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**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO DELIVERS REMARKS AT
INTERAGENCY EBOLA PREPAREDNESS MEETING**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Okay. I just want to say a few things up front here. Obviously the people of this city are concerned about the situation with the Ebola crisis and what it could mean for New York City. We want to address that, but first, a real thank you to everyone in this room. I'll talk about who's here and what they're doing – but a very very impressive group of professionals working to make sure that each and every New Yorker is safe. And a lot of planning has gone on in these last weeks – a lot more is happening now – and I'll speak about these efforts in just a moment.

But first we want to say – we are faced with a crisis now, which is a painful one. People have been lost already. Obviously this week we experienced the first death on U.S. soil. Our hearts go out to all the families who have been affected and our prayers are with them. This is a painful time, but it's also a time that the whole international community is recognizing that this is all of our problem. This is something that has to be addressed by action by countries all over the world to help address the problem at its core in West Africa.

As for the efforts being made here – again, these are extraordinary efforts typical of New York City – a group of exceedingly capable individuals and agencies working together here today – a planning session, talking about different scenarios so we can be ready for each and every one. There's been a lot of discussion, a lot of reporting on Ebola. The fact is – thank God – there has not been a case in New York City. There is no cause for alarm.

In New York City, we have right now an extraordinary effort in place to work with health providers all over this city, agencies of every kind to make sure that if anyone does present themselves with symptoms, we have a clear protocol for how to handle the situation. But you can rest assured – at this moment in New York City, there is – thank God – no crisis. There has been no case of Ebola in our city.

The city is vigilant by our nature. We know the kinds of challenges we face. Everyday there are a number of us who focus on the question of terrorism. That has created a vigilance in this city over years. It is a 24/7 reality. So the idea of having to be ready for something very challenging

is not new to us. It's what we do as New Yorkers. It's particularly what this city government does and what all our partner agencies do. We've faced terrorism. We've faced natural disasters. We now face the possibility of being affected by a pandemic. But the fact is, all of those other moments prepared us to handle whatever is thrown at us.

The city is particularly well prepared for any possible instance of Ebola because of our extraordinary healthcare system – both our public healthcare system and our voluntary hospitals, our health department, which is the envy of the nation – in fact, of the world – in terms of the public health work it does. I can say that with great confidence. We have the finest health professionals anywhere in the world here in New York City, the finest healthcare institutions, and that gives us tremendous strength in the face of anything we may face.

Today's meeting is an example of the seriousness and the thoughtfulness that all the agencies are using in addressing this crisis. You literally have here in the room every pertinent agency that would play a role in addressing a case if it were identified. And I want to thank them all for the leadership they're showing and the willingness to cooperate from the beginning and making sure that we will be seamless in our response. I want to thank our deputy mayors who have primary responsibility in these areas – Tony Shorris and Lilliam Barrios-Paoli. And then I want to just note all of the agencies here at the table to give you a sense of the extraordinary effort, the extraordinary planning that's been going on for weeks and now is intensifying.

We have here the Office of Emergency Management, the Fire Department, the Police Department, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Health and Hospitals Corporation, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, the 3-1-1 system, the Departments of Sanitation, Education, Corrections, Environmental Protection. We have the New York City Housing Authority here, the Office of Management and Budget, the Law Department, the Department for Homeless Services, the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, the Community Affairs Unit, the Human Resources Administration – literally every agency that would be part of a response, every agencies that touches the lives of New Yorkers every day.

We, in all of our planning, work with our partners in other parts of government, so the New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services is here as part of this exercise, the Metropolitan Transit Authority, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, representing the voluntary hospitals, the Greater New York Hospital Association, and then from the federal government, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. So there is tremendous coordination and unity of planning.

What's happening today is an effort to go over different scenarios, get everyone on the same page, talk about precautions that need to be taken, talk about how we can inform the public every step of the way if there were to be a case, and making clear to people that a lot of planning and forethought is being laid in to deal with each scenario. Again, this has been playing out now over weeks and weeks – the planning has been going on, now it is intensifying.

The important point here is we have to understand Ebola for what it is and not make it something mysterious and mystified. We have to look at the basics here. The way to contain Ebola is the same way we contain measles – very straightforward concepts. Diagnose, isolate, and treat. It's a

straightforward protocol. Physicians, hospitals, emergency medical personnel are trained in how to identify this disease and how to quickly isolate anyone who may be afflicted. All the major hospitals in the city have at least one special facility for isolating and tending to patients with any kind of highly infectious disease, so each of our hospitals is ready. The city has the lab capacity to conduct immediate testing to determine if an individual case is Ebola.

Again, everything we do will be in close consultation with our federal and state partners. This is now a 24/7 dynamic. Our agencies are working literally every hour of the day to make sure, if anything is found, that we act quickly. But it's very very important that the public understand the role that each and every New Yorker has to play. It comes down to yourself and your own family, what you are experiencing. Very very few people should be at risk because the risk is primarily related to those who have traveled to one of the countries suffering this crisis – that's a small number of countries by definition. If someone has been to one of those countries or if they are in immediate close personal intimate contact with someone who's been to one of those countries – that is the universe of people we're talking about.

We want to emphasize – if someone thinks they may have been exposed to Ebola, they need to go to the nearest emergency room immediately. We do not want people waiting. We don't want them taking a long period of time trying to contact their own physician or get to their physician's office. The appropriate action is to go to the emergency room immediately. If anyone thinks they may be afflicted and for any reason cannot get to the emergency room, or if they have a family they think may be afflicted and cannot take them immediately to the emergency room, they should call 9-1-1. So there's two live options if someone believes they are afflicted or a loved one or a friend is afflicted – go immediately to the emergency room or call 9-1-1.

The bottom line is that we've done a lot of preparation with our hospitals. Again, they know how to handle this type of scenario. It's also important for anyone, any New Yorker who may be hesitant about going to the hospital because of their own immigration status – I want to make crystal clear that immigration status will not be discussed. Anybody who goes to the hospital to seek emergency care because they fear they may be afflicted with Ebola will not be asked their immigration status – they can rest assured. They're there to get the healthcare they need. It will be provided – it will be provided regardless of ability to pay and without intrusive questions. We want to encourage anyone who needs help to get help.

This is the way we keep our city healthy. It's a straightforward plan and these agencies are doing a tremendous job in preparing.

I just want to say a few words in Spanish.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, that is the statement I wanted to make sure we got out. And then we're going to thank everyone from the media for being here and after you leave we will continue the planning exercise. Thank you.

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