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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Well, good morning everybody. What do we all think about every day? We all think about our families, people we love, keeping them safe, keeping them healthy. We all think about our own lives dealing with this new reality, wishing it was over. We all think about breaking free, and what it would feel like to start to go back to normal. That's what every single one of us has running through our mind all day long. That's what so many conversations are about, so many questions are about. We want to get back to our lives. We want to be able to feel the things that we felt were really part of our everyday lives. Maybe we took them for granted a little bit. Maybe we didn't recognize how wonderful they were, and when we get back to normal that day, not too far from now, I hope, and I pray we're all going to appreciate the little things a whole lot more. But right now, the question is how do we get there, and I don't think people fall into the trap of thinking it's going to be easy. I think New Yorkers are tough. New Yorkers are resilient. New Yorkers are streetwise. We do not underestimate our enemy. We understand this'll be a tough fight. And I do speak about this virus as an enemy, because I think it's important to think about the fact that it's a fight that we all are waging. It's a fight that we all have to participate in. And again, New Yorkers have been outstanding at taking up this fight, doing everything we can possibly do to beat back this disease. But I want to be very clear, this virus does not defeat itself. We have to defeat it. We have to keep doing the hard work. And I think it's important when you think about that, that you not see yourselves as sort of witnesses to history, if you will, or just somehow this whole thing catching you up in it. I want you to think of yourselves as people have power, remarkable power to fight back, to be able to bend not only the curve of this disease, but the future to create a different reality.

Everything you do, and this is sort of clear I think maybe then in almost any situation we've lived through, every single thing every one of us does has an impact. If you add it up everything you do each minute, each hour, each day, and then you add it up with 8.6 million other people, it becomes something much, much greater obviously. But it takes on a power every time someone practices social distancing every time, even though they don't want to go back inside, they still go back inside. Every time people are smart about what they're doing it adds up. Every time you use a hand sanitizer even, you're depriving the disease of yet another avenue, and you do that over and over, 8.6 million people do that over and over each day, millions and millions of times combined, and you actually are fighting back. So, we see in the three indicators that we are displaying every day, we see evidence, real hard evidence that what you've done has had a tremendous impact, and that should be energizing and encouraging to every one of you that you're participating in something absolutely necessary. And I'll tell you something, people, people might have felt defeated, people might have felt overwhelmed, instead New Yorkers just stood on their own two feet and fought back. And I think it's going to be looked at as an incredibly noble moment in the history of the city. And we will come back and we're going to come back with all the energy, all the strength, all the vibrancy that New York City has been

known for, for generation upon generation. But the history will show it's because of what you did that we were able to come back.

So, these numbers we've gone over every day. They tell us a lot. And again, the goal here was to give you the power of seeing the same exact measures, and then watch how they vary day by day. So, you're part of this, all of us together. There's no mystery, there's no, you know, secret laboratory somewhere where the numbers are being crunched. It's all out in the open to show you what's happening. And then we all judge together how we're doing. Now, I don't know what's happening in each and every state, each and every city. I don't pretend to understand the details of what they're all going through, but I do know a lot of states are rushing to reopen. I hope and pray they have very clear indicators that back up that decision. I hope and pray they're sharing them openly and transparently with the people of those states. Because if the facts don't merit that fast reopening, and if the facts are not out in the open, then there's a real danger that something else is being made a priority over what should matter most, which is saving human lives, protecting all of our health, making sure that we do this the right way so that when we reopen, we can do it once and for all, and do it for good, not start to reopen and see a resurgence of the disease and then have to shut right back down again or even get more restrictive. So, my fear is that there are people governed more by politics or image or their concern about the economy than they're concerned about the health and welfare of their people.

Now, we're trying to take not only cautious, careful approach, but an approach that shows you exactly what is governing the decisions we're making, and these indicators speak volumes. They help you understand why we're doing what we're doing. They show you obviously some progress. They also give you a real clear caution about how much fight we still have to wage. And I think, look, my view is every one of you would rather have the blunt truth, would rather get the straight story of what it's going to take rather than be given a lot of platitudes and then find out they're false. So, we are being real clear. And again, I talked about the progress, but I'm also going to talk about the underlying challenge. The challenge is, and I say this very sadly, that the coronavirus is alive and well and living in New York City. It's quite clear from the numbers, it has not been beaten yet.

So, the facts just yesterday – 2,519 new cases identified in New York City yesterday; 320 deaths yesterday in New York City. These are really painful facts. These are all indicators of people's lives, families that are going through so much. In recent weeks, we hear numbers like this and we say, look, this is better than where we were a few weeks ago, that's something that shows we're moving the right direction. That's true. But just think about what they mean. These facts, what they mean in and of themselves. And if it was any other time, if it was three months ago or three years ago, and I said to you, we had 320 deaths and 2,500 new cases, we would have been all deeply, deeply troubled. So, we cannot lose the forest for the trees here. Yes, there's been real important progress, and we can and will make more, but we're still very much in this fight. We cannot forget what we're up against and the power of this disease, but if we find our own power, if we act on our own power, I'm also convinced we will prevail.

So, let's talk about these indicators and what they mean not only day by day, but what they tell us over the last few weeks that we've been tracking and publishing this information. So, on the indicator number one, the daily number of people admitted to hospitals for suspected COVID 19 cases. Okay, this indicator is simple. It tells us how many more patients our hospitals need to care for related to COVID 19. And when we started this, showing you these particular indicators,

it was right after the very, very worst moments. So, you go back to March 31st, 850 new admissions per day for COVID, astounding number. By April 11th when we started showing you these numbers, down to 383, so honestly huge improvement. And now, in the last 10, 11 days down to 227. So, 227 admitted for suspected COVID cases, that's this morning's report. Much, much better. But it's still 227 new cases in one day. That means we are not there yet. I'm stating the obvious, but I want to just hammer home the point. We're not there yet, and we need to be sober about it, and we still have a substantial distance to cover.

Now indicator number two. Okay. The daily number of people in ICU's across all of our public hospitals for suspected COVID 19. What does it tell us? Again, shows us how this fight is raging, and for the folks in those ICU's, they are literally fighting for their lives right now, and it's putting a huge strain of course on our hospital system. And so much of what we have done over the last two months has been to protect your lives by protecting your hospitals, and your healthcare workers. We're in a better place again, but we still see way too many people in those ICU's. So again, we've seen over time some progress, but in this one, we've got to understand that this is a telling report because it shows, this one has not moved as much and that's cautionary. So, the day we launched indicators, we were already at a really troubling point for our public hospitals. They were more than double their normal ICU capacity, and that looked like it was about to continue to go up in those first few weeks of April. April 11th, 835 patients in our ICU's and our public hospitals. April 14th, it went up to 887. Now it's started to come down, but it's 796 in today's report. So again, 796 compared to 835 10,11,12 days ago. That's not the movement we need. Progress – we see the capacity for progress, but we don't see the movement we need. So, we have to keep working to get it right.

Look, put it all in perspective. Think about all the people we've lost already. Think about how much the hospitals had to do just to hold on. All those ICU beds they added. All the personnel they brought in. All the doctors and nurses and healthcare workers, the extraordinary long hours they fought through. The fact that we had to bring in the military, military medical personnel. We had to hire people from all over the country as well to come in, just to hold the line. And so, we need to understand, just keeping where we are now and making even slow and steady progress that's still putting a huge strain on those hospitals and those health care workers. God forbid there was a resurgence – and this is another reason for caution, if there was a resurgence think about the heroes, think about the people were celebrating every day, every night. Think about when 7:00 PM when we applaud them, think about what a resurgence would do to them and how much pressure, how much stress, how much strain it would put on them if this disease came back. If that were to happen, once again, there'd be more and more people in the hospitals, we go back to having to create new hospitals, new beds. We don't ever want to go there again. Indicator number three, percentage of people testing positive for COVID-19. So, this – obviously, it gives us some sense of how widespread this is in the city. And we've said from the very beginning, you know, I still say that the saddest part of this whole very painful reality is what could have been. If on the first day that I called for testing for New York City from the federal government, January 24th if on that day the federal government had acted for New York City, for New York State, for cities and States all over the country and gotten us the testing in the beginning of February, this entire scenario would have been different. We would have seen so much less pain and so now we have still so many new positive cases, but we don't know even the beginning of it because we can't test anywhere near the level that we need to. What it does tell us is still of course there's a lot of new positive cases, 2,519 yesterday. The more testing we get, the more truth we will find, the more testing we get, the more we can fight back and contain this

disease, all roads lead to testing. Literally, the more you have, the more you can trace each person's reality and get them the help they need, figure out who needs to be isolated. All those things become possible the more testing you have.

So, even with the limitations, we still have information that's valuable here. So, when we launched indicators, April 11th, 58 percent of those being tested, we're testing positive for the citywide measure. For the public health lab, it was 78 percent, where we are now much better – 32 percent citywide, 57 percent for the public health lab, but still a long way to go. That's definite improvement, but we needed to keep going down more. So, what can we say? We're decelerating, you're seeing all these charts, they're making very clear the – sometimes charts and graphs and those things don't tell you much, these are telling us something. Yes, we're decelerating, that's a very good thing. But we need to finish the job. We need to go farther because if it were to level off, that's not acceptable. You know, we've heard this word plateau. Plateau is not a good word. Plateaus a dirty word where I come from. This is – in this case, plateau means too many people suffering on a consistent basis and we can't have that. We need the deceleration to go down further so we can link it up, so we can hand off, we need to go through the efforts we're going through now. Everything you're doing that's helping make you safe and healthy, everyone else safe and healthy we have to hand off that effort to the testing and tracing we talked about yesterday because all of what you're doing alone gets us a long way, but we have to be able to test and trace to finish the job. We've got to be able to suppress this disease and contain this disease. So, putting the pieces together, the indicators tell us a lot. We're going to keep showing them to you every day, we're going to keep analyzing them every day, they tell us a lot. They tell us there's progress and they tell us there's still real work to be done. They tell us, don't give an inch here, do not relax, do not let this disease back in the door, they tell us about the power of social distancing and shelter in place. They tell us that it has been smart to postpone those big events to only have essential workers out and keep non-essential businesses close. They certainly tell us still and it's sad, but we got to keep our schools close for the rest of the school year. They tell us we have to be smart and careful and then it makes abundantly clear that to get to the pathway to normal, we need the firepower of testing and tracing.

That handoff must happen and we have to have a large-scale testing effort to do it much more than what we have available today in New York City. But we're going to keep fighting because we're finally getting more test kits. We're going to create our own in the coming days here in the City and we're going to keep expanding every effort to get the test kits in, to get the lab capacity, because this is how we get to the next level. And I described to you yesterday a huge initiative in May, unlike anything we've seen in this city ever before, thousands and thousands of people will be a part of it. Testing people, tracing their contacts, isolating everyone needs isolating, supporting them. That is the way forward, it will take a huge effort, but that's how we actually beat this disease and that's when we actually get to relax these restraints and start back to normal. So, I want to just take that from where I started to this point, we all want to get back to normal, we all want to breathe free. We all have to fight together to get to that point it's a very painful struggle but a noble struggle. We can do it and I hope you see the re-progress in the numbers and this idea of the handoff to the strategies of suppression and containment handoff to the testing and tracing. That's how we get to the day where we can actually ease these restrictions and start to have a normal life again. So, I'm going to go over the daily numbers one more time since we do it every single day, just show you the day to day comparison. So again, on the three indicators, daily number of people admitted to hospitals down again, there's a couple of day lag here. So, down April 20th, 252; April 21st, 227 – real progress. Daily number of people in

ICU's, down, April 20th, 821; April 21st, 796 – real progress. Percentage of people citywide testing positive down just by a little, but we still like anything that's moving in the right direction from 33 percent to 32 percent. The only place where we didn't have progress in this daily report is in the public health lab; their test went up, but slightly from 54 percent to 57 percent. So, this is a good day, it's not the perfect day we're looking for where everything moves together in the same direction, but it's a good day and we just have to keep doing what we're doing.

Okay, just a couple more things for your today. So, what a very painful reality in one way and a very emotional reality in another way and a very maybe clarifying reality is the way to think of it at the same time that this horrible, tough journey we've all had to go on coincided with such profoundly important holidays of the major faiths of this City. We all wish that the celebrations of Easter and Passover could have been so different. And yet I talked about at the time, I think a lot of people talked about it, that the power and the meaning of those holidays really came through in some ways even more vividly because of what we were all suffering together. And a reminder of the endurance of our ancestors in each faith and reminder of the messages and the values, and the – meaning of each faith when it came to strength and community and came to belief and charity and being there for each other. And now we find ourselves once again about to celebrate a profoundly important holiday of one of our major faiths. So, tonight marks the start of Ramadan and there's hundreds of thousands of Muslim New Yorkers who for this moment, this is the most important time of the year. And I want to say to all of our Muslim brothers and sisters, you've been going through so much as we all have and not able to worship and not able to do the things that you're used to doing as part of your faith, but you shown strength as all New Yorkers have and you've joined with everyone else and fighting back this disease. One of Ramadan's most noble callings is to feed the hungry. It's a crucial part of how the holiday is celebrated to remember to be there for those in need and that is now harder than ever, obviously, people can't go to their mosques. In fact, mosques have often been a place that those who were hungry, those who were poor would know they could go during Ramadan to break the fast. They knew there would always be a meal there for them that's not going to be true in this season. So we want to, the City of New York wants to support this community as we're supporting all communities. We've been making sure there's food for every New Yorker and we've tried to also make sure that for those with a special food needs that we could be responsive. So, we've been creating kosher food programs and Halal food programs to recognize that we're all in this together, we want to respect all the people, all the faiths of New York City. This is part of what makes New York City so great, that we have that mutual respect and we understand that we all come together to create something greater than the sum of the parts. So, for anyone who needs food, again, no New Yorker will go hungry, any New Yorker who needs food, it will always be there for you during this crisis, your City will provide, there's no question. For those who need Halal meals, there will be 400,000 Halal meals available at 32 specific Department of Education sites, remember overall we have 435 sites and I'll keep reminding people, anyone that needs food, whether it's to go to one of those DOE sites or home deliveries, whatever you need, call 3-1-1 or go to nyc.gov/getfood. But for folks who need Halal meals, there will be 32 of those DOE sites in particular focused where there are large Muslim communities. 400,000 meals available, another hundred thousand will be distributed through partnerships with community-based organizations, food pantry, soup kitchens. So, over half-a-million meals will be distributed during Ramadan and it's a reminder, this is a place that truly believes in equality and it's something that is a profound New York City value.

People have come here from all over the world, all over the country from [inaudible], always knowing this was a place where everyone has a chance, a chance to achieve their dreams, their goals – everyone is respected. You know, there are people out there – and I'm not happy when I see this – there are people who are naysayers about the future of New York City. There are people who are trying to suggest that New York City won't come back or won't be as good in the future. I think that's absolutely wrong. I think that people who say that don't understand New York City and New Yorkers. New York City will come back. New York City's been through a lot over many generations. New York City has always come back and New Yorkers are made of something very strong, very powerful. We come back and then we find a way to do something even better. We come back and we find a way to answer the questions that were dredged up by the crisis and create a place that's even more fair, that's even more respectful of each and every one of our fellow New Yorkers. We come back and we find a way to be stronger. That's just who we are, it's been proven time and time again. Anyone who's telling you it's not going to happen this time doesn't understand history, but they clearly don't understand New Yorkers. So, I am convinced that that spirit of equality that pervades this place is going to sustain us. That is why whoever you are, if you're hungry we're going to feed you, and that has meant in the month of April, we expect about 10 million meals to be served to New Yorkers in need. That could be more like 15 million in May, but we will be there for you no matter what.

So, as I conclude, I want to refer to a phrase I've been hearing lately that I find very troubling on the national scene and President Trump has been amplifying this idea of states being “liberated.” He's been tweeting out, “liberate Michigan,” “liberate Virginia”. Well, you know what? We all want to get back to normal – that's true. We all want to get rid of these restrictions. We all want to start our economy again, get back to our jobs. Who doesn't? Everyone wants that in common. What does liberate mean? Liberate means being free, being free from danger, having the security of knowing you can live your life. Well, you know what? If we don't protect people's health, we're not going to be liberated. If because of political slogans or political agendas or more focus on corporations and the stock market than human beings, there's some effort to “liberate” that forgets about people and their families and their health and their safety. It will not only backfire, it will set us back by months and months. And the recovery we all hope and pray for will be diminished and slowed and people will suffer. So, it comes to everything I've been talking to you about today. We all want to be liberated, but you can only be liberated by the truth. You can only be liberated when it's real and not a lie. So, I know in New York City, when we get to the day where we start to open things up, it's going to be [inaudible] because we're absolutely convinced that we're truly at the right moment to do it and I think you will be convinced too, because you'll be seeing all the facts and then together with confidence we can move into a new reality. But any place that attempts to “liberate” before they have the facts, before they have the proof, they're actually going to be chaining their people to a painful reality and prolonging this agony – that's my warning. Here, we're going to do it right and we're going to look back and be glad we did. Let me do a few words in Spanish and then we'll turn to questions from the media.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

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

Moderator: Quick reminder for folks that we have Dr. Barbot, Dr. Daskalakis, and Dr. Katz, and Dr. Varma on the phone and our first question is Erin at Politico, Erin.

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor, I'm wondering with the latest models that you've been looking at, you said previously you thought that half of New Yorkers would contract this virus. Is that still the prediction or has that shifted at all? And also, I'm wondering if you could just give us the total number of cases. You gave us the increase yesterday, but the website's down, so if you could just give us the total number.

Mayor: Okay, total number of cases. I gave you the number, hold on one second, make sure I get it right, Erin - 2,519 new cases yesterday. Remember the indicators are on that two-day lag. For some of the indicators, let me just check this here. Yeah, no the indicators on a two-day lag and the, the cases yesterday was 2,519. To the bigger question that you raise, it's a great question, Erin and I turned to the health folks and I am sure they have strong views on this matter, but I think they'll also be the first to tell you we are still dealing with the great unknown in the absence of testing. We don't even a hundred percent know, you know, when the first cases emerged in this city because we didn't have testing in February. We know it was February, but we don't know when; we don't know how many people got it back then that went entirely unnoted. So, I think it is right to assume - this is the way I'd say it as a layman - first of all, we're in the thick of it, right? We're not in this perfect linear descent yet. So we don't know when we get to get out of this widespread transmission phase. Second, unless we are very careful and we have some good luck and some blessings thrown-in, we have to be wary of a resurgence. And then, you know, we still don't understand the seasonal reality. Does this come through in a sort of very clean seasonal pattern? Does it re-emerge later in the year? We're certainly concerned about next year already and being very, very mindful that it will still be a part of our lives until there's a vaccine. So, I think the big answer is we don't know for sure, but I would say the assumption that still more than half of New Yorkers could get this is a safe place to hold because we can't tell you the opposite. We can't confirm to you it's going to be less at this point. That's my layman's assumption based on the conversations we've had, but now we have a fabulous panel of four doctors. Let's see what you guys want to add to that.

Commissioner Oxiris Barbot, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: So, Mr. Mayor, what I would add to what you correctly laid out is that currently we are at over 138,000 people who have had confirmed positive tests. But that, really, I think is the tip of the iceberg for a number of different reasons. Primarily because, you know, New Yorkers have been heeding to our advice that if they have mild symptoms at this point in time - when you've got community-wide transmission - having a test result isn't going to change what we're going to tell you to do in terms of staying home and you know, monitoring your symptoms for whether or not you get better or worse over the course of three to four days. And that we want to reserve testing for those individuals who are really sick enough to be in the hospital. So with that being said, you know, it wouldn't surprise me if at this point in time we have probably close to a million New Yorkers who have been exposed to COVID-19. And so again, we're, we're tracking the number of positive test results as a way in which we can then better guide the healthcare delivery system interventions, the way in which we can help emphasize New York to New Yorkers, the importance of life saving measures, like staying at home. But you know, I don't think any of us have any misconceptions of how widespread this virus is and how ultimately it will affect the vast or large numbers of New Yorkers overall.

Mayor: Any other doctors want to jump in? Okay.

Moderator: Kathleen from Patch is up next, Kathleen,

Question: Hi Mr. Mayor and everyone.

Mayor: Kathleen, we need you to speak up a little more.

Question: Sorry about that. Can you hear me better now?

Mayor: Yep.

Question: Okay, so I'm just following up on my question from a few days ago about how many people are projected to become food insecure this year and does the city have resources to feed them without federal help? Also considering the plateau that we're seeing and concerns about how New Yorkers are going to behave when the weather improves, are you considering a stricter lockdown?

Mayor: Okay, so the first point, Kathleen, I'd say first of all, we, we do need to give you an estimate and I think it's fair to say, and I'll, I'll just be very broad now and, and make sure we get the exact numbers out to you. You know, previously over a million New Yorkers just in, in the times before COVID-19, over a million New Yorkers experienced food insecurity with some frequency and that's a horrible fact that directly correlates to poverty levels, obviously. And talk about the tale of two cities that, you know, I've been focused on for a long time. There's still obviously a persistent poverty problem in New York City. This is one of the things we have to fight back when we overcome the Coronavirus. We have to go much further in our strategies to reduce poverty in New York City. We did in the last few years get hundreds of thousands of people out of poverty - that's a very good thing. But there's still too many people facing that challenge and that directly connects to food insecurity. In this environment, the number of people are food insecure as unquestionably going up, and we'll get you the exact number, but I think it's going to be not around over a million, I think there's going to be pressing on towards 2 million, given that you've got half-a-million people who have lost their jobs, almost – you know, we don't have the exact numbers yet of what's going to happen, but, you know, I've said from the beginning, I think between the folks who have lost their jobs and the folks who are going to lose their jobs, or the folks who have lost a very substantial amount of their income, that's a half-million people at least. So, many of them, of course, were the sole breadwinners for their families. And that means the ability to buy food gets massively disrupted. So, again, I fear – and we'll give you a more exact number, Kathleen, but I fear the number is going to be around 2 million New Yorkers who are food insecure as this crisis deepens. And that's a horrifying number. The meals count tells you something. You know, we started smaller, we got to the point now where we project about 10 million meals in April. We are preparing to do 15 million meals in May. Can we do it alone? No, of course we can never – of course not. We can never do it all alone, meaning we need a federal help always. We need a lot more people to be made eligible for food stamps, for the SNAP program. And there are actions being contemplated in Washington right now that would increase the eligibility under this kind of disaster scenario. There specific ways that more people can get that support, but they need to be – it needs to be approved by the Congress. To the best of my understanding, I don't think it can be done administratively. I think it requires Congressional approval. We'll be back you on that. And we need – what we're hearing is coming, I want to get a 100 percent confirmation that FEMA reimbursement will be 100 percent and that it will cover things like this. So, you know, we have \$170 million food program

we're in the middle of now and that's going to have to grow. So, we need help from Washington to make all that happen. It's a very painful reality. I mean, just think about so many people – it's bad enough for people always were food insecure – that's not acceptable and we need to overcome that, going forward, but think about folks who just weeks ago couldn't have imagined not having enough food to eat and now they're struggling to find it. And there's so many people who need help.

On the lockdown question, what I'd say is – you know, what I've tried to say and I know the doctors have tried to say, and they'll jump in as well if they want to add anything, these indicators are to tell us where we stand. If they keep going in the right direction, that tells us at some point we can loosen up. If they don't go in the right direction, it tells us the opposite. If at some point we saw a resurgence, of course, we would have to come up with even tighter standards, because the reason that we've seen the progress we've seen is because the standards were tight and people lived by them. So, Kathleen, I don't predict it, I don't want it, but if the indicators tell us that things are going in the wrong direction, then, clearly, we would look at tighter restrictions. I pray that day doesn't come, but that's what we would do. Do the doctors want to add to that at all? Are you good with that Oxiris?

Commissioner Barbot: Yes, sir.

Mayor: Okay, great. Go ahead.

Moderator: Andrew from NBC New York is up next. Andrew?

Question: Hello. Good morning. How are you, Mayor?

Mayor: Good, Andrew. How you doing?

Question: Good. I have two questions. The first one is – and this this sort of springs off of the lockdown question – are you concerned that there's been an uptake in traffic, people getting in their cars, driving to run errands, sort of a more casual attitude of late? And my second question is, is any City agency, whether it's the NYPD or Department of Buildings monitoring construction? Because we are getting calls and complaints from some neighbors that construction has seemingly resumed all over the city even though that is not considered an essential workplace.

Mayor: No, I appreciate those questions. And Andrew, thank you also for the question the other day on 4th of July, because it helped focus all of us on getting ahead of that and figuring out how to work with Macy's on something as important as that. So, thank you very, very much for that. On your questions today on construction – first of all, non-essential construction is supposed to be shut down period. So, if you are seeing any instances, Andrew, or any of your colleagues in the media, or any New Yorkers, we need to know. Colleagues in the media, please tell our team here at City Hall. Every-day New Yorkers, call 3-1-1. We need to know. This is directly COVID-19-related. So, when you're calling in a complaint to say you see construction happening that may not be essential construction, you're actually helping to protect people's lives. So, please place that call. Remember, what the State laid out was, what was essential, what was non-essential. There may be some cases where people see something, they think it's not essential, but it actually does fit the standards for what essential is. But I'd rather be safe than sorry. So, I want

every report possible if people think something looks wrong so the Department of Buildings – and yes, it is the Department of Buildings – they follow up. They were very aggressive when the new rules came out. They sent their inspectors out, they shut down sites on the spot and, at least, as of a week or two ago, we saw pretty consistent results where there was not inappropriate construction. But if any of those sites are trying to reassert themselves who shouldn't, we will crack down on them, they'll find them, we will force the people off the site. We'll padlock it, whatever it takes.

On the uptake and traffic. Yeah, I do share this concern. Now, I will have a deeper conversation today with our police commissioner and our transportation commissioner to understand what they're seeing. But I've been seeing it personally and I am worried about it. Look, to the extent, again, it is essential workers moving around, that's appropriate. If it's folks starting to get a little too loose, that's a problem, meaning folks who are not doing essential things. We've got to be smart about it. So, going someplace in your car, if that leads you to a place where you're then going to be with a crowd of people or you're then not going to have social distancing, that becomes a huge problem for everyone's health and safety. We've got to be really smart about it. So, if someone's going to the grocery store, that's one thing. But if they're starting to get a little looser, we've got to really be careful about what that means. The most important thing is what does it lead to, Andrew? If it leads to people being less careful about social distancing, less careful about staying at home, we've got to be very mindful of the problems that create and we've got to find ways to enforce on that.

Moderator: Sydney from the Advance is up next. Sydney?

Question: Hey, Mr. Mayor. So, you've been citing these three indicators for the last several days of new admissions, ICU patients and the Health + Hospitals system and the percentage of New Yorkers testing positive for COVID, but you haven't been including private hospitals in your daily ICU indicator count. And by doing so, you know, you're leaving out an entire borough of Staten Island. Why isn't Staten Island and other private hospitals being included in at least the ICU portion of your daily count? And do you think that the count could be skewed if you're not factoring in the number of people in the ICU from an entire borough?

Mayor: Yeah, Sydney, again, I understand you're going to always look at it from that perspective, which is obvious and necessary. I think the way to think about this is, there's 56 hospitals in the city, we're looking at the 11 public hospitals because we get very consistent information there and we're trying to make this tracking system as clear and consistent as it can be. The 56 hospitals all have different ways to some extent – each one has its own tracking mechanisms and it's kind of hard to get the consistency that we need for this kind of measure. So, no, it's not a in any way – [inaudible] the hospitals is different because we serve all 56 in a variety of ways. It is trying to get clear and consistent information out and the public hospitals – and I've been over these numbers recently of the hospital admissions for COVID, and the ICU activity, and the public hospitals, tragically starting with Elmhurst Hospital, have borne the brunt, clearly. So, that is going to give you the slice that tells you most carefully what's happening with the ICUs as a measure of what it means for the overall trajectory of this disease. Any of the doctors want to add?

President and CEO Mitchell Katz, Health + Hospitals: [Inaudible] that Health + Hospital data has tracked the other hospitals. When we were getting more and more full, they were getting

more and more full. When we started to be less full, they started to be less full. So, I think, as you say, Mr. Mayor, it is an accurate indicator of what's going on in all hospitals in New York City.

Mayor: Thank you.

Moderator: Anna from the Daily News is up next –

Deputy Commissioner Demetre Daskalakis, Department of Health and Mental

Hygiene: Can I clarify one thing? Sorry, really quickly – I just want to also clarify that the admissions indicator includes all New York City hospitals and not just H+H. I think you probably know that, but just wanting to make that very clear as you get testing parameters.

Mayor: Right. So, just to pick up on Demetre's point, indicator number-one is all hospitals; indicator number two is the Health + Hospitals, public hospitals; and then indicator number three, again, two measures, one citywide testing everywhere, and, two, public health lab testing. So, different measures, but really important to recognize the goal was to get clean, clear, consistent information that would tell us what we have to do. And that's why it was chosen.

Moderator: Anna from the Daily News is up next. Anna?

Question: Hey, Mr. Mayor. Yesterday you were asked what the City's current testing capacity is for COVID-19. You didn't have that number, so I'm going to follow up and ask if you have it today, given that your plan relies on that.

Mayor: Absolutely. And I just wanted to make sure, Anna, thank you for asking that. I am always careful to make sure that we give accurate information, because this is another example where we have numbers of course for our public hospitals and the testing they're doing of patients, the testing they're doing of their own personnel. But we want to confirm what was happening in the voluntary and independent hospitals as well, and with first responders. I wanted to make sure we were getting the whole picture. So, I think the simple way to say this is, and I think this puts into very clear perspective, that up until next – I mean, excuse me, up until last week – so, last week's an important kind of watershed – as of last week, we did not have a major source for test kits. We were cobbling together a number of test kits from different sources, but we didn't have a single strong supplier nor a dependable supply. So, that was limiting us. We had been, until very recently, unable to free up personnel from hospitals, unable to free up PPEs to protect the people doing the test. So, again, to do a test, you need the kit, you need the person, that trained person to give the test, you need the PPEs to protect them and then you need the lab capacity. You know, in the first two weeks say April, it would have been impossible to imagine that we could free all that up consistently given what we were coming out of with the hospitals and all. But then, as we got into that second week in April, we saw the situation improving and that allowed us now to be able to free up some of the people we need to do the testing on a bigger scale. But, this is why I go into last week, we still didn't have the tests are reliable supply of tests. Finally, this week we have gotten, you know, the beginning of the shipments in from Aria in Indiana and that looks like it's going to be a major consistent supply. We have our own test kits that are about to be developed here in the city. This is the first time we've been able to imagine a true expansion. Nowhere near where we have to be, ultimately. And, again, the only way that happens is with federal involvement. But the point is to get to the punch line of your

question. Up until Friday we were at a point of, we were, I'd say, under 10,000 a day would be a good measure. And – meaning if you combine everything happening in New York City, testing of patients in danger, testing of health care workers, testing of first responders – if you combine everything across the 56 hospitals and every place else that testing was happening, you were coming in and under 10,000 a day. This week, that number is going to start to go up, we're going to add on average probably at least a thousand a day because we have now these community-based testing centers that we're putting up, but we also have all the things that go with it to allow us to increase that number. And that number I hope will start to increase steadily. The numbers I want to get to, certainly begins with many tens of thousands a day. I've projected in a perfect world, we would have hundreds of thousands a day to really suppress this disease. And I don't know when we'll get to that point, but we are at least on the gateway, going into May, where we could get to 20,000 tests a day, 30,000 tests a day. At least that's a major, major step towards the kind of suppression and containment we need. So, I think that gives you some perspective about where we have been and where we're going now.

Moderator: Julia from the Post is up next. Julia?

Question: Hi. Good morning, everyone. I have a question for you, Mr. Mayor, and a question for the doctors. I'll start with your question, I'd like to get your reaction to Governor Cuomo saying yesterday that it's “not our job” to provide nursing homes with personal protective equipment even though, you know, we've had over 3,000 patients die in nursing home facilities. And I wonder if you agree that sick nursing home patients, COVID patients should go back into the facilities or if they should go somewhere separate, like maybe in the hotels you preserved for isolation and quarantine. And then, for the doctors, Department of Health tweeted out the graph this morning on hospital admissions and it says they want to get below 200 a day. I'm wondering what the significance is of that number, and, if you can tell us, it looks like you've got close to 200 on the 18th and 19th, but the number went up again. I wonder if you know why that is.

Mayor: Thank you, Julia. I'll start and then turn to the doctors, and they can both speak to part of the senior citizen nursing home question and the quarantine question, and then they'll also speak to the indicator question. Look, protecting senior citizens, protecting people in nursing homes is – for all of us, it's our job, it's our responsibility. I think this is a point where we'd say any sense of, you know, which part of the government does what is less important than the moral imperative to protect our seniors and to protect people in need. By the organizational chart, the State of New York is responsible for nursing homes, for regulating them, for ensuring they're doing their job. These are overwhelmingly private profit – you know, for-profit facilities. And, obviously, they have to bear responsibility for whether they're doing everything to serve their patients, their clients or not. So, the way I look at it is, whatever is supposed to be each responsibility of each level of government and of the private owners of the nursing homes and everybody, the most important thing here is to save lives. So, we, the City of New York – we have been providing the personal protective equipment to nursing homes for the last few weeks. The State asked us to help out. We said, of course we've got to protect our seniors, we've got to protect the health care workers and the nursing home workers. We've been getting them personal protective equipment. We will continue to do that. And anything we can do to help save lives, we will do. So, I think it's all our job. I think this is a time where everyone's got to find a way to help in every way we can until we can beat this back.

In terms of the question of – again, to the doctors, start if you will, on that point, of the other part of Julia's question on the notion that if a senior test positive who lives in a nursing home, do they go back to the nursing home or is there some other alternative place that would be better? If you could speak to that, doctors? And then on the point about the indicator at the 200 level – Mitch, do you want to go first?

President Katz: Yes, sir. It is as you've explained, it's been a tragic issue how many people have lost their lives, seniors in nursing homes. We all feel terrible about that. When someone tests positive, the best solution, if they're symptomatic, is for them to go to the hospital, because we know that people who are elderly with other comorbidities are at very high risk. So, people who are testing positive in a nursing home and have shortness of breath, those people need to go right away to the hospital, they're at greatest risk. People with no symptoms or with minimal symptoms should be isolated within the nursing home. I think what we've read in some of the descriptions is that many of these nursing homes have not had appropriate equipment, they haven't had the appropriate staff, but that's certainly the best way to contain the virus, is to isolate the person within their existing room and to make sure that everybody taking care of them is using the appropriate PPE, personal protective equipment.

Mayor: Mitch, I want you –

Unknown: [Inaudible]

Mayor: Hold on one second. Just, Mitch, if you would expand, and then your colleagues can jump in. I think the question, which is a common sense question, is, would a nursing home resident – and again, as you said, if they need hospitalization, there's no hesitation, right, to the hospital. But if someone tests positive, I think there's a common sense question, would they be better off in a quarantine, like a hotel, or would they be better off in the nursing home? And I think one of the things that you've talked about previously is they still need a lot of other services and hotels, we can provide a certain amount, but not necessarily the same as it's presented – provided, I should say, in a nursing home setting. So, could you speak to that?

President Katz: Yeah. So, you're, you're exactly right that people who are in nursing homes cannot be maintained in hotels or they would more appropriately be living independently. And also many people who are in nursing homes for long time are very dependent on their relationships with their caregivers, their caregivers understand their specific needs and are best able to meet those needs. So, I think all of our effort, should be on how do we make that safe, how do we make sure they're isolated—

Mayor: You still there?

President Katz: —other residents [inaudible] able to protect themselves.

Mayor: Okay. Now other doctors please join in.

Commissioner Barbot: So, Mr. Mayor, I'll just add to what you and Dr. Katz laid out. So clearly what we have done is ensure that when these patients are coming back to the nursing home which is their home, right, because they need higher level of skilled nursing services that we provide the PPE that these nursing homes need as well as the technical assistance to make

sure that all infection control procedures are properly in place to prevent any further transmission of COVID-19 in those homes.

Mayor: Okay. And then on the indicators question?

Commissioner Barbot: So, sir, on the indicators – what we have laid out is the rough guideline of 200, which is typically twice the baseline of those types of visits that we would anticipate seeing in previous years for that same time period. So it's a rough measure that gives us a sense of the load, if you will, that hospitals are seeing broadly for the number of admissions due to COVID-like illness.

It's a measure that we have to follow over time. It's not that we get there for one day and all of a sudden, you know, we're in a brand-new game as you have said in the past. This is something that we need to monitor over time and it's over a course of several days, like with anywhere between 10 to 14 plus or minus that we would have to track that number and ensure that it stays roughly around that line or below.

Moderator: Marcia from CBS New York is up next. Marcia? Marcia can hear us okay?

Question: How are you today?

Mayor: Hey Marcia, how are you doing?

Question: Okay. So, I have two questions. The first one has to do with the Fourth of July. I wonder what your concerns are in terms of social distancing and whether you're going to have to get the NYPD involved to enforce that and around that issue, so Stuart Applebaum, a union leader has said that Macy's shouldn't be spending millions of dollars on fireworks when the workforce is out of work. If you have any thoughts on that and also relating to that, why you think, you know, having fireworks on the 4th of July is a really good idea? And my second question has to do with nursing homes. Last week your office told us you were sending extra staff to nursing homes – that sending staff to nursing homes was a state issue. Why did you decide to do an add extra help today?

Mayor: Well, Marcia, it goes back to the previous question that we're going to do whatever it takes to protect senior citizens and the nursing homes are struggling. If we can help, we're going to help. That's the bottom line right now. They needed more personal protective equipment? We got it to them. They needed more staffing? We're getting it to them. It just is a matter of we're in a crisis, people's lives on the line. We're going to do whatever – whatever help we can, whatever it take, we're going to do it.

On the 4th of July. So again, what I'm saying is sort of the central question was are we going to do something? Are we going to do nothing? And I'm saying, no, we're going to do something. We're going to celebrate our nation's birthday, especially in the middle of this crisis. We're going to take that moment to appreciate what we're all doing together to fight this disease back and to honor our nation. And I think the absence of that celebration would be very damning, would be very troubling, you know, would be, it would hurt the morale of New Yorkers as they're fighting this fight. So, from my point of view, unlike, you know, so many

other, there's many other important celebrations and gatherings, but this one is truly universal and it's something that we should not go without.

Now, what the CEO of Macy's, Jeff Gennette and I spoke about was trying to figure out the right version of it for this circumstance. And we don't know what July 4th, that day is going to bring, right now, it's by the standards of this crisis, which is, you know, the worst of what we've gone through here is seven weeks old, you know, that is far enough in the future. We've got to go through the rest of April, all of May, all of June into July. We could have very, very different reality or we might be still fighting a very tough battle. We don't know yet. We will calibrate what's going to happen to that reality. So, Marcia, if it's a situation where you, you really can't have any crowds at all, then we'll create something that people can appreciate on television. People can appreciate, you know, from the rooftops maybe we'll figure it out. If it's something where there could be modest crowds with social distancing, we'll figure that out too. But I don't want any assumptions yet about what role the NYPD has to play or anybody else because it's just premature. We'll have more to say on it as it gets closer. On the question – Stuart Applebaum is a great labor leader and he represents working people with real passion. I don't think it's an either or. Macy's put aside the resources to provide this celebration. They're committed to doing it for New York City. I respect them for that. I clearly want to make sure their workers get all the support possible, but let's face it, that goes beyond the question of Macy's. That goes back to the federal government providing working people with the way to get through this crisis providing us the City of New York with the way, the ways to help working people get through it. I think that goes far beyond what Macy's can do. The cost of this one display, and it might be a more modest display, obviously than unusual is small compared to the needs of working people. And clearly the companies have to step up, but the federal government has to step up too.

Moderator: Brigid from WNYC is up next. Brigid?

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor, last week you were asked about the City's plan to keep vulnerable people cool in the summer. I'm wondering first what the status of that thinking and planning is and Comptroller Scott Stringer is urging the City to expand the cooling benefits program and to even begin stockpiling air conditioners. Would you support those policies?

Mayor: Well, first of all, Brigid, I think I was asked this yesterday, we're going to have a summer plan for sure that will include different ways of keeping people cool and keeping people safe unquestionably. And even if it means in a socially distance manner, we're going to have that. As I said yesterday and we were still a-ways off from summer, so we will put that for a plan out in the next couple of weeks as it's ready. On the question of the air conditioners, I think it's a good question. We have to think about things in a whole new way in this environment we're in. So what role air conditioners could play on a more individualized basis? It's a good question. I think that obviously would raise a lot of questions about how you would put together such an effort. But let's see as we get closer, if we think we can do the right kind of cooling center or something like we've done in the past or we need a different kind of solution and we'll add that question into the plan that will unveil in the next few weeks.

Moderator: Yoav from The City is up next. Yoav? Hey Yoav, can you hear us?

Question: Yeah, can you hear me?

Moderator: Yes.

Question: Okay. Hi, Mr. Mayor. On nursing homes, you've said a number of ways in which the City is supporting nursing homes through staffing and PPE, but is there also an accountability side to that equation? You know, is there anything – I recognize the State has the ultimate oversight of these, but if you see red flags at any nursing home, is there anything that the City has done or can do to ensure that they're following the proper protocol to keep their patients safe?

Mayor: Yoav, we'll do whatever it takes. Again, I respect the role of the State of New York, especially the role the State plays in the crisis dynamic. It is an area where – the City doesn't have a deep connection to nursing homes. The City of New York government doesn't regulate nursing homes, we don't deal with them every single day. It's just, it's a part of the equation that we've had to learn in a new way to actually be able to be helpful. And it just, I want all New Yorkers to understand that, you know, there's so many pieces that make up life in this City that there's always kind of a division of labor between what the City government does, what the State government does, what the MTA does, you know, what the federal government does, everything is laid out in, in a pattern of who has responsibility for what is the only way you can make sense of things.

So in this crisis, the City's tried to step up and what we've done is even though we don't have a regular working relationship with these nursing homes, we've just tried to say, what do you need? And we're going to try and get it for you. Whether it's PPEs or more and more, we see staffing as a real issue. We're just going to get them what they need to deal with this crisis and to protect these seniors who are in danger.

In terms of figuring out, you know, if there's a specific thing that needs to be acted on anytime. I'm sure if there's a specific problem – there's constant communication between the City and State, we're giving feedback to the State on what we're seeing for sure. But, right now, I just keep it really basic. It's just if there's a need, we're going to do everything we can within the resources we have to fulfill the need and protect people.

Moderator: Katie from the Wall Street Journal is up next. Katie?

Question: Hey Mayor de Blasio, I was hoping you could give some more information cause it's actually not on the website and I'm sure people would want to know which of the 32 schools will offer halal food? It's not on the DOE's website and the truth will set us free. So, I think it would be good with liberating that data. And while we're on the topic you know, the Department of Health website, it's – sometimes it's down, doesn't always update, you know, keeping with this vein of truth setting us free will you eventually, and will the Department of Health eventually update with more hospital stats, which hospitals have the most deaths? And release more information?

Mayor: Yes. well I like that you're invoking the phrase, the truth will set us free. I didn't use that one before, but I like it and I agree with it. So yeah, the – I'm going to – while I'm giving answer on the second part, I'm hoping that Freddi Goldstein is going to write me an answer on the first part, because I'm confused [inaudible] starts tonight. The – what I need, Freddi is the 32 sites. Are they going to be up or when they're going to be up because clearly we need to – and that's a

good catch, and Katie, I want to thank you for it because we're trying to make sure people know where this food is and we have to be smart about getting information out in real time. And sometimes, and you can understand in the rush of events here, sometimes things are missed. So anytime a member of the media catches something that we needed to do and didn't happen, right, I will say thank you and we will make sure this information goes up immediately on the DOE website.

But beyond the DOE website, the WNYC, excuse me not WNYC – sorry, product placement there – the nyc.gov/getfood and folks calling 3-1-1, everything has to be working together today so that if someone's trying to find those halal meals that they know where to get them.

So I am thanking you, I hope to get an update in a moment, but as also a reminder to everyone who's listening from the DOE and everyone is listening in the – our food czar and everyone that works with her, that we will do quality control later on today to make sure that if you call 3-1-1, you go on the City website or you go the DOE website, that anyone looking for halal meals, will find them. And this is yet another example of making sure we are getting information out to people.

On the second question, Katie, everything that we can put out that we believe is accurate we're going to put out. I think the bottom line is there were a few weeks in there we were literally in the throws of a deepening crisis and putting out data was much less important to us than securing our hospitals and everything we needed to survive what looked like it was going to be a truly terrifying number of cases. Now that we have had a few weeks of some improvement, we're catching up on a lot of areas where we need to put out data. We will keep doing so. So, I'll come back to you more on the specifics, but the overall goal and the overall instruction I've given is whatever data we have that we know is accurate and we can sustain on an accurate basis, we should keep giving out.

Moderator: Dan from NY1 is up next. Dan?

Question: Morning. Mr. Mayor. I have a question and a request to respond to what an MTA official said yesterday, both pertain to homelessness in the subway. Interim Transit – New York City Transit President Sarah Feinberg said, we urge the City to take more aggressive steps to address this problem. It is without a doubt a City obligation and responsibility. Also saying we stay in close contact with the NYPD and the City, but I think it's safe to say everyone here is losing patience with the situation. So, I like a response to that. But my question is that homelessness in the subway has been on the City's radar since the peak last year, almost a year ago when it seemed like it was out of control and the City announced some steps. So here we are April 2020. Does New York City have a new strategy to deal with homelessness in the subway as essential workers commute or is it going to be the same old?

Mayor: Dan, I appreciate the question, but I'm just going to disagree with you on it ever being “out of control.” And I again, I understand that the media looks at situations and tries to portray them in clear and simple terms, but it's just – homelessness, let's have an honest conversation here. This reality of homelessness in general, homelessness in the subways has been with us for decades. No, it's not just something that got the attention of the NYPD in the last year. They've been working on it for years and years. But it's tough to – again, you can't just take someone and arrest them because they're homeless and that's not what New Yorkers would want and it's not

legal. We have to work with homeless people to get them off the streets once and for all. And the NYPD's actually been outstanding both above ground and below ground contributing to the HOME-STAT effort, HOME-STAT's, gotten thousands of street homeless people permanently homeless people off the streets, out of the subways, into shelter and into affordable housing and kept them there, and the NYPD has been a crucial part of that equation. So I'm not going to accept respectfully a question I think – I don't think you mean to denigrate the men and women, the NYPD but I think your question probably inadvertently does so.

They had been working constantly to address homelessness with our Department of Social Services and Homeless Services with all those street outreach workers who tirelessly go out, even during this crisis had been going out and trying to get homeless people to come in. But an honest conversation about this does not ignore the fact that if someone is in that kind of state, a lot of people with real serious mental health problems and we can work to get them in, but we don't have like the magical ability just force everyone in. It's tough, tough work. But that's what the NYPD has been doing and that's what all these outreach workers have been doing for a long time and with success, there's clearly more to do and we're not stopping. We never have stopped and we're not going to stop. And some day when we get out of this crisis, we're going to go back to what we're talking about with the Journey Home Plan of ending permanent street homelessness because we have the tools now that we think work. This crisis has disrupted some of what we were doing, obviously, but we have the tools that work. In terms of Ms. Feinberg, I don't understand what she's saying because NYPD has been out there in force trying to address this issue constantly. And if she's losing patients, I don't know why she hasn't called me. People who have serious concerns and I assume she's talked to Commissioner Shea, which should be the first stop, and if she thinks his strategies aren't working, she should talk to him. If she's not satisfied with that conversation, she should talk to me. And there's anything more that we can do, Of course we'd do it.

Moderator: Gersh from Streetsblog is up next. Gersh?

Question: Hello Mr. Mayor, how are you?

Mayor: Hey Gersh, how are you doing?

Question: Well, my, my apartment's a mess and I'm baking bread, but nonetheless, I want to follow up on Andrew's question, the issue of traffic, however, it goes beyond the current situation he was asking about. We're hearing a lot of people say they won't feel comfortable taking transit after the crisis and we're hearing many people even saying they're considering buying cars to get around. The result of that might be tens of thousands more car trips in the city, which would add congestion, pollution, danger, anxiety, and undermine your own heart felt effort to increase the mode share of cycling as a sustainable, clean transportation. So what are you and your Transportation Commissioner doing right now to plan for this possibility?

Mayor: Well, it's a very good question. First of all, before I go into that Gersh, I hope you're doing – you're live streaming your baking process. I think all New Yorkers would like to see you in this crucial endeavor.

Question: [Inaudible].

Mayor: I'll be watching it all day, Gersh. The – it's a great question. I think we have to come up with a plan to not only avert what you just said, which is hesitancy to go back to mass transit, but to go much farther than we ever went before in terms of deepening mass transit options, deepening the ability of people to use alternatives like bicycles, getting people out of their cars more and more, because – excuse me – because the today's crisis is COVID-19. The bigger crisis has not gone away and that is global warming and we have to take these actions to save ourselves and save our planet going forward. Let alone what it would mean for improvement in people's quality of life and reducing congestion and all the other things we care about. Obviously safety.

So that work is going on now and will go on. I think the – I do not start with the assumption that the vast majority of New Yorkers are going to be thrown off by this experience. In the short term, of course, everyone's going to be cautious to protect their own health and safety and their family's health and safety. But New Yorkers are amazingly resilient and as we come out of this, I think the vast majority of us are going to resume, you know, the lives that we have had. So I do not start with the assumption there's going to be a radical shift, but I think you're right to say it's something we should be concerned about, is something we should guard against, but much more importantly, we have to build an entirely different reality going forward anyway. So we have to find more and more ways to attract people to mass transit, to better options, and I think it goes back to the basics we've always talked about. Frequency, reliability, cost, the quality of the experience, all the things that determine whether people are willing to engage or not. We just have to double down on those investments in the future to make sure that people can believe in mass transit and go back to it in record numbers.

Moderator: Last two, Jeff Mays from The Times. Jeff?

Question: Hey, good morning, Mr. Mayor. Two questions. I'm hoping to get update on the deaths in the quarantine hotels. Does the city know what went wrong? Did the city know that this is a disease that can kill people who appear to have been on the mend? And what will the monitoring look like from now on? And then secondly, the numbers on the indicators that you give seem to clash a little bit with the States. You know, the slides that the governor has say 1,300 people per day are being admitted to hospitals, whereas you say 227 per day can Dr. Daskalakis or Dr. Barbot just kind of clarify what's going on with those two numbers?

Mayor: All right, let's have the doctors speak to that first and I'll double back on the hotel question. I'll just preface by saying, Jeff, again, there's three levels of government, you know, and we are working very closely with the State government, have a lot of respect for the efforts of the Governor and everyone in the State government have some real differences obviously with the federal government in the way this crisis has been handled. But all that is to say in the end, the City of New York and every city is going to keep their own measures that we think are right for judging our reality and when we can make moves that affect our people. So, we're all working together and everyone's always comparing information but these indicators are ones that our health care leadership believes are the truest, most effective ones in terms of deciding if and when we loosen up restrictions and changes we would make. So, they can speak to the specifics but I wanted to give you that kind of background. Go ahead. Doctors.

Deputy Commissioner Daskalakis: This is Demetre. So, I'd like to - so the indicator about hospitalizations is actually using not only individuals who are COVID-19 confirmed by labs, but also looks at every person who gets admitted to the hospital with a syndrome that can look like

COVID. So we think that that indicator is an excellent gauge. It's a different way than how the State does it. So they are actually looking at hospitalizations that are in fact directly COVID related. So this is just a different way of doing it and again, shows a pretty robust picture of what hospitalizations are like in New York City related to this virus.

Mayor: Anyone else want to add on that? Okay, and again, on this one, on the hotels, I'll start and if any of the doctors want to add. So, Jeff, first of all, we have more information but still I don't think all the information we would like to have on these three deaths. Again, confirming three individuals who had been coming out of three different hospitals, in one case, and I want to be respectful of privacy and all, but the person's death may not have been COVID related. In the other two cases it appears it was as I understand it, but what we are still trying to understand is what happened in the discharge process that would have led someone to end up being discharged to a hotel if there was still any kind of danger or maybe something, you know, maybe there was not an evident danger and something very different happens. So, we do not have the full, full picture yet.

What we're doing is adding clinical staffing in these hotel facilities. There was a monitoring process in place and a certain supports in place, but we, based on this experience, which we're still find not only troubling, but there's still unanswered questions here, we're going to be an abundance of caution having a clinical personnel monitoring people regularly in these sites to make sure that folks are safe even if they appeared to be fully and appropriately discharged, out of abundance of caution we're going to keep monitoring.

Moderator: Last call, Reema from Chalkbeat, Reema.

Question: Hey, Mr. Mayor, can you hear me?

Mayor: Yes, Reema.

Question: Okay, great. So, I have a couple of questions. The first one is, you know, and I know you've been asked this a lot. We're still, you know, hearing from families who haven't received devices yet for school, the internet capable devices, and we know that video isn't a process of handing, you know, hundreds of thousands of these out. But I was hoping you could sort of walk us through why taking so long to get these devices to families? And then the second question you know, there's all this mounting push to salvage some of the Summer Youth Employment Program and providers have been saying that they've been pretty frustrated that the city didn't [inaudible] first and asked [inaudible] if they could develop some sort of [inaudible] option for students? [Inaudible] I know City Council is talking to providers. Just want to see if your team has been talking to these folks to figure out alternatives or where your administration sort of stands on that?

Mayor: Sure, okay, Reema let me answer your two points but also give an update as I lead into this. So, what I'm being told here is a little bit different than what I understood previously this going back on the halal meals. So, I have first of all again, thanks for the catch earlier. I think it was Katie on the – or, someone to tell me if it was or not? But it was Katie. Thank you. Thank you again, Katie. On the website those locations that have additional halal meals, the 32 sites will be clear on the website by noon, schools.nyc.gov/ramadanmeals. Very specific. Now, here's what I did not get clean information from my team on, I apologize. I'm going to give you a good

update, which is apparently all sites of the 435 halal meals. The 32 specific sites that are in communities that have large Muslim populations have an additional quantity available to make sure they can meet demand. So what I am getting here is if you go to any of the 435 sites and specifically asked for halal meal, they have something that does qualify as a halal meal. At the 32 locations there'll be ample additional quantity and again, the website will have that by noon.

On the question of the devices. So the latest, and I checked in with the DOE a day or two ago, is they're on track, every student, every family that has reported not having a device and internet service will get what they need by April 30th. There is still – so that's happening. The devices have come in from Apple, they're being distributed out, the delivery systems moving, you know, internet service enabled, the whole nine yards. But where there is still an open question is we think there are still families who need a device and have not reported in that they need a device. And so if anyone is talking about this issue, and all the New Yorkers watching out there could get the word out, any family of a public school child that doesn't have a appropriate device for their child to participate in online learning or doesn't have internet service, call 3-1-1, let them know right away because we can add them to those deliveries instantly. It's just something we have enough of a supply, but we still think there are kids out there who need help and we don't know. We've asked school administrators and teachers to identify any families they think may not have a device and reach out and confirm whether they do or don't. That has been ongoing. But, right now, we're going to have more devices than there are kids asking for them and we want to make sure we close that gap. So that's the update on that.

On Summer Youth, Reema again, there's the first reality with Summer Youth was we had no way to start a process which would have meant right away making arrangements with employers, putting the time and energy into arranging for kids to be selected, all the things that go into building up Summer Youth Employment, that all would have been underway already at this point in April. And when we did the budget, we could not authorize a major effort for something that we thought physically couldn't exist in time based on everything we knew at the time and we know now. A lot of those employers are nowhere near being open. We obviously only are allowing the most essential adult employees right now to do work. All other adults who are working are either doing work from home or God forbid many of them just don't have a job anymore. So we couldn't say, let's start up a Summer Youth Employment Program when we didn't even know what the summer would look like or whether they'd be employers to receive those kids and whether people could gather in one place or any of those things.

The second reason was money. We're running out of money. This is obviously, you know, the crucial question as we look at what's happening in Washington with the stimulus, but even beyond that, we're in the middle of a massive budget crisis. It's horrifying, all because of COVID-19 and of the things that we have to focus on, we had to focus again on health, on safety, on food, and on shelter, and we could not prioritize certain things as a result of needing to focus on those basics. So, Summer Youth was not going to be a financial priority compared to a lot of other things like the \$170 million we're spending on food already, again, a number that I think will be growing. So that's the bottom line on how we got to the decision. Look, if this situation improves going forward and we can do some creative things with young people, of course I want to do that. But again, will we have the money for that is an open question. We got a first think about getting the breadwinners and families back to work so they can support their families. That's the first priority obviously. But if we can find some creative alternatives of ways to

engage young people, we're very, very open to that discussion. Just not into this point, clear what that's going to look like. It's going to take time to figure out what's really going to be viable.

All right, everyone. Just want to bring it together as we close today and you know, we talked about what these indicators mean. We talked about the approach this city is taking. Steady, careful approach focused on your health and safety, that's what we're doing and making sure that when that day comes that we start to reopen, we're really sure it's the right moment. We're really sure we're ready to do it and that we can do it right and sustain it and not have a boomerang. So that's what we've been doing. The important thing to think about is the month of May, because the month of May is when these pieces now start to come together, keep driving down those indicators and that's our jump off point, do that link up, do that hand off to the testing and tracing program. And as I described yesterday, we're going to build up a massive apparatus that will be up and running in the month of May to reach thousands, and then tens of thousands of New Yorkers to test and trace to really start to constrict and constrain this disease and beat it back even more.

So, we all have a lot to do and again, I'll always say thank you. I want to say thank you again. People have been amazing. I'll keep saying thank you. Stick to it, stay with it. Because if we can keep fighting these next weeks to get to that handoff, that's going to be a point where we really start to make even greater progress. And then we're going to need everyone to participate fully in testing and tracing as many tests as we have, we're going to use. When we need to trace cases, we're going to need the New Yorkers who are part of that to fully participate, to help us do that the right way. When we tell people you got isolate, we're going to need people to follow those instructions for the good of yourself, your family, and everyone. So it's all participatory. We're all in this together. But if what we've seen these last weeks is any indication New York City and New Yorkers are off to a great start fighting back this disease. As we go into May, I think we can do some really extraordinary things and go a lot farther.

Again, thank you everyone. Appreciate you, appreciate all you're doing, and God bless you all.

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