

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 30, 2020, 12:10 PM

CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO DELIVERS REMARKS AT GOVERNOR
CUOMO'S MEDIA AVAILABILITY**

Governor Andrew Cuomo: I think we have the Mayor, who is on the telephone or some electronic means – there he is. Mayor Bill de Blasio, welcome to Albany.

Mayor Bill de Blasio: It's a pleasure to be with you. Governor, I want to add to that point you made about all of us, together, doing something different, doing something necessary, and being willing together to go someplace we've never been before. You and I have talked about this kind of idea a lot over the years. You know, I think when we first met each other, the word disruption was considered a bad thing. In recent years, it's taken on a very positive connotation, that when we disrupt something that isn't working or has been thought about in a very narrow way and we go someplace new and better, that's a positive. And I think what we're talking about today is exactly that, and I commend you and everyone at the MTA. And I want to talk about why I think this plan is so important in terms of our essential workers, our first responders, our health care heroes, why I think is so important in terms of also addressing homelessness in a new and powerful way.

But I first want to say, I want to express my appreciation along with you. Really appreciate – back on one of your previous topics – the contact tracing. Really appreciate that my predecessor, Michael Bloomberg, is stepping up in such a big way for New York City and New York State. And the contact tracing, the test and trace approach is going to change everything. You and I are united in that as well, the aggressive approach. In fact, Governor, New York City, right now, is hiring a thousand contact tracers with health care backgrounds to supercharge this effort. And I think we are going to be able to show this country a model that's going to be extraordinarily effective in beating back this disease. So, I look forward to that partnership as well.

But right here on the issue of the MTA, we've all been throwing the biggest curve ball in our lives with this pandemic. But look at the consistent heroism of the health care workers, the first responders, the grocery store workers, the pharmacists, everyone who came forward. And Governor, I know you feel it too, it's probably the proudest moment we've had as public servants in this state, in this city, watching the heroism of these New Yorkers who have stepped up. Now, we owe it to them to understand their lives and the notion that they have a daily routine where they go into battle, they go toward the danger, they go where the infection is, which so many people couldn't even imagine, but that's what these heroes are doing. We owe it to them to support them in every way possible. You and I have talked many times about the PPEs and the basic protections, but we also owe it to them to be safe on the way to work, on the way back home to their families. So, I think what we're doing here in partnership is exactly the right thing,

to say we're going to find a way to make our subway system cleaner than it's probably ever been in its history, honestly, and address this crisis in a whole new way. I agree with that and I commend you for it. And yeah, it took some disruption to say we're going to do something there in this pandemic we've never done before, but it makes sense when it comes to protecting our heroes.

The second point, homelessness – look, another issue you and I [inaudible] decades. While we know it's been in many ways an intractable issue, because there wasn't always an impulse to disrupt, and here is an example of saying, look, we now have found new ways to get street homeless people off the street. And I want to commend Commissioner Dermot Shea and everyone at the NYPD who's really focused on how to help the homeless; Commissioner Steve Banks, everyone at homeless services and social services; and all those – also, those heroic outreach workers. Governor, you know about this work – we go out there day after day to engage homeless people on the streets and the subway, get their trust and get them to come in to shelter and ultimately to permanent housing. This work has always been in some ways stymied by the reality of a homeless person who is struggling with everything they're dealing with – a mental health challenge, a substance abuse challenge, riding the subway all night long. We're New Yorkers, we know about this reality, and it's been put in a stark light by this crisis like so many other challenges and disparities have. Well, it's an unacceptable reality and this new plan will disrupt that unacceptable reality and allow us to actually get help to people more effectively, because if you're not going back and forth all night on a train, then you actually are coming above ground where outreach workers are there to help you, where NYPD officer's training in the homeless outreach are there to support homeless people and get them to a better situation.

Governor, you know, for decades in this city, somehow homeless encampments were actually tolerated. People thought, oh, it's the kind of thing – what can we do about that? I'm proud to say, in the last few years, homeless services, NYPD, nonprofit organizations, we got together and we said we're not allowing that anymore. We shut them down and we found it actually helped us to get the homeless to the help they need. This is another example of that. So, I want to let you know that as we all talked about this idea – and I commend you, your team and Albany, and, obviously, the team at the MTA, Pat Foye, Sarah Feinberg – it's been a very productive conversation these last few days. And what I think we've come to, to get there is, yeah, we're going to do something unprecedented, we're going to do something because of an emergency, but we're also going to do something that's going to protect people and offer a new way to get people help who never got enough.

And so, Governor, thank you. I think this is a partnership – you're right, it's not going to be easy. No one said it was going to be easy, but you have my full commitment, the commitment of the City, the commitment of the NYPD, and all of our agencies. We're going to make this work together and we're going to be able to look back and say we did something that actually changed people's lives for the better. And as long as it takes, we're going to stand with you and get this done.

Governor Cuomo: Thank you. Thank you very much, Mayor de Blasio.

###