test through them. Do you hope for a day when every single New Yorker can be tested regardless of having ever been symptomatic or having ever been in touch with anyone who tested positive? And Mr. Mayor, can we approach the future – as we approach the future when more and more and more testing would be made available and the criteria is that adjusted to include more and more people – what else can you say to everyone out there to make them understand the importance of getting tested?

Mayor: Well, look, Luis, again, the PCR testing, the diagnostic testing, which is still in a very imperfect supply – although, I'm thrilled we are now at 20,000 a day capacity and growing, it's still nowhere near what we want. We are keeping some real criteria on that according to greatest need. That will – that is starting to loosen up as we get more and more supply. It will continue. I would love nothing more than the day to come when that could be truly as universal as we want it to be. But we will keep being clear about criteria. Again, the antibody testing, very valuable, but not the same as the PCR testing, but we still want any New Yorker who wants to take advantage of the antibody testing to do so.

Now, the point to my mind going forward is that testing helps us know what's going on big picture, but it's also about the ability – with the diagnostic testing, the PCR testing, the kind we have at City MD, the kind of we have at the H+H clinics – it's our ability to determine what to do with each person, each family. If someone tests positive, then we know how to help them get support. If they need to isolate, how to isolate. The value of testing is it gives you the knowledge then to act. It's not perfect because things change over time and that's where more and more testing would help us to be able to test people as frequently as ideally. But what I can say to people is the most important thing to do is to follow those basic rules on shelter in place, on social distancing, wearing a face covering when you go out, basic hygiene, washing hands, hand sanitizer, covering your mouth when you cough and sneeze, those are still the basics. But for people who meet the criteria we've laid out, we want as many as possible get the diagnostic testing because it's going to help us understand, but most importantly, it's going to help us in their case and their family, help them to do what's safest and help them to protect their families.

Moderator: Next we have Yoav from The City.

Question: Hi Mr. Mayor. I believe on Thursday or Friday you were asked a number of times essentially to offer an expression of support for your Health Commissioner. She has been absent from quite a few of these press conferences lately. She did not attend Friday's City Council hearing. So I just essentially wanted to offer you another opportunity to essentially assure the public that you believe you have competence in your Health Commissioner.

Mayor: I chose her, Yoav. She is the Health Commissioner that I chose to put in place. I've been working constantly with her during this crisis. I have a lot of respect for Commissioner Barbot. I have a lot of respect for the Health Department. It was important that we have a conversation to clear the air on some of the recent issues and I think we had a good and productive conversation and we're going to move forward together. So yeah, look forward to her doing good and important work, and I think we all understand this is a team effort. And I know and I don't ever blame the media for focusing on personalities, I'm going to state the obvious, having the responsibility for protecting all New Yorkers, it is not about one personality and another, it is about a huge team that needs to work together as a team to protect people with only one agenda, protecting the people in New York City, nothing else, no other considerations. And that's what I expect from everyone and we're all going to move forward on that basis.

Moderator: Last two for today. Next we have Jacob from Jewish Insider. Jacob, are you there?

Mayor: Jacob, can you hear me?

Question: Hey Mr. Mayor, good morning.

Mayor: There we go. We thought we lost you, Jacob. What's going on?

Question: You're never going lose me and I'm sorry if I'm a week late but I want to wish you a belated happy birthday.

Mayor: Thank you, Jacob.

Question: So, I have two questions. Number one, I've been getting a lot of inquiries about the State extending the restrictions on small businesses and local shops opening, and a lot of shop owners have expressed, some say disappointment, but also the frustration at you know, they were given no guidance and they do not know as to when they would be able to reopen even with, you know, some restrictions, if it's letting one customer at a time in implementing some restrictions in practicing social distancing. So, my question is what would you tell those shop owners as how long to wait and what can be done for them to resume business?

And the second question is the ADL recently reported a troubling report about a dramatic rise in anti-Semitic incidents. Obviously, you have addressed that in the past and this is an ongoing battle. However, there have been some complaints recently that members of the Orthodox community who are more visibly Jewish have been receiving insults and, you know, amid this pandemic going to places while practicing social distancing, while wearing masks, as the ones who are responsible for this outbreak. So, what is the city doing, number one, to combat this dramatic rise in anti-Semitism, but also to avoid these incidents from happening?

Mayor: Yeah, Jacob, thank you. Look, it's absolutely unacceptable and we had a horrible incident and there were instant consequences for those perpetrators, the incident where we had someone in the Jewish community wearing a mask and someone tried to pull it off them, which is just insulting, it's anti-Semitic, it's discrimination, it's a really a horrible thing to do to another human being. Think about the implication too of someone trying to do the right thing and protecting their fellow New Yorker by wearing that mask and then someone tries to take it off them, thus endangering everybody, themselves included. Not only is it anti-Semitic and inappropriate, and an act of bias, it's idiotic because it just makes everyone less safe. So there were quick consequences in that case, those individuals were arrested, but we're going to as always ensure that there is a strong NYPD presence, anytime, anywhere we see a bias, and this has been true in many different communities and the answer has always been to make a strong, clear statement that we don't accept bias in this city, that there will be consequences for acts of bias and discrimination, to increase NYPD presence and presence of other city agencies to protect people. We'll do that whenever needed. It has worked consistently and people need to know there's consequences and it will not be accepted in this city.

On the small shops, very important issue. Look, I keep talking about these indicators every day and the State has their own indicators and we're all working together and it's quite clear nothing is going to change in May. It's May 17th, the indicators on the state level and the city level have not moved enough to change things in May for all intents and purposes. So, we're talking about June as our first opportunity, but we have to keep making progress. So, I say to everyone in every community, if you want to open those small shops, keep buckling down on the social distancing, on the shelter in place, on using the face coverings, all these things. It's literally a direct line between what you do and our ability to reopen anything. We will be providing in the coming days guidance on what that first phase of re-opening would look like, so people will have some time to get ready. But I want to say the shop owners and everyone else, there's no guarantee we get to that point until the indicators show us factually that it's safe enough to do. And then once we do it, we're going to monitor very intensely to make sure people follow the rules. If they don't, there'll be consequences. If we see a resurgence of the disease, unfortunately we would have to put back on restrictions. So, we're going to be very smart and careful about this, but there will be time for shop owners to know what's coming, but it's not coming in the month of May.

Moderator: Last question for today, Roger from 1010 WINS.

Question: Hello Mayor. Good morning. I wanted to ask you a little more about these resource navigators and how that's going to work. If someone tests positive for COVID-19 is living with family, when should they reach out to these people? How will they find out about these people and how do they reach out to these people?

Mayor: So I'm going to turn to Dr. Ted Long who's the Executive Director of the Test and Trace Corps, and I'll only say as we turn to Dr. Long, the goal here is to make it really user-friendly, really easy for the people in New York City who needed that support, to get it, and we want it to be a sympathetic positive process. We want people who need to go to a hotel to feel comfortable

doing it and feel really supported in it. So, Dr. Long talked to us about the resource navigators and the role they'll play. I know he's out there, Dr. Long, can you hear me?

President and CEO Mitchell Katz, Health + Hospitals: I'm going to fill in until I see him. This is Dr. Mitch Katz, Mr. Mayor, thank you. And Dr. Long was here just a second ago. So I'm thinking it was a technological issue. Yes, we see that our ability to use these resources will really help the effort. We want people to see what we're doing as a service to them. We think that if it's as – if people see it as a service to them and recognizing that our only concern is that they be healthy and that their family be healthy, that they will then accept the idea that they need to be isolated, whether it's in their home or in our hotel room, and then these great resource people that you've spoken of will take care of bringing them the other things that they will need, including their food, help them with any economic benefits, medicines, figure out how they'll need medical treatment. So I think that it really reinforces the efforts that you've spoken of sir. Thank you, Dr. Katz.

Dr. Ted Long, Health + Hospitals: If you can hear me, I agree.

Mayor: You're back, was that consensus, Ted?

Dr. Long: Strong consensus.

Mayor: Strong consensus. Thank you. Thank you, Ted. Thank you, Mitch. All right, well as we conclude for today, I'm going to say one of the statements you can say in this city that probably would get the greatest consensus, in fact, and I'm going to say this, this is the greatest city in the world. There is no one on earth, no group of people in the whole world as amazing as New Yorkers. I believe that in my heart. And I want everyone to understand we've taken on this pandemic. We have been the epicenter and we fought back. You fought back. The success we've had to date is because of you. Now we have to go further. We have earned our way to the point where we even have the ability to talk about loosening restrictions, we've earned our way to the point we could talk about at one point having beach season again, we're not there yet, but if you keep earning it, if you keep fighting for it, if you keep being as great as New Yorkers can be, then we get there. It's everyone's responsibility. We're all in this together. So keep doing what you're doing because it's been amazing. Aim high, be as great as this city is capable of, and that's the pathway to beginning to reopen. That's the pathway to having a better summer and a much better year ahead. We all need to earn it together and I have confidence we will. Thank you, everybody.

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