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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON MSNBC'S MORNING JOE

Mika Brzezinski: New York State appears to have passed its coronavirus peak. Governor Andrew Cuomo announced yesterday that hospitalizations continue to fall as he reported the lowest death toll in more than two weeks at just over 500. The state's total now towers at more than 13,000 dead, roughly the same size as entire towns, upstate. Cuomo cautioned that the downward trend continues to be a big if, as long as New Yorkers stick to the guidelines. Joining us now, the Mayor of New York City, Bill de Blasio. Thank you, Mr. Mayor for joining us. Let's start there on sticking with the guidelines. If you could, please talk about the challenges of asking New Yorkers, people who live in New York City to stick to the guidelines for months to come.

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Yeah, Mika, it's amazing that New Yorkers have done what they've done, and we really have to stop and sort of take stock of this. Look, here's the most densely populated place in the country. This is the last place you'd think that social distancing and shelter in place would work. And yet New Yorkers have taken to it. They've listened, they've followed through, they've helped each other through it. So, the fact that we're seeing some improvement is directly related to what everyday people have done and they really need to be recognized. The president of course loves to credit himself. I would like to credit everyday Americans and everyday New Yorkers who are doing this hard work of figuring out a new way of life with no warning. They just had to do it and they're doing it. And so, we see real progress. Now, I caution, the numbers you just went over – we're still losing way too many people each day. There's way too many people in the ICUs. We are far from out of the woods and any discussion of a "restart" has to take into account that we have to make sure our people are healthy and that we've actually beaten this disease, which is far from certain right now. So New Yorkers are doing their job, but we should be very careful at all levels of government and the federal government especially needs to get the memo that this thing ain't over. And if you pretend it's over, it's only going to boomerang back and make it worse actually.

Brzezinski: Alright, Mr. Mayor Katty Kay has a question for you, Katty –

Katty Kay: Mayor, thank you for joining us. And you had some pretty hard words for the president over the weekend asking if the White House just wanted New York to drop dead. Do you get the sense from Washington a little bit like we've had throughout the history of this virus that somehow, it's somebody else's problem that, you know, for a while it was China's problem and then it was a problem that was going to be in Italy but not in my backyard? And do you think New York is kind of almost being ring fenced as well? New York has this big problem, they can deal with it. It's not our problem.

Mayor: Yeah. Katty, I think that's exactly what you're seeing. And, first of all, we all know it's not just a New York problem. This is a problem all over our country. And if it's not handled right, it actually will get worse in all kinds of states. I mean, this is a red state and blue state problem. It's bigger cities, but it's not just bigger cities. We see, obviously, in small towns of America this problem too. So, I think you're right – in the mind of Donald Trump, it becomes easy to say, you know, let me compartmentalize this away. But here's the truth. First of all, 8.6 million Americans living here who have walked through hell and are still fighting an extraordinary battle and they need their federal government to stand with them. And that analogy I made the other day, you know, reminiscent of the 1970s where Gerald Ford turned his back on New York City. I don't think Donald Trump wants to be in the company in history of Gerald Ford, or another great example, Herbert Hoover, who he acts like a lot when Hoover literally ignored the totality of the Great Depression and let people suffer. You see too much of that would Trump. So right now, here's the nation's largest city, one of the great engines of the American economy. I'm asking for help to get back on our feet.

Right now, I want to give you a very sobering figure. We're going to spend this year \$3.5 billion to save lives and protect the health of New Yorkers that we were never going to have to spend in a normal year, but this crisis is so bad. We have to save lives. There's no other choice, but to protect people. Federal government is not saying we're going to make you whole for that extraordinary effort. My budget, I just announced we've lost over \$7 billion in revenue. Right now, Donald Trump is not doing anything to help my city back on its feet. How am I going to pay for basic services? How am I going to pay for first responders? How am I going to have a restart of my economy if my city's going broke? And I know it's happening all over the country. You're hearing mayors, Republican and Democratic, I've talked to them, saying, we're not going to be able to make it if we don't get help from the federal government because we've just seen a hit on our budgets, a hit on our cities, a hit on our people that was unestimable, and Donald Trump is silent. You know, Senator Menendez, Senator Cassidy said yesterday, there should be a bipartisan consensus to provide aid to cities and states, and get them back on their feet. That's how you restart the economy. Anything short of that, you're not going to have the recovery. But Donald Trump is literally silent, doesn't seem to care.

Joe Scarborough: We have Donny Deutsch with us, New York's own Donny Deutsch. He has a question for you, Mr. Mayor.

Donny Deutsch: Good to talk to you, Mayor – keep up the good work. Here's what I'm still not getting, and this is the million dollar question and that nobody seems to have an answer to – and you just showed Times Square, there was a clip. There's nobody there. I walked on 5th Avenue yesterday. There's nobody there. I still don't understand what the moderate step is, what the first step without testing, without a vaccine, I don't see how we get from A to B, whether it's a week from now or even five weeks now. Please paint a picture, whether it's June 1st, June 15, July 1st, what that first step back for New York or anybody else would be because I can't see what it looks like.

Mayor: Right. Donny, that's because you're exactly right. The absence of testing from day one never allowed us to fight this war the right way. If we had had testing in the beginning, we could have done a very intensive containment strategy. We might have been able to beat this disease back here and many other places. Now the – to get where you're saying, first of all, we have to

drive down these numbers. When you're still losing hundreds of people a day. Hundreds of people are dying a day, when your ICUs are still full, that's not turning the corner. We got to keep driving that down with the social distancing, the shelter in place, all the things we're doing, but to be able to come back, you need testing to be in our city, probably hundreds of thousands of tests a day. You need temperature checks going into workplaces. You need all sorts of things to make sure that anyone who's sick is immediately isolated and supported in quarantine. We could get there, but we can't do it without widespread testing. And so far, the federal government still can't get the handle on that. So, you're right – weeks, months until we have the tools to start back to normal.

Scarborough: And Donny Deutsch, of course, wants to make sure that everybody's temperature is taken before they go into tanning salons across the Greater New York area. We have now –

Deutsch: Joe, [inaudible] I still can get you to come out and attack me even at these times. That's when I know everything will be okay, that you still have that ability to just to bust my chops. So, that makes me warm and fuzzy.

Scarborough: In the immortal words of the Reverend Al Green, everything is going to be alright. Now, let's go to Jonathan Lemire. Mr. Mayor, you're favorite former New York Daily News reporter who I'm sure is going to go ask a question about your Brooklyn gym. Go ahead, Jonathan.

Jonathan Lemire: Not today, Mr. Mayor, but it is about your home borough of Brooklyn. A nursing home in Cobble Hill, Brooklyn, it was reported over the weekend, has lost 55 residents. 55 residents at this nursing home have died to the coronavirus. That nursing home is just down the block from my family's apartment. My children had done some volunteer work there, had gotten to know some of the residents. So, my questions to you are this, how could this happen? Is the City investigating it? And more broadly, what steps are the City and perhaps the State doing to prevent something like this from happening again?

Mayor: It's horrifying, Jonathan. And it just shows you how intense, how horrible this experience has been, how much this virus overtook us, particularly in those worse weeks. So, there's two different responsibilities here – the State of New York regulates, monitors nursing homes. They set the policies and the approach. The City of New York has been providing a lot of the supplies, the personal protective equipment, and whatever support we can to help people there. Our hospital system obviously is the – that's been the line of defense so that folks in those nursing homes who needed help, we would get to the hospitals that we've been trying to keep alive through this crisis to get them help. But something really has not worked out the right way, obviously, because people in nursing homes had been so vulnerable and somehow have not gotten to the hospital when they needed to. There's something wrong. We'll have a – we have to figure it out now and we have to figure out afterwards what we're going to do going forward. But it's horrible. It's horrifying. It kind of reminds you that this crisis has taken us places you could not have imagined in modern America, where so many people have been vulnerable. But it's also a warning of, you cannot pretend that this ferocious disease is simply going to walk away at one point, or you'll flick a switch and it's gone. You have to recognize how dangerous it is, and that's why that way back, that Donny was just talking about, it has to be done the right way or this disease can reassert and you'll see more tragedies like that.

Brzezinski: Mayor Bill de Blasio, thank you very much.

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