

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 4, 2020, 2:45 PM

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

**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO CALLS INTO NY1 TO DISCUSS THE CITY'S
RESPONSE TO TROPICAL STORM ISAIAS**

Kristen Shaughnessy: Mayor de Blasio is now joining us by phone. He has been urging people to stay inside. This city is experiencing a high 9-1-1 call volume. He joins us now to talk about that. I want to thank you for joining us, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Bill de Blasio: You're very welcome. And, yeah, your colleague got it right. The winds are still very serious and we need people to stay inside to the maximum extent possible. That means don't walk, don't drive. If you can stay home for the next couple of hours until around five o'clock, I want to urge all New Yorkers, just play it safe, stay home or stay inside if you can.

Shaughnessy: I know you were talking yesterday – you were down at the South Street Seaport talking about the barriers that were put up. Now we saw these wind gusts as high as 78 miles an hour. We've got the elevated subway lines shut down and the city's 9-1-1 system really being challenged by this volume of calls. Was the City prepared enough for this storm?

Mayor: Look, what we see now is that the storm has been much more of a wind event than flooding so far, thank God. The barriers that were put in place, based on the projections we had, you know, that was where we needed them but thank God we did not see a big problem today at least with the flooding. It's really the wind – and with the wind, an important point is to tell people to be ready for it and to stay in. Certainly, everyone in the media was warning people. We were warning, at City Hall, New Yorkers to stay in. So, I think that's the name of the game. And New Yorkers are generally really good at heeding these warnings and getting ready. But I want people to realize, even though, you're right, 78 miles per hour – extraordinary. It's come down from there but it's still dangerous.

Shaughnessy: And we have the coastal flooding concerns tonight. Even after that wind dies down, there's still that concern particularly after dark, as you know, from Hurricane Sandy.

Mayor: Well, always, and that's something we take very seriously. We're going to be watching situations all over the city, having first responders ready. I think the important thing is for people to be vigilant. If you're in an area that's prone to flooding, obviously, we've got to be really careful about that. But what's important now is that people realize there's particular danger up until five o'clock. Look, we've already very tragically lost a New Yorker in Queens, dead on arrival when a tree branch hit them in their car. We've got another person in critical condition in Brooklyn. This is serious stuff and I just want everyone to take it seriously, don't take any chances in this kind of weather.

Shaughnessy: Yeah, let's hope people do heed the warning. Sad to hear that. Before you go – I know you have a lot to get to but I have to ask you about the timing of today's announcement about Dr. Barbot's resignation as Health Commissioner. It came just as the storm started to bear down on the city. Couldn't it have waited another day? This is something that obviously reporters and people are very interested in. It felt like a diversion attempt.

Mayor: No, not in the least. This is something that just – it was based on the Commissioner sending me a resignation letter. It was very important to immediately let people know where we were going, that we were going to have great leadership in the Department of Health with our new Commissioner, Dr. Dave Chokshi. And I think New Yorkers need to know that the City government is prepared in every way to protect our health and safety. And so, we're doing that today with this storm and I'm quite certain that Commissioner Chokshi will be doing that. He's really contributed a lot already to our response to the coronavirus and he's going to help us get through the much bigger crisis we face over these next few months.

Shaughnessy: And before we let you go here – I appreciate you discussing that – back to the storm for a moment. The 9-1-1 system, it has really been challenged by these calls. Any suggestions for New Yorkers who have an emergency situation who are trying to get through?

Mayor: Look, the important thing is stick with it, the call volume spiked up for a period of time right around, as you said, you had those extraordinarily high winds. We had a really high call volume. That's coming down some now. We're adding on all these capacity in these situations. So, even if you get a delay in your call being answered, stick with it. If it's something you need help on, stick with it and you will get help.

Shaughnessy: Mr. Mayor, we want to thank you. Five or six o'clock is when John Davitt said we can feel the storm ease a bit. Have a couple hours to go but we wish you the best of luck.

Mayor: Thank you so much. Take care.

###