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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good morning, everyone. We have a big challenge on our hands. You know, we've had so many other challenges before, and the last year's been real tough, but welcome to February 2021, we have a new challenge, and that is a pure blizzard. This is the real thing. So, blizzard conditions today. I want to emphasize, I'm going to say it clearly, I know my colleagues are going to say clearly – blizzard conditions, stay off the road, stay off the streets and sidewalks, stay inside. If there's any way you can avoid traveling, avoid traveling today. Let me tell you why I say blizzard conditions, because at the most intense points, you're going to see two to four inches of snow per hour. That is extremely intense snow – that's blinding snow. You do not want to be out in that if there's any way you can avoid it. So, please, everyone, heed this message. We're expecting somewhere between 16 inches and 22 inches of snow before this storm is over, that's what the National Weather Service is saying. And that kind of estimate can often be low, we might even see more. So, this is the real thing. We expect some moderate close coastal flooding, we're watching that situation carefully as well. But the bottom line here is, stay off the roads. It's not just me giving you advice, it is a specific order of the City government. We are in a local state of emergency. I signed an executive order last night, and this executive order makes clear we're requiring people to stay off the roads except for essential travel. This one to effect at 6:00 AM this morning. It will go to 6:00 AM tomorrow morning.

Now, look, again, we understand emergency vehicles will be out there, health-related vehicles will be out there – ambulances, etcetera – essential services, people delivering food, that kind of thing. But we do not want anything non-essential going on. We've got to take this really seriously. So, a state of emergency in place. We're going to be constantly getting the message out to people, what we're seeing from the storm. But I am fearful that even this tough situation we have now could even get worse. So, I need people to heed the call, stay home, stay off the streets, help the Sanitation Department do what they need to do.

Now, remember, the snow removal is the way we come back out of this storm and that it can't – our colleagues at the Sanitation Department, these incredible men and women who do this work, they can't clear the streets if there's cars in the way, just doesn't work. There's a traffic jam, the whole thing falls apart. So, this is why it's so important to stay off the streets. Alternate side parking will be canceled today through Saturday. So, wherever your car is, you can leave it. You

don't have to worry about that. A lot of disruption, obviously, in travel – a huge number of flights have been canceled. New York City Ferry - NYC Ferry, SeaStreak Ferry have been suspended today. Staten Island Ferry, reduced schedule, modified schedule. Subways and buses, right now, delays – still running, that obviously could change. As storms get worse, sometimes, the State decides to alter subway and bus activity. So, you know, that's something to keep an eye on. That could change in the course of this.

Now, let's talk about schools. Today, in-person learning was suspended. We have obviously all kids learning remotely. We're going to do the same tomorrow. So, there will not be in-person schools tomorrow. Remote education, of course, will go on for all kids tomorrow, Tuesday. But Wednesday, we'll be back strong. So, parents – so you can plan, I wanted to make sure you knew this as early as possible. No school today. No school tomorrow in person. We're back in person Wednesday, but every day, of course, we'll have remote learning. The programs that go with schools, the food programs for the community, those will be canceled when school is canceled. So, they will not be up today or tomorrow. Learning Bridges, the childcare program will not be up today or tomorrow. So, those both will be canceled, but back on Wednesday.

Open Restaurants – the outdoor restaurants, canceled tonight. We'll see about tomorrow night. There's a chance we might be able to get them back for tomorrow night, depending on how the plowing operations go and how the weather goes. So, we'll have an update on that later on today or tomorrow morning. And, of course, we're watching out for everyone's safety, so Code Blue is in effect. If you see a homeless person in distress, if it's urgent distress, call 9-1-1. If it's someone who needs help otherwise, call 3-1-1. We want to make sure we get people to help they need.

Our team has been working non-stop to prepare for the storm and address its challenges. And, of course, led by our Emergency Management Commissioner. And she and her team are doing a great job, covering a lot of basis to keep everyone safe. Now, I turn to Emergency Management Commissioner Deanne Criswell.

Commissioner Deanne Criswell, Office of Emergency Management: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. And good morning, everybody. Yeah, when we woke up this morning, there was already over six inches of snow on the ground in some parts of the city, and that's before the heavy bands had even started to move in. So, this is going to be an extremely dangerous and treacherous storm. We're starting to see the heavier bands of snow now and that's going to last until early evening. And, as the Mayor stated, we are expecting a total accumulation of 16 to 22 inches. But, again, that could still go up. I'm saying it's a minimum of 16 to 22 inches. So, please be prepared.

We're also starting to see an increase in the winds right now, especially along the coastal areas. We still expect sustained winds of 20 to 30 miles per hour with gusts as much as 40 to 50 miles per hour at times. And while the National Weather Service has not issued an official blizzard warning, as the Mayor stated, we are going to see blizzard-like conditions intermittently throughout the day today. And so, I am really encouraging everyone, please exercise extreme caution, even as you're out walking outside today for the things that you need to do. Please exercise extreme caution, the conditions are going to be very hazardous.

Because of these conditions, there are travel restrictions in place. And we did issue a wireless emergency alert this morning at 8:00 AM to remind all New Yorkers to please stay off the roads. As the Mayor also mentioned, we are expecting to see some moderate flooding during tonight's high tide and the National Weather Service has issued a coastal flood warning, beginning at 8:00 PM this evening through 5:00 AM tomorrow. The areas around Jamaica Bay to include Howard Beach, Hamilton Beach, Broad Channel in the Rockaways, could see two to three feet of inundation. This will be the most flooding we've seen from a winter storm since October of 2018, but it's close to what we see in a normal high tide event other parts of the year. And elsewhere across the city, the National Weather Service has issued some coastal flood advisories for vulnerable shorelines that are seen in the Bronx, Northern Queens, Southern Manhattan, parts of Brooklyn, and Staten Island.

Some of the impacts that we've seen so far, as the Mayor had mentioned, many flights have been canceled already today at JFK, LaGuardia, and Newark. The New York City Ferry and SeaStreak Ferry have been suspended for today, and Staten Island Ferry is running on a modified schedule. Subway and bus service is running, but I strongly encourage you to check schedules for any delays. They are starting to experience delays, and we'll see that probably increase throughout the day today, so please check the schedules. And other rail operations from LIRR, Metro North, and New Jersey Transit also they're suspending some services or modifying services, so please check schedules before you go out today.

We've seen minimal power outages right now and heat outages at this time, but Con Edison has brought in extra crews. So, they are prepared to respond throughout this event today. And our Emergency Operations Center is activated, will remain active throughout the evening through tomorrow and longer, if needed, to help coordinate the City's response. To close, I'd just like to thank everyone for staying off the roads today and also for taking care of your neighbors, looking out for your neighbors and loved ones as we go through this event today. Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Thank you so much, Deanne. And, you know, as we speak, the extraordinary men and women of the New York City Sanitation Department are out there clearing our streets, protecting us. We call them New York City's Strongest for a reason, and we really need to support their work. I want people to say thank you – whenever you see a Sanitation worker today, say thank you to them. But even more, what they want from you is clear the way so they can do what they do best. Here to give you an update on this intense mobilization to clear our streets, our Sanitation Commissioner Ed Grayson.

Commissioner Edward Grayson, Department of Sanitation: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. As the Mayor said, and as my colleague, Commissioner Criswell said, we are just at the start of this event. During the overnight, we were out there plowing all night long with a full complement of over 700 spreaders in 2,000 plowed vehicles. And we fought about a six-inch snowstorm before daybreak. And now, we have even more coming. The total snowfall amounts are great, as my colleagues have stated, and we are encouraging everyone to please stay off the road. This will be the only way for us to fully complete our mission. And our mission today is to try to keep all roadways passable for all New Yorkers.

Now, I want to make one thing very clear, a passable roadway is not blacktop. In a storm like this, it'll be quite some time before everyone can see blacktop on their street. But make no mistake, we are out there. We are going to come on a slow, methodical approach to hit every street in the city multiple times. I cannot stress that enough, it will take multiple passes during this prolonged period of active snowfall. So, we please ask everyone to heed the guidance and stay off the road.

As the Mayor said, ASP has been canceled today and for the rest of the week. We're going to need that. I would ask all residents once we get out of the active snow fall to think about that when they're out there shoveling. I want them to take extra time and be very safe and cautious while they're out shoveling, while they're out treating their own properties, and looking out for their neighbors, as my colleague said. But, more importantly, this is a heavy snowfall, let's make sure that you're being healthy, taking breaks, etcetera. There's a lot of snow move. We're going to move it off the roads. Be very careful when you're moving it away from your properties.

Speaking of moving the snow – after, hopefully, the cessation of snowfall, for tomorrow, New York City will be employing the emergency snow laborers that are pre-registered. So, that's 8:00 AM tomorrow. Please, if you've pre-registered – over a thousand people have registered to be an emergency snow laborer – please know that you're activated as of tomorrow and you can contact your work location, and we'll be making some contact to those who pre-registered. For anyone who's looking to register to be an emergency snow labor, you can do that at nyc.gov/snow, and you'll find out exactly how to do that with DSNY.

Since the same men and women that are out there plowing and salting today, fighting this storm for New York City, are the same men and women who pick up your garbage and recycling. Know now that we've suspended collection operations for today. More than likely we will have service delays that linger. So, definitely, if you can hold it in, please do that. But if you cannot because of space, put it out and know that we will be coming, but we will have service delays on refuse and recycling. And as soon as we have a better handle on just how much snowfall is out there and just how long it's going to take to fight it, then we'll get back on refuse and recycling as soon as possible.

So, outdoor dining, as the Mayor said is suspended today, and we're hoping to have it back as soon as possible tomorrow. It's a tough storm, we just need time to do our jobs. Again, the messages to encourage everyone, if you can, to stay off the road and let us get out there. And we're looking to keep everybody safe. And, as the Mayor said, the men and women of the Department of Sanitation, they are heroes, and they're out there right now fighting to keep this city passable, keep everybody safe. Thank you.

Mayor: Thank you very much, Commissioner. Look, everyone, we're hoping – you know, we see the main body of the storm end by early evening, and that's going to give us time, and give Sanitation time to get out there and clear things. But, again, we have been thrown curve balls before by mother nature. So, this storm – it ain't over till it's over. We're going to stay on it to make sure people are safe.

So, we'll keep giving you updates on the storm. But now let me give you an update on the thing that we are focused on every day, which is getting people vaccinated, protecting people from the coronavirus. And, obviously, the first thing to say is that the storm is disrupting our vaccination effort and we need to keep people safe, we don't want folks, especially seniors, going out in unsafe conditions to get vaccinated. We know we can reschedule appointments very quickly, because, of course, we have supply. We're going to use the supply we have. Our problem is lack of supply. So, we can take the supply we have and distributed very quickly in the days to come and make sure everyone gets to the appointments. But it's not safe out there today, so vaccinations are canceled today. They're also going to be canceled tomorrow. Based on what we are seeing right now, we believe that tomorrow getting around the city will be difficult. It'll be icy, it'll be treacherous. We do not want seniors, especially, out in those conditions. So, we're going to have vaccinations off for today and tomorrow – come back strong on Wednesday. We'll be able to catch up quickly, because, again, we have a vast amount of capacity. We don't have enough vaccine. So, we'll simply use the days later in the week crank up those schedules, get people rescheduled into those days.

Okay. Now, let's talk about the vaccine effort overall. We ended up finishing January very strong. Here's our final number for the vaccination effort from the beginning when we started until the last day of January – 815,193 vaccinations given in New York City. Again, our goal had been a million. We would easily have made that goal, if we had the supply. That number, 815,000, more than the total population of Seattle, Washington, to give you perspective. But the bottom line is we don't have the supply we need. This situation gets less and less acceptable by the day. We have the capacity to vaccinate half-a-million New Yorkers a week and we're nowhere near that right now, because we don't have supply. We've got to do something different. So, let me talk about the approach that I think we need to move towards immediately. And this fits with the vision I've been talking about these last few days since the State of the City on Thursday, and I'm going to keep talking about how we build a recovery for all of us.

A recovery for all of us, requires everyone to get vaccinated. A recovery for all of us means we speed the vaccination effort. By speeding the vaccination effort, we're protecting people and speeding up the reopening of our economy and our full recovery. We need the supply to do that. What's wrong with this picture? Well, the pharmaceutical industry, the biotech industry, all the pieces of the scientific community that could all be working together in a single project to manufacture the vaccines we already have, that's just not happening. I mean, think about it for a moment, there's two companies right now producing vaccine – two. And all of the other companies in America that have the ability to produce vaccine are not in the game. These companies need to step forward, offer their help to create and produce the Moderna vaccine, the Pfizer vaccine. There is no reason that we're living by traditional lines of corporate self-protection. There's no reason that profit is dominating this discussion instead of the needs of people. There's no reason that people are more concerned about patents than saving lives. I mean, whatever way you say, there's a reason for the status quo, when you think about for a moment, it does not make any sense. We need the federal government to step in and require these companies to all work in the common interest of the American people and immediately use their manufacturing capacity, their assembly lines to produce vaccine. You have some people out there saying, oh, you know, people aren't going to get vaccinated until the end of the year. That's totally unacceptable. The federal government needs to step forward, aggressively use the

Defense Production Act, but the companies themselves could be stepping forward and saying, we'll immediately volunteer to do this.

Let me give you a little example from history. In World War II – and this one points out how ridiculous the current situation is – in World War II or the entire war effort animated this country to stop Nazi-ism, stop fascism, save lives. Companies understood they had to step up, they had to do whatever it took. Aircraft engines were made by the company Pratt & Whitney. Ford motor company didn't make aircraft engines at all, but they stepped forward and said we'll take Pratt & Whitney's design and we'll create aircraft engines – doesn't matter if it's something we haven't done before, we'll figure out how to do it for the war effort. I'm saying the companies that right now do – they already know how to make vaccines. They already do pharmaceuticals. They already do life sciences. We need those. We've identified 27 companies nationally that could all be part of this effort. We need Pfizer and Moderna to connect to those companies, share their plans and everyone to produce with a common goal and we need our federal government to lead the way. When we get the vaccine, we here in New York City, like so many other parts of the country, we have the infrastructure, we have the people ready to go, we can give the vaccine with extraordinary speed, but it all comes down to supply, supply, supply. And the status quo when it comes to supply right now, the status quo in this country is broken. We need to do something different and we need to do something different right away.

Okay. Everyone, as we complete today's presentation, I'll go to our indicators in a moment, but let's take a moment to recognize it's a very special day. It is February 1st. So, it's the beginning of Black History Month. And this is a month for everyone to really think deeply about the history of this country. And not just the contributions of the most famous African Americans in our history, but the contributions of every-day people, the fact that there is no America as we know it without the African-American community. The fact that we've got to come to grips with our history, so suffused by racism and overcome it. I, in my State of the City on Thursday, announced that we're going to have a commission on racial justice and reconciliation that's going to look at structural racism in New York City, identify where it exists in every facet of society, and develop the solutions. Looking back on history is a chance to think about what we can learn and do better. So, this is a time, a powerful time of transformation. The Black Lives Matter movement has educated people, opened eyes. Folks all over the country are looking for change, they're looking to do something differently and leave behind the broken reality of the past. Obviously, an amazing year, because for the first time in our history a woman of color as our Vice President of the United States, Kamala Harris. So, this is going to be a year of tremendous progress locally and nationally. So, let's celebrate Black History Month. Let's remember, but let's be inspired to do a lot more right now.

All right let me go to the indicators for the day. Number one, daily number of people admitted to New York City hospitals for suspected COVID-19, that number is 180 patients. The confirmed positivity level 65.79 percent. And then the hospitalization rate 5.17 per 100,000. The new cases on a seven-day average, 4,509. And percentage of people testing positive citywide for COVID-19, today's seven-day rolling average percentage, 8.26 percent. We'll do a few words in Spanish on the storm and everything we're facing with it.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

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

Moderator: We'll now begin our Q-and-A as a reminder, we're joined today by Dr. Chokshi, by New York City Emergency Management Commissioner Deanne Criswell, by Sanitation Commissioner Ed Grayson, and by Senior Advisor Dr. Jay Varma. First question today, it goes to Andrew Siff from NBC.

Mayor: Andrew? Andrew Siff are you there? I really don't feel like he's there. Can you hear us?

Moderator: We might not have Andrew. Let's try Andrew a little bit later. We'll go to Juan Manuel from NY1.

Mayor: Juan Manuel? Okay. We are having technical difficulties. Who is out there?

Question: Can you hear me now, Mr. Mayor?

Mayor: Juan Manuel, how are you?

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: Mr. Mayor, about half an hour ago, Governor Cuomo, while driving into the city, told Juliet Papa of 1010 Wins that service for above ground subway lines could be canceled by noon today. Do you have any details on subway service today in the city?

Mayor: I'm waiting for a full update, but that's certainly consistent with what we've seen in the past, Juan Manuel. When the snow gets too intense, those over over-land subway lines, those elevated subway lines really meet tremendous problems. And the last thing we want to do is see all the trains stranded up there. So, a lot of times the MTA has decided just to focus on the underground service when the snow gets too intense. And that doesn't surprise me at all. Go ahead.

Question: Mr. Mayor, you've been asking the federal government to push all these pharmaceutical companies and biotech companies to produce a vaccine. And you're telling the media and you're telling television viewers, but have you had any direct conversation with President Biden or any high official in his administration? And have you demanded that they take this step?

Mayor: Yes, with key members of his administration and looking forward to deepening those conversations. This one to me is urgent, Juan Manuel. I understand, especially for a new administration, that's trying to deal with every problem simultaneously, that they have so much they're trying to deal with. They're trying to get the immediate supply moving under the current conditions. And I really respect their efforts. I think we have to acknowledge however that the status quo won't be able to work well enough under current conditions. It just can't, it's not President Biden's fault. It's what he was handed. We've got to break the mold here. We've got to

do something very, very different. So, I'm certainly making this argument to federal colleagues. And you know, I believe they're looking at this question, but I'll let them of course speak for themselves.

Moderator: Next. We're going to go back to Andrew Siff from NBC.

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

Mayor: There you go. You sound great, Andrew.

Question: I'm glad that whatever technical glitches were happening have been rectified. My question has to do with the vaccine postponements today and tomorrow. How exactly does that work? Do the same sites where people were supposed to get their vaccine, squeeze them in within a day or two. Does it move back a week? You know there's anxiety out there, particularly people who've been waiting for weeks for their appointment only to have it canceled for today or tomorrow.

Mayor: Of course, there's anxiety and look, anyone who was looking forward to getting vaccinated today or tomorrow, I really feel how frustrating it must be for all of you that this has gotten delayed. But everyone who has eyes to see. We're in the middle of a blizzard. It's not safe for people to be out in the blizzard. It's particularly not safe for seniors. We don't want someone going to try and get a vaccine to protect their health, and then end up, God forbid, in a horrible situation because of the snow. So, we're going to turn quickly to reschedule those appointments. Dr. Chokshi, you want to talk about how that's going to go?

Commissioner Dave Chokshi, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: Yes, sir. Thank you, Mr. Mayor. And thanks, Andrew, for the question. Yes, the way that this works is that wherever someone had their appointment, whether it was at a City site or another site, a hospital or a neighborhood clinic, they should get in touch with that place if they haven't already heard about their appointment getting rescheduled. In terms of the timeframe, it will vary a bit depending on the specific site. I do know that many sites still do have the ability to shift those appointments into later in the week. So, it will only be a postponement of a few days. And at the minority of sites, they may have to postpone it into next week. But the bottom line is many people have already been contacted about that rescheduling. And if someone has a question about their appointment for today or tomorrow, they should feel free to call the site where they have that appointment.

Mayor: Go ahead. Andrew

Question: Second question, if your Sanitation Commissioner is still on the call. With regard to preaching patience to people who wonder when they'll see a plow, the challenge with this storm is that you still have many more hours, maybe 12 hours more, maybe even more than that, of snow. So, in a borough like Queens with a lot of windy little streets where you have your strategy with holsters and small mini plows, what is your message to Queens residents as an example about when they should expect to see their street cleared, at least with the first pass?

Commissioner Grayson: Great question. They've already had a pass in Queens, guaranteed. We've been plowing since yesterday. So, the one thing for our residents in Queens – and just city-wide – to remember is that this is definitely an event where it will take multiple passes. And with the rate of snowfall, as the Mayor was saying before, as high as, in some cases at the height of it could be two inches an hour, we could have made a pass and in under an hour in the time it takes you to heat something up and have something to eat there could be two inches on the ground when you look out your window. So, just be patient with us, we're coming, and being a former Queens resident for a very long time, I know the challenges in Queens and the men and women out there are very dedicated and we're committed to do the right thing.

Moderator: The next is Marcia from WCBS. Mr. Mayor, thank you for taking this call. I have two questions. The first has to do with the people who are food insecure. I know you said that the grab-and-go meals at schools would not be continued, but I'm wondering whether the City is going to be making the food deliveries to homebound seniors and others who depend on those deliveries, or will these people have to use the food delivery services or just go without?

Mayor: No Marcia, we're not going to let anyone go without food. Absolutely we're going to make sure those deliveries get to people, come hell or high water. This is sometimes said from the beginning of the pandemic, we will not let any New Yorker go hungry. So, for folks who need those home deliveries, folks who are home-bound, don't have a choice, call 3-1-1. We're going to get you a delivery right away. The school program, that's going to be back up on Wednesday, for sure. And we can give people multiple days of food if they need going forward, but the home deliveries we're going to make sure that happens for sure. Go ahead, Marcia.

Question: My next question has to do with your vaccine equity program. I know that you released numbers yesterday. I guess the question we have is when will we see true vaccine equity? What's your program going forward?

Mayor: Marcia, we got a lot of work to do because it's a combination of, we need a hell of a lot more supply and we need to work on the real concerns about trust and hesitancy. This is going to take work. If we get a bigger supply, I think that's the single biggest difference maker, because what that means is in communities all over the city, people start to know more and more people in their life who have gotten vaccinated. That's going to be the biggest impact, that word of mouth. The spread of the news word of mouth is what's going to convince people to get vaccinated. My neighbor got vaccinated, they said it was okay. My aunt got vaccinated, she said it was okay. You know, someone I worship in church with got vaccinated, they said it was okay. That's what we need. We can't do that without a hell of a lot more supply. But in the meantime, what we're going to do is work to ensure that the supply is getting to the grassroots, getting to the, you know, the sites that people really know in their community, continuing to do a lot of communication with people in lots of different languages. We're going to keep working at it and I know we'll get there, but you know what? We'll always have one hand behind our back, tied behind our back, if we don't get the supply, that's the bottom line.

Moderator: The next is Henry from Bloomberg.

Question: Hello, Mr. Mayor. How are you doing? Hanging in there?

Mayor: It's a winter wonderland, Henry, how you doing?

[Laughter]

Question: I'm doing well. I know you're going to be very disappointed about probably canceling Groundhog Day tomorrow. You're probably not going to be able to make that –

Mayor: I am crushed, Henry. I am like – I have to take it off my schedule. I'm very upset about it.

Question: All right. I also have to commend the Sanitation Department. They've plowed my son's street in Long Island City, Queens twice already.

Mayor: There you go. Congratulations, Ed.

Question: The demography of the vaccinations. If I'm not mistaken, you said that there was about a 40 percent rate of people not volunteering their ethnic or demographic identification. In light of that, how confident can you be in the data that you presented yesterday?

Mayor: Look, two points, Henry, and then I'll ask Dr. Chokshi to weigh in. I feel like when you've got as many people as we do have the data for it, that's a lot of people that's a really big sample size. So, I think it tells us a lot and it certainly tells us there's a real disparity problem we have to address, but we got to get other people to provide that data more consistently. And I don't think it's so much just the individual not offering it. I think the providers need to do more to let people know how important it is to provide that information. So, Dr. Chokshi, why don't you talk about the HAN and remind me what the acronym stands for again, and the alert you put out and what it tells providers to do.

Commissioner Chokshi: Yes, sir. Thank you. And first I just wanted to reiterate the most important point, which is the one that you made which is that we have enough data to tell us that we need to be redoubling our efforts around addressing equity and particularly racial equity. So, we have the information that we need to take action today. We don't need to wait any longer to commit and recommit ourselves to that urgent imperative. And with that said, yes, there are some limitations to the data, particularly the percentage of people who are either declining to provide their race or ethnicity or for whom a provider isn't capturing that, so that we can see it in the system.

For the second part of that we are putting out a HAN, which is a health alert notice. This is the way that we communicate with clinicians around New York City making very explicit what our obligations are with respect to reporting on race and ethnicity as part of our immunization efforts. We're also going to be working with those same clinicians about how to have those conversations with patients so that we capture more of that data as well. We do know from other states and cities around the country that are starting to collect this data, in most other places it's upward of 50 percent of the data points that are unknown race or ethnicity. In New York City,

it's 40 percent but we have to get that number even lower so that we can have the best picture of what's happened.

Mayor: Thank you. Go ahead, Henry.

Question: Okay, thanks. On the restaurants reopening, I know this is a State decision but is there –

Mayor: You're saying the – just Henry, to clarify, not the outdoor dining and whether it's on or off, you're saying indoor dining?

Question: I'm sorry. Indoor dining. Did I say outdoor dining? Indoor dining. Is there anything that the board of health – I mean, if you have a true disagreement with the Governor on this, the city board of health has enormous plenary powers in the city. Are you just – do you just want to avoid a conflict with the State over this issue or is your power really limited by the State's you know control over this issue?

Mayor: Yeah, look, Henry, at this point because of the actions of the Legislature this is a decision the State makes, obviously we have to start having a conversation in New York State about when we're going to revert back to normal governance and let cities and towns and counties make decisions for themselves. But right now, this is a decision the State makes. We're going to be watching very carefully. We're really concerned about the variant – the new variants, I should say, plural – and what that could mean. And we're going to enforce the standards with a lot of energy because, really important that with indoor dining coming back, it be done safely and carefully. And the Department of Health will lead the way. So, our focus will be on the piece that we do control, which is the enforcement, getting that right. And we're certainly going to be really watching carefully as we, you know, watch to see what's happening with the virus in general, as we – there's a lot of unknown still out there. And we'll talk about what we're seeing, and we'll act on it accordingly.

Moderator: The next is Shant from the Daily News.

Question: Good morning, everyone. Hope everyone is staying warm. Had another vaccination question. Can you say what the City had been expecting in terms of its next shipment of doses for the week, and is this storm going to delay that?

Mayor: I'll turn to Dr. Chokshi on the numbers, Shant. Clearly, I can say from the beginning, the numbers are extremely insufficient. We got a little bit of a boost from the announcement from President Biden, which we really appreciate, but they're still way off what we need. And so far, you know, with the storm situation, we're going to be concerned about any disruption, but that should be a very temporary disruption. And again, because we have so little supply, we will be catching up quickly. We have much more capacity than we have supply for. So, even if there's a little delay, it won't be long because we'll just fill in all the spaces we could be using. Dr. Chokshi, do you want to talk about specific numbers and if you have any specific reports on delays.

Commissioner Chokshi: Yes, sir. Thank you. We do not have any specific reports on delays as yet. We are actively monitoring that. We're in communication with both the federal government, as well as the manufacturers and the shipping companies to be alerted of any delays if they do occur over today and tomorrow. But thus far, our conversations indicate that they're planning to proceed with deliveries as they had been scheduled. With respect to the numbers, we're expecting about 150,000 first doses to be delivered across all New York City sites for this week. Most of those deliveries will occur today, tomorrow, and Wednesday.

Mayor: Go ahead, Shant.

Question: Yeah. Thanks for that. Other than that, I wanted to ask about a New York Times report about a number of high-level State Health Department officials resigning apparently amid a major rift with the Governor. I guess, for one thing, you've had any number of clashes with the Governor during the course of the pandemic. Can you sympathize with those State Health officials who have resigned? And also, with this level of dysfunction with the State Health Department, is that going to affect the handling of the pandemic in the city?

Mayor: Well, I'm concerned obviously about that. Look, here's the bottom line Shant. Every leader in America should be listening to their health officials. It doesn't matter if you're a governor, a mayor, or president of the United States, every leader in America should be constantly consulting their health officials, weighing their analysis and their suggestions. The worst example we had during this pandemic, the what not to do example, is Donald Trump ignoring Dr. Fauci and ignoring all of the other key medical leaders and health leaders. Literally not talking to them or criticizing them publicly. That led to some of the worst mistakes and lives were lost. So, you have to, you have to encourage your health leaders to offer their views. I talk to my health leadership every day. We talk through a variety of issues every day. That's the way to do things if you're going to save lives. Go ahead.

Moderator: The next is Rich Lamb from WCBS 880.

Question: Well then hi there during the storm, Mr. Mayor and everybody on the call. So, I wonder whether Commissioner Grayson can give us any from behind the wheel experience from driving a plow and say what a storm like this really takes it out of you, doesn't it? I mean, it's ongoing and you got another 12 hours of this. Can the people handle it?

Commissioner Grayson: Yes. This is the time when the men and women of the department truly show their professionalism. We train for this. But I can tell you from personal experience, it's treacherous driving. You have to go very slowly. You have to be very mindful because of the plow sitting on the front of the truck. Look, New York City is a tough place to drive a garbage truck any day. You add some snow, you add some poor visibility, and it's now time for us to go very slowly, very controlled rate of speed, get our jobs done, go through meticulously, and they'll be okay. But they've trained for this. And they're very dedicated.

Mayor: Amen. And again Rich, we – I've seen the heroic work of the men and women of Sanitation. I've been there in the garages when folks are, you know, going out again after 12 hours and going out for more. It's unbelievable the commitment that they have. So again, I'm

going to keep saying, if people respect that and appreciate that, get out of their way. You know, get your cars parked and get out of the way and let them do what they do best. Go ahead. Rich.

Question: Yeah. Just to follow up, just wondering how many swipes do you think on an average street, if there is an average street or at least the main streets will be getting in this storm? It seems like it's – I know multiple, was the word that was used, but you know, what is it 20 or I don't know any, any idea?

Commissioner Grayson: This will be hard to tell – hard to say only because of we have no idea yet at the cessation of snowfall. We're going to continue to go until we get it blacktop. That's what we're going to do. And we're going to keep coming back because we also are expecting cold temperatures for at least some duration of period after the cessation of snowfall. So, then we'll go through the ebbs and flows as all New York City residents know of the melting and refreeze. We come back and retreat again. So, I can't give you more than multiple passes because I just don't know how many yet.

Mayor: Thank you. Go ahead.

Moderator: We have time for two more for today. The next is Kristen from the Staten Island Advance.

Question: Good morning Mr. Mayor. How are you?

Mayor: Good, Kristen, how are you doing?

Question: Good, good. Hanging in there.

Mayor: What are you seeing? Are you on Staten Island right now?

Question: I am. I am.

Mayor: What do you see?

Question: I'm seeing a lot of cold white stuff.

Mayor: Okay. Thank you for that very specific report.

Question: Yeah, I do my best. But I wanted to talk to you about you know, weather contingency plans? I mean, excluding days like today, when there's just absolutely no way that people can get over to vaccination sites, you know, what if any plan does the City have for sites, you know, specifically like the Gotham Vanderbilt clinic where people are, you know, being vaccinated outside in a tent you know, on days like Friday when it was just frigid?

Mayor: Go ahead I'm sorry.

Question: I was just going to say is there any plan to, you know, on days like that to bring people indoors?

Mayor: Yeah, it's a really good question. And obviously Kristin first and foremost, you know, I'm to keep reminding us in the spirit of hope that spring is around the corner. So, this kind of weather we're only dealing with for hopefully a few more weeks. But it's a really good question. And this is made tougher by the fact that we need to distance people. We would probably in the past in a lot of situations had a much easier time bringing people indoors. But we don't want to crowd a lot of people, especially indoors. So, it's a tough situation. I do think we have to keep trying to figure out how to make people as comfortable as possible and move lines as quickly as possible. Dr. Chokshi, you – I know that site is a Health + Hospitals site, but could you speak about the bigger philosophy that you're using and Dr. Katz and all your colleagues to keep lines moving, to keep people as warm as you can, bring them in when you can? What can you tell us?

Commissioner Chokshi: Yes, certainly. And I can tell you actually more specifically about my experience in Staten Island on Saturday. I was at one of our Health Department sites there with the vaccination effort. And just as you pointed out in your question, it was a very cold day. It was 16 degrees outside. And so, we made every effort, first to keep the line as short as possible. Our wait times were less than five minutes you know, for people who were queuing up. And we moved the line entirely indoors. You know, that is a site at Port Richmond High School where we had sufficient space to be able to create a line and move it indoors so that people could be more comfortable. So, I mean, every opportunity where we have to do that of course we will make it happen. In circumstances where lines get a little bit longer we will then prioritize, you know, our older New Yorkers, people who have limited mobility, rushing them to the front of the line, making sure they have a place to sit if they do have to wait for a few more minutes. So, all of those plans are in place. We're also making sure that the flow through the sites is maximized because that's what helps us keep the lines short in the first place. And doing things to ensure that we have indoor staging areas that allow us to continue with that distancing. We can follow up with some more specifics about the Vanderbilt site, but that's our general approach.

Mayor: Go ahead, Kristen.

Question: Great. And, you know, I just do want to add that we have heard that the lines overall have been shorter, you know. I haven't really been hearing about the two, three hour waits. So, you know, that is good, but 15 minutes and 16 degrees is still pretty cold. But now just a little bit more specific about the actual types of vaccines. The City Health Department told me the other day that all of the City vaccination hubs have the ability to store and distribute both the Pfizer and the Moderna vaccines. But all of the sites on the vaccine tracker show that the Moderna vaccine is specifically the one that is being administered. What City sites are using the Pfizer vaccine and you know, why isn't it being used more widely?

Mayor: Dr. Chokshi?

Commissioner Chokshi: Thank you for the question. So, I would clarify it's for all City sites when we use that a bigger set of sites. That includes Health + Hospitals, as well as the Health Department sites, that includes both Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. Generally, it's at Health +

Hospitals sites where, because there's a close affiliation with the hospital that they're more readily able to use the Pfizer vaccine which requires that ultra-cold storage. For the Health Department sites we're using primarily Moderna vaccine at this point. And if other vaccines get approved in the future, like the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, we would be able to administer that through Health Department sites as well. So, for your question, I would say we are using both vaccines at City sites. But, generally, it's split in that way to be able to ensure that the vaccine is safely stored and administered.

Mayor: Thank you. Go ahead.

Moderator: Last question today goes to Nolan from the Post.

Question: Hey everybody, how are you doing?

Mayor: Good Nolan. Are you enjoying the winter wonderland?

Question: I am. Yeah, there are near white out conditions here in Crown Heights. I can't see across the street anymore, so that's exciting for me and the people tasked with clearing the walk to my building, which is thankfully not me. If we could just go back and talk a little bit about the vaccine real fast. I'm curious because we have gotten sort of two sets of breakdowns here. But we really don't have any base demographic information to compare it against. Does the City have an idea as to what the demographic makeup of the city is above 65? And does it have an idea as to what the demographic breakdown is for the first responders and the hospital workers who qualify under 1a and 1b?

Mayor: Yeah. And what we're going to do – good questions Nolan. We're going to keep providing more information and more breakouts and more pieces of the population. As I said, I also want to start getting things down to the ZIP code level and to the vaccination site level. So this, it all takes time to get it right. And we also would like more of the providers to give us accurate information. But the more we can break it out the better. But your first point is a really important one. There is a demographic difference by age. I can tell you this much. So the city as a whole, again this is broad data and obviously things evolve even month to month. But here's the basics. The city as a whole 32 percent white, 29 percent Hispanic, 24 percent Black, 14 percent Asian. You saw the difference in the vaccination data compared to that baseline data. But to your point about age, there is some difference in age. When you do the category 18 to 64 years old and then separate categories, 65 years and up. 18 to 64 in this city is 31 percent white, 28, almost 29 percent Latino, 21 percent Black 15 percent Asian. When you do 65 and up, it's actually meaningfully different. 65 and up is 41 percent white, 22 percent Latino, 21 percent Black, 14 percent Asian. So, you do see some meaningful differences there for sure. But what we're going to do is keep trying to get more and better data, keep putting it out, going down to a more local level. We'll get the data out, obviously on the folks who serve us – first responders, teachers, health care workers. That data set is a different reality than the general population though. I want to be very clear about that. And that's a group of folks in specific professions, does not set up the same as the population overall for a variety of reasons. But we'll get you information on that for sure. Go ahead Nolan.

Question: And secondly, just to follow on the questions about vaccines and who is getting the vaccines. There are more Anglo people who live outside of New York City who have gotten a vaccine here in the city, then people who are Black and live in the five boroughs. Is there something preventing the City from imposing residency restrictions on suburban New Yorkers coming into the city to get their shots on the private health systems?

Mayor: It's a good question for sure. Yeah, there is and I want to talk about that for a moment, because it's important. But first let me say this – what we talked about yesterday, and I spoke with Dr. Chokshi and all of our colleagues in detail about this in the last few days, as we got ready for yesterday's announcement. We still based on the information we have, which we need, we need to perfect that information. But based on what we have, vast majority of the folks who got vaccinated and live outside the five boroughs are people who serve New York City. They are health care workers, teachers, school staff, police, officers, EMTs, paramedics, firefighters. We want all those people vaccinated. If that demographic reality looked different than New York City, we understand why, but most importantly, we wanted those people vaccinated. They serve all of us. They protect all of us. We need them vaccinated. But there's a different question, which I think you're getting at, which is folks who just individuals, who are 65 and older, and are looking to get vaccinated who come from outside the city and go to our hospitals for example, and get a vaccination. This is where we need to work with the State on the solution. I want to see everyone vaccinated in New York City, in the tri-state area. We want everyone vaccinated and we care for everyone. Obviously, you know, every single human being who's feeling vulnerable right now, every senior in particular, we need them to get vaccinated. We want them to get vaccinated. Their families are anxious for them. We want everyone to get served. But we know that vaccine has been distributed not just to the suburbs in New York State, but to Connecticut, to New Jersey. Obviously, you know, each of our suburban areas has gotten their own allotment and we really want to make sure that people who live in the suburbs to the maximum extent possible, live in other states to the maximum extent possible, get their vaccines where they live. So we can protect what we need to do for people here, particularly the most vulnerable people in the neighborhoods we were talking about yesterday. Who are in the places where the most people have died proportionally. I'm going to be just blunt about that, the most danger exists. So that's something we can only do with the State. But as we look at that situation we've got to think through the ramifications. And you know, right now the best information I have Nolan, is for example, about 29,000 of the doses were given to folks who live in New Jersey and Connecticut. Now, again, some of those folks are public servants who serve us, is absolutely a fair and smart priority. But some of those I'm sure are just individuals who came in because they had an opportunity to get a dose. We respect them. We care for them, but we want to see folks get their doses where they live to the maximum extent possible for the good of all of us.

Okay everybody, as we conclude today look, we got a lot we're facing, but we're going to get through it. We always do. We are going to get through it together. New Yorkers stand up for each other, protect each other. Look out today, please look out for your neighbors. Look out for people in your family who might need a little help. Please folks who are trying to shovel snow, it's going to be incessant. You heard Commissioner Grayson. This is going to be at some point – a great example of, you know, between the time you go to make a sandwich and eat the sandwich and look outside again, the snow will already piled up. So please be careful snow shoveling. If you're someone with any kind of health reality that's a challenge, or if you're older, take it slow.

See if someone else can help you. We want people to be safe today and I can safely say tomorrow is going to be a better day. Thank you, everybody.

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