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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY ON COVID-19**

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Everybody we are coming to the end of a week that has changed our lives profoundly. The week before that I think we would have said was a week that changed our lives profoundly. And next week will be even more. So, we're dealing with something we've never dealt with before, none of us has experienced. We are all together trying to figure out how to deal with a new reality and that will be something we grapple with together for weeks and months to come. So, I just want to start by saying for everyone, it's important to recognize the distance we've had to travel in very, very little time. We've had to get used to things that were literally unimaginable and we didn't get months to get ready. We only had days to change our habits and our lives profoundly. Anyone out there who's confused, you are absolutely in the vast majority with the rest of us. We're all trying to make sense of so much new information, so many new challenges and trying to figure out the right way to do this together. I'll be talking today about clearer specific ideas about how we will work together within the new pause order from the State of New York. I'll be talking about the ways we're going to work together to get through the weeks and months ahead.

I want to be very clear about challenges. I think my job is to tell you the things that we're going to confront, including some things that are difficult to hear, but to brace New Yorkers for the reality. To get you all informed honestly about what we're dealing with, what we will deal with. But also, to remind you of our strengths, of all the help that people are giving each other, all the help our City government can and will give our State government can and will give. All the people who are stepping forward not only in New York City but all over the country, all over the world who want to help New York City right now and God bless them all. I'll talk about all of that today and in the days ahead. But really it is important to recognize the sheer extent of change. And to understand how challenging that is for all of us as human beings to make sense of so quickly. If anyone is feeling anxious or fearful that is entirely normal at this moment. And what's so important is to talk it through with each other and seek, you know, good and real and accurate information, which we will provide constantly. To support each other, listen to each other's concerns, see how we can help, particularly how we can help those in greatest need. And that's what New Yorkers do so well. We've seen it time and time again, after 9/11 after Sandy, so many times. When seniors needed help, folks with disabilities, folks who didn't have medicine, folks who couldn't get out of their apartment, time and time again every day, New Yorkers answered the call. And we're going to need that again. And we're going to be at this again for weeks and months.

But I'll tell you something, I really believe that even though we are the epicenter of this crisis, and I want to be real, real honest about that. We are now in New York City, the epicenter of this

crisis in the United States of America. I'm not happy to tell you that and you're not happy to hear it. But I'll tell you something else, there is no place in the United States of America, no place on Earth, where there are stronger, tougher, more resilient people, where there is more spirit and compassion. This is the place where people can handle anything thrown at them. That's who New Yorkers are. That's who all of you are. And that gives me a lot of hope. And I've been real honest about the fact that I'm not satisfied by our nation's response to this crisis. I don't feel that there's been anywhere near the response that any place in this nation deserves, especially our nation's largest city with 8.6 million people on the front line. But I, at the same time as I'm deeply concerned and troubled and angry and frustrated at the lack of federal response, I am inspired by the response right here in New York City from everyday New Yorkers, from our public servants, from all the people who protect us and keep us healthy. So many good people who are stepping up. And I'm inspired because I believe if there's one place on Earth that has the ingenuity and the creativity and the sense of entrepreneurship to find a way to overcome this crisis with our own resources, that's right here.

Now, I want to be 100 percent clear that doesn't let the federal government off the hook in the least. I couldn't be angrier at the lack of response. I've been very plain about that. But you know what? If we're going to be left to fend for ourselves in New York City, in New York State, all I can at least say there are no people on Earth who are more creative and more able to create something out of even the most tough circumstances. No one's better than New Yorkers. We're going to find a way to do things we've never done before. And I've likened this situation to war many times because it is, that's just the reality. And we've only begun down this very difficult path. But I already see New Yorkers doing extraordinary things. I already see people volunteering to find the supplies we need to build the equipment we need to make things happen. Even when previously we would've thought it impossible. Isn't that the history of New York City in a nutshell? People making things happen even though they were told it was impossible. That is the story of New York and New Yorkers. So, we will do it again in our time right here, right now.

Let me turn to some specific updates and information I want to share with everyone. And I want to take a moment to really commend the people who are doing exceptional work right now, helping us all. Of course, our health care workers, God bless them. They have such a tough job at this moment. But they are showing up with energy and passion, protecting the lives of so many people. Our first responders, who we call – we need them every day, every year, and we need them even more now. And they are at their post doing their job brilliantly. Our transit workers we're depending on them to make sure that everyone else we need gets where they need to go. And thank you to all the transit workers for what you're doing. And then there's a lot of even more unsung heroes who really deserve notice at this moment. You know what? Maybe in the normal course of life, you don't stop to think about the man or woman that works in the grocery store or the pharmacy. The postal worker who brings you every day, things you depend on and you're going to depend on even more now. All the delivery workers, whether they're in the public sector or the private sector – the men and women who deliver food and are now working at so many food establishments, they're going through a tough time, but a lot of them are continuing to operate so they can help all of us. All those folks are answering the call in their own way. I want to thank all of you. We need all of you and you don't get the praise you deserve normally and you should get a whole lot of praise now because you, all of you are helping to keep this city

running, keep it together and ensuring the people who need help the most are getting it. So thank you. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart.

I want to note and I want to ask everyone if you see, you know, this is a time I say it a lot, that you know, remember to thank people who do so much for us. You know, this coming week we're going to be dealing with a whole different reality. We've never been under this kind of order to pause our lives, change our ways. It's going to take getting used to. It's going to take adjustments. There'll be some trial and error for sure. But let's thank the people who are helping us, helping to make it work. If you see a first responder, a police officer, a firefighter, a EMT, thank them. Thank the transit workers, thank the health care workers, thank those educators who are going to be at those enrichment centers taking care of the children of those essential workers. And like I said, the postal worker on your block, the person that delivers a pizza to you, anybody you come across who's out there making it happen, please give them some extra gratitude because they deserve it.

Each day, I have a very unfortunate obligation to tell you the overall situation in terms of the number of cases. I remind you every case is a human being and a family. And the numbers, again, continue to be staggering. Confirmed New York City cases at this moment, this is based on information from 10:00 am today, 9,654 cases, an unbelievable number. We couldn't even imagine such a number just a week ago. We are on the verge right now of 10,000 cases in this city. We essentially at this point, and this has been a trend over recent days, we represent shockingly about a third of the cases in the entire United States of America. And about two thirds of the cases in the State of New York or even more. We'll constantly keep you updated, but I want people to just for a moment reflect on that fact. This is a crisis affecting our whole state, our whole nation. But it's a crisis affecting New York City far more than any place else just by the numbers. One third of the cases in the entire nation right here. We have lost 63 people to coronavirus in just a matter of weeks.

We're going to constantly update you, what we see within these facts to help people understand this disease better. And I remind you, it's a disease that literally no expert on earth fully understands but we're trying to constantly confirm our understanding and update people. But here is a fact that's important. As of this moment in New York City and this information will be published in more detail shortly. There have been in the age group from birth to 44 years old, so New Yorkers from the first moments or life up to 44 years old. Within that group, there have been no deaths. And that is a very important fact confirming a lot of what we understood previously about this virus. The breakdown by borough – Brooklyn is 2,857 cases, Queens 2,715, Manhattan 2,072, the Bronx 1,411, and Staten Island 593. Another very important point. And again, information will be updated constantly and made public when we can. But we've talked a lot and I reflected a few days ago about a conversation I had with Dr. Anthony Fauci, who is the leading national expert in this crisis and who we all are turning to for important information. He's also a proud son of Brooklyn, proud son of New York City.

He, days ago, said to me, we really need to educate people to the particular danger to those over 70 years old. Well, here's what we know in New York City. So far, 35 percent of our hospitalizations related to coronavirus have been for New Yorkers who are over 70, 35 percent, over a third. But you should also know that people over 70 constitute only about 10 percent of

the population of New York City. So, what we're seeing is the over 70-year-olds represented among those hospitalized, over three times more than their proportion of the population. That really reminds us that that's the particular thing we need to focus on. Folks who are much older and particularly they have those preexisting conditions we've talked about so much. These are the folks in the greatest danger who we have to really move heaven and Earth to protect. Keeping them isolated and out of contact with other people to the maximum amount possible, supporting them, still giving them a lot of love and support -- phone calls, FaceTime, everything you can do to support your older loved ones, getting them the things they need. But keeping them out of contact with others to the maximum step possible to protect them. That's crucial.

I'm going to talk for a moment about a situation with the other levels of government, and it is if there were ever a tale of two cities, this is at -- the State of New York is doing so many wonderful things, so many of the right things to help people all over the state and certainly to help New York City. I commend Governor Cuomo and our legislative leaders in Albany, Speaker Heastie and Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins and so many people across the state government who are doing so much to help New York City right now. And on the federal side, it's almost exactly the opposite where we're seeing so little. That is not to say there are not good people in the federal government trying to help us. And Dr. Fauci is a great example and so many of the good men and women of FEMA are a great example, it's not one way or another. But when it comes to the decisions of government and the actions of government, really doing something tangible, we're seeing a lot of help from the State of New York and very little and in the way of evidence that the federal government understands that our nation's largest city is in the crosshairs and that the federal government's going to actually do something about it. I won't dwell. I've been perfectly clear. We need our armed forces and we need them now. And I'm very happy that we're getting the ship, the Comfort coming to New York soon. That's very, very helpful. That's a great example of what our armed forces could do, but they could do so much more if they were fully mobilized and we need them.

We need supplies on a vast scale for the city. We are very happy that FEMA is here. That could make a difference. But so far, we have no specifics on what supplies we will get when and we need them now. I have, again, to compare -- great appreciation for the announcement that Governor Cuomo made yesterday, a million more N95 masks coming to New York City soon. That's crucial. That's wonderful. But I have no such announcement from the President of the United States. In fact, he still has not fully utilized the Defense Production Act. He has not given orders to specific companies, to not only produce those items that are needed most starting with ventilators, but to ensure that they will be distributed to where the need is greatest here in New York and other key parts of the country. I believe that can't be done and won't be done unless and until our military is mobilized. And I don't know why on Earth the President hesitates at this point. I think you're seeing a human cry all over the country for our armed forces to be activated. The time is now.

Very quickly, and this has been put out publicly yesterday. I'll just give a brief overview, a number of personnel announcements. We are continuing to build out our team to deal with what is a wartime type of crisis. I want to thank for her extraordinary leadership, my Chief of Staff, Emma Wolfe and I announced yesterday that I will add to her title the designation of Deputy Mayor for Administration and that will put her second in the line of succession after our First

Deputy Mayor Dean Fuleihan, both of them have been the paramount outstanding leaders of the day to day operations that are being run out of our Office of Emergency Management and other locations, coordinating all the work of all city agencies. We, all of us, even though we're working remotely from each other in many cases, we are talking constantly throughout the day. I am being given every hour, literally, it seems new decision to make and I'm determining the direction of the City's response. But I have extraordinary leaders to depend on to implement those decisions and to coordinate the work of all of our agencies. So, a tremendous thank you to First Deputy Mayor Dean Fuleihan, and now Deputy Mayor for Administration and Chief of Staff, Emma Wolfe.

I announced that we will have one of our most extraordinary public servants, our Sanitation Commissioner Kathryn Garcia will take on an additional title as our COVID-19 Food Czar. This is a brand-new concept and it reflects the reality of what we're dealing with today. We hope to get good news from Washington of some kind of true stimulus package that will actually reach the people of this city and this country with substantial direct support. Not token support, not one-time support, but deep ongoing support so folks can afford everything in their lives. We don't have that yet, however. I'm desperately concerned that a lot of New Yorkers are running out of money and that's the money they use to buy food among other crucial necessities. Commissioner Garcia and her new role will create a citywide network to ensure that food is available to those who cannot afford it. Food is available to seniors and vulnerable folks. Food is available to people who are working just a few weeks ago and no longer have any means of support. It's going to take a mobilization such as we've never seen before. She'll work with all of those agencies that currently do food relief, the Human Resources Administration, the Mayor's Office of Food Policy, obviously state agencies, Food Bank, soup kitchens, so many amazing nonprofit organizations. She'll work with all of them, but she's going to build something bigger and more comprehensive than we've ever seen in New York City. On the assumption that food will become much more of an issue going forward and that many people will have a strain that they have not experienced previously because of huge disruptions in their own income. So I want to thank Commissioner Garcia for taking on that role.

I've named Peter Hatch as our COVID- 19 Public Private Partnership Czar. He will work with private sector entities and philanthropic partners to create a brand-new network of support. There are so many wonderful offers of help coming in. We have to build that into a truly organized forceful effort to ensure that the maximum private and philanthropic help reaches those in greatest need and augments everything we're trying to do as a city. Peter Hatch has served previously as deputy, excuse me, as Chief of Staff to Deputy Mayor Raul Perea-Henze. He will take on this new role as the public private partnership czar. Also coming back into city service my senior advisor for years, Gabrielle Fialkoff who played a crucial role activating many forms of support for the people of the city. She did an outstanding job over five years serving the people of this city and she's returning as a senior advisor. She will ensure that many of the organizations that previously she worked with to help in normal times will help even more now in these tough, tough times. And replacing Peter Hatch, in his role as Chief of Staff to the Deputy Mayor Raul Perea-Henze, Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services will be Julie Bero who has worked in our Intergovernmental Affairs operation and thank her for taking on that new role.

Lastly, we're going to be doing something and I'm announcing this now, something we have not had to do in our recent memory in this city, which is to organize production here in New York City for vitally needed supplies and equipment. The notion of this city being left in so many ways on its own to deal with this crisis is deeply painful, but we don't take it lying down. We're going to fight for all the resources and support we deserve and need. But in the meantime, I've named Carl Rodriguez, who is currently Chief of Staff to Deputy Mayor Vicki Been, Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development. Carl will additionally take on a role running our production capacity group. This will be leaders from different city agencies working with the private sector to determine the maximum extent possible quickly, tangibly, how we will produce ventilators right here in New York City. Surgical masks, hospital surgical gowns, anything and everything that we need. This is a no way letting the federal government off the hook. But it does say that if we can effectively produce something in New York City, even if it is not exactly the ideal we would want, but it's still usable, we will produce it here. I want to thank Carl for taking on this role in all those who will be working with him.

Quickly I'll talk about some other items and then turn to our Police Commissioner who will give you an update. On the question of parks, I spoke earlier with Governor Cuomo. We are fully aligned. We understand that we have a big and different and new challenge on our hands. Folks who are going to be home in a way that literally, it doesn't happen any time of the year, not even in summer, to have so many people home at once. So many families and so many children looking for some opportunity to get out of their homes, at least for a small portion of the day. Here's how we're going to do it. And I'm going to describe what we're going to do in the first week, starting Monday and throughout this coming week. And then we're going to judge the results accordingly. And we might then make some very different plans. And again, one of the things I want to emphasize, every single day instructions can change based on new circumstances because we are dealing with something that we've never dealt with before. We'll always try and give you clear and consistent information. But I'm also warning people it can change. If it changes, it changes for a reason and we'll certainly explain why.

So, on the parks -- we understand that under the Governor's pause order, which I entirely agree with, we need to ensure that if people want a little exercise in their day that they can do that the right way. It is absolutely normal and human to want to get outside, get a little bit of exercise. But I remind you, the pause is all about social distancing. It is all about protecting ourselves and our families and each other. When we say you can go out for some exercise, we are not saying you can linger. We're not saying you can make a day of it. We're saying, go out, get a minimum amount of exercise, get what you need, and then get back in the doors. Same with grocery shopping. Go get what you need. Get back inside. You got to go to the pharmacy, get what you need, get back inside. We will be enforcing this, but with an understanding for the challenges that people are facing for how new this is. And I'll talk about it. And then Commissioner Shea will talk about it. We'll enforce through education. We'll enforce through warnings. We'll enforce with having real conversations with people to help them understand what's going on. We're not going to be draconian. We're going to give people a chance to get used to this, but I guarantee you we will enforce this new reality. And I think the vast majority of New Yorkers will understand quickly and will act accordingly. So, folks will go to their parks. That's normal. You want to get outside for a little bit. You want to get some exercise, you want to go for a run, whatever it is, that's normal. You got a socially distance. You can't do it the way you're used to.

You can't play team sports at this point. It's going to be unfortunately quite a while before that's possible again. There's no more gatherings. There's no more events. There's no more big barbecues. All that is gone for now. It's not gone forever. It's gone certainly for weeks, probably for months. At some point we'll be able to resume a more normal life, but for now, when you go to the park, you're going for your own exercise. Now, you might say, well, wait a minute, what if it's a parent going with their child and they live under the same roof? Of course, you're already living with someone under the same roof or a couple that lives together. Let's be clear, that's a different reality. People who live under the same roof and are already exposed to each other all day long and this is something that Governor and I explicitly discussed, they already have a different reality and they don't need to distance from each other because they're already in constant contact with each other. So, if a mom goes to the playground with her child, obviously she's already in constant contact with that child. That's different than if that child came in contact with a child from another family or that mom came in contact with a mom from a different family. That's the problem. Let's be clear, within the family, under one roof, that's one thing, but families mixing, people connecting who are not under the same roof, that's where we're going to see a spread of this disease that we can't have. That's where the social distancing rules come into effect, six feet apart, and we all want to be social, but we just can't the way we were. So you can go to the park, but only for a limited period of time. Families can stay together but don't mix with other families. If you're going on your own, stay on your own, keep six feet apart from everyone else. Go get your exercise. Get home.

In terms of playgrounds, this is a thorny issue, and I'm saying this as a parent, I used to take my kids to playgrounds around Prospect Park in Brooklyn constantly. I understand a lot about the culture of our playgrounds and the challenges that we deal with in normal times with all the kids who want to be on the playground. Here's what we're going to do for this next week, and I'm only saying this for this next week because we want to try it out. We're going to say to parents, look, here's the reality, if you're going to go on a playground, you have to take full responsibility for the situation. Full personal responsibility. Here are some of the realities. We cannot have overcrowding on a playground. If there are some people already on the playground and it's starting to get to you can't keep six feet away from people who are not part of your family, don't go on the playground. If our police, our parks enforcement officers or other enforcement agency see a playground that's starting to fill up, they're going to clear it out. If you go the playground, you need to keep your children away from children who are not part of your family. That's your responsibility. We will always do our best with city enforcement, but we can't be everywhere, obviously, you have to take responsibility. If you don't feel you can do it, don't go to the playground.

Some parents have said, will the playgrounds be cleaned and sanitized? The answer, just a real blunt, New York City answer is no. They never have been. They can't be in this situation. It would take a Herculean effort every five minutes, literally, that we simply can't do. If your kids go to a playground, you might want them to not be on certain types of equipment or any type of equipment. You might say, I don't want to go to a playground. I just want my kids to run around in an open area. You parents have to make that decision. Well what we're going to do is have playgrounds open to the maximum extent possible, monitored and enforced, but parents have to make their own choices for this next week as to what they feel is appropriate. I'm trying to give

you real honest warnings. We'll put up signage, we'll constantly reiterate these rules and we'll see how it goes for a week.

If people are responsible about use of the playgrounds, and we believe it's a good outlet for kids who are only going to get in a short period of exercise each day, we'll keep them open. If we feel that they are not being handled properly. If we feel that people are taking advantage in the wrong way of the situation or not paying attention to the rules, or it's creating something that's just not supportable, we'll have to at that point strongly consider shutting them down. It's not something I want to do. I really don't want to do that. I'm saying that as a parent. So, we're going to see how this week goes and we have agreement with the State of New York that that is the approach we'll take. Tomorrow, I'm going to provide the State with a written plan delineating what I've just told you in broad stroke, and we'll work with the State each step of the way going forward to determine how best to handle a real sense of reality of our parks and playgrounds.

But again, a NYPD is going to be out there. If they see anything that looks like even the beginning of a gathering, they're going to say, break it up. They're going to say, you got to get your quick exercise individually and get home. The message couldn't be clearer. And Commissioner Shea will give you a sense of what he's experienced in recent days. But I can summarize it. New Yorkers are listening. They are following the guidance they're getting. And when police officer or other enforcement officer tells him to do something, overwhelmingly they are doing it. They all understand what time it is. So, I think we're going to see that we're going to find a way to make this work. Okay, very quickly, let me just note, hold on one second - oh, this is consistent with this point, to confirm just how much New Yorkers are adhering to rules. I want to give you an example. It's a very striking example for anyone who knows this town and has been here for any amount of your life, especially if you've been here a long time. I think you might find this striking. Yesterday in New York City, we sent out four agencies, NYPD, FDNY, Department of Buildings, and Sheriff's Office to continue doing enforcement at bars, restaurants, movie theaters, gyms, any place that we needed to ensure people were not congregating. There were 13,000 inspections yesterday by those agencies. 13,000 inspections of which in only 11 instances was a violation given. One in a thousand – less than one in a thousand cases, was it even necessary to give a violation. I think that speaks volumes about what we are dealing with now.

A very important topic. There's been a lot of concern about our jail system. I'm going to be giving you constant updates. This is an area of tremendous concern, obviously. Talked about an initial group of inmates who were being reviewed for release. This will be an ongoing situation and a rapid one. I have been working closely with the Police Commissioner and other officials and obviously our correction leadership to determine the proper approach that is a humane and responsive to this crisis, but also constantly takes into effect – into account, I should say – public safety and obviously legal requirements. 23 inmates are being released today from our jail system. Those individuals are over 50 years old and low risk to re-offend. Some others we're awaiting a response from the State before they can be released. We are now starting immediate work on a group of 200 additional inmates who are being reviewed for release. We will have the update on what number within those 200 will be released. That update will be tomorrow. These are primarily individuals who have limited time remaining on their sentences on Rikers Island.



For all those who are concerned about this issue. I'm concerned. The Police Commissioner is concerned. The Health Commissioner is concerned. The Correction Commissioner's concerned. We're all trying to make sense of a very challenging situation in an appropriate way. We are looking at each individual case and some of the portrayal of the situation I think has left out some of the complexity. There are individuals who I think are obvious candidates for appropriate release. There are some other individuals with complex histories that raise other questions. We're going to strike that balance, but we will continually update, continually look at tranche after tranche of inmates for potential release in this crisis. This next group of 200, we will have an answer on by tomorrow. There is a very rigorous effort being made right now in our jail system to keep everyone healthy and safe. There's a lot of resources being applied for the safety of our officers and inmates alike. That effort will continue to intensify.

We have updates, I know some of them I believe have been announced about changes in testing locations. You can hear later on details from the Health Commissioner and from our Health + Hospitals CEO. There's been a closure of the site at Jacobi. We'll explain that, when we get to Q & A. Everything is being done specifically related to prioritization. That means ensuring that we get to those individual patients in greatest need, and we do everything we can to use our testing capacity, ease the burden on emergency rooms. Testing has been fully focused on priority needs. Structural needs to keep our health system going to reach those in greatest danger. It will be tightly organized according to that principle, and we can get into detail in the Q & A. Few other points quickly. For our health care workers, these are the people are, there are so many heroes in this city, and so many people are depending on, I think we can all agree there is no group of New Yorkers we are depending on more right now than our doctors, our nurses, our lab techs, every human being who works in our health care system is precious right now. These folks are doing heroic work. They're working exceedingly long hours. They are putting themselves at risk. We must support them in every way we can. A small but helpful thing we can do right now in light of the profound changes in this city, the fact that so much of the city is not operating the way it normally does, and the idea of commuting has been fundamentally changed and so many parts of our city are not seeing the kind of traffic, etc., that we're used to. We're going to do something temporarily in this crisis and grant parking permits to health care workers who we need to serve this city in this crisis. So, there'll be a process to determine who qualifies and we will begin with 10,000 permits for these heroic workers that we will start to distribute as early as tomorrow.

Related to how people get around. There's an excellent question in the last day or two on what is essential in terms of how people deal with this crisis? And the question that was asked to me is if car repair mechanic shops, automotive shops are being kept open, shouldn't bike repair shops be kept open? I thought it was a very good question. We in the city have compared notes with the State and we have agreement that yes, bike repair shops are essential at this time of crisis because more and more people are depend on their bicycles. So yes, we will instruct that bike repair shops will be treated as essential and if they are open all of our enforcement agents will know to respect that and allow them to keep doing their work that we all need.

Finally, before I give you a few words in Spanish just to say I don't think anyone will be surprised to know that since we're in a crisis, we really have to be careful for everything we need. Everything that's a basic need and know nothing is more basic when it comes to protecting people's health care than ensuring that there is a blood supply to serve all New Yorkers. Right

now, our blood supply is sufficient, but a lot of the blood drives that happen throughout the year, particularly based in companies that we appreciate deeply, a lot of those have been canceled because the companies have had to shut down. Giving blood is essential. So we need New Yorkers to step forward. Go to any New York blood center site in the city. If you are going to give blood, everyone will know that that is an essential activity. Again, you go, you participate. Every one of us says thank you and then get back home, as with everything else. If you are ready and willing and able to give blood, please call (800) 933-2566, again, (800) 933-2566, or go to [www.nybc.org](http://www.nybc.org), nybc.org. Everyone I've heard from so many New Yorkers who want to do something, who are looking to be helpful and you know, are frustrated by this crisis and want to help, here is a way that anyone who qualifies can help. So, we really, really appreciate that.

In Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio Speaks in Spanish]

With that, I want to turn to our Police Commissioner. I want to thank you, Commissioner, and all the men and women of the NYPD for absolutely outstanding work in this crisis. And I know together we're going to be figuring out how to do some new things. But I know you are up to the task as are the men and women who serve under your command. Commissioner Dermot Shea.

**Police Commissioner Dermot Shea:** Thank you Mr. Mayor. As the Mayor said, it's been an interesting couple of weeks here, but I can tell you definitively that the men and women in the New York City Police Department, as well as all the other city agencies, certainly the health care workers across the board are rising to the challenge. And it's at a time like this when quite frankly, you see the best in people come out and we're seeing it day in and day out. The traditional crime that we put on the shoulders of the men and women in the New York City Police Department has not been forgotten, but there was so much more that they've picked up in the last couple of weeks. Just most recently in the last couple of days, we've begun surveying over 500 large supermarkets in New York City. Just yesterday in the last 24 hours between pharmacies and supermarkets, over 1600 visits by the men and women in the New York City Police Department and literally no issues. A couple of couple of discussions about overcrowding, but, overall, very well.

In the last 24 hours, over 5,500 bars and restaurants. And that's the story that you're continuing to see, cooperation by New Yorkers. Two arrests and out of 5,500, and that I believe is one incident in Queens. So by and large, we are seeing cooperation. We're seeing New Yorkers rise to the challenge throughout the city and all five boroughs. You're seeing tasks picked up by the men and women of the police department in reaching out to elderly people that may not be serviced by traditional means and working with elected officials, working with community partners, getting them food. So, I can tell you that I couldn't be more proud of what I've seen. To the parks, the Mayor mentioned the parks and in the last couple of days. It's an interesting dynamic now as we get through this time where we've been all stressed I think and all pent up inside and we are like no other city in the world, in a city of over 8 million people – a vertical city – and you saw yesterday people getting out exercising, which is a good thing. I can tell you that I hit the – in the last 48 hours, the East River Park, the West Side Highway, I personally saw a Riverside Park, Central Park, over 99 percent of what I saw is what you hope to see, New

Yorkers coming out, parents with kids, responsibly getting the exercise that the Mayor have talked about. No, I did not see organized sports. The biggest thing I saw was a two on two pickup game. And I can tell you that the men and women now of the New York City Police Department are getting more and more involved in this as the Mayor said. Made calls yesterday with some of the borough and bureau commanders of the NYPD to just reinforce that messaging piece of this. We're all in this together, reinforce that positive message. As much as you want to get out, there's a responsible way to do it. And that's what we all need to hear and take part in.

So you'll expect to see police officers throughout the five boroughs, whether it's on a bicycle, probably on some scooters and some marked police cars, driving slowly through the parks and just broadcasting and speaking to people about that message. Enjoy, how you doing, get your exercise, and then the politely, get out of here. And I say that tongue in cheek. We are all in this together and, and it was really, it was heartwarming, I'm sure to see, Mr. Mayor you touched on it, people that are people that are behind closed doors all day, every day. That's not really what we're worried about when they're walking. A husband and wife holding hands in the park, taking a walk with their dog. That's not really what we're worried about, they're together in the apartment anyway, but it's the large groups. I heard from some elected officials yesterday and throughout the city working on this. We got to we got to think, think long distance here. This is a long game. So those backyard parties, those DJs, I'm sorry DJs, I know how everyone is hurting here, but we can't be having parties with the large gatherings whether it's in backyards or anywhere else in New York City at this time right now. It's just too dangerous. So thank you. I'm sure we'll have some questions. But again, on behalf of all the men and women in the police department, thank you for all the kind words we are there for you and we're going to continue to be there for you.

**Mayor:** Thank you very, very much Commissioner. I think you laid it out very, very clearly. I think you said a very nice version of get out of here. I like that. And then we'll make sure the message spreads in in a very smart, fair, decent way. With that want to make sure that we now have an opportunity to take questions from the media on all the things we've talked about here and any other topics they would like to bring up. And let's turn to the media questions. Who's first?

**Ann Cheng:** Hi all. Just a quick note at the top, we ask that everyone limit their questions to no more than two, including follow-ups. This allows us to be fair and try to get to as many people as possible. We will start off today with Aaron from the Post.

**Question:** Good afternoon, Mr. Mayor. Can you hear me?

**Mayor:** Yes, indeed.

**Question:** So just wanted to go on to circle back on the issue of parks and people going outdoors to get their exercise and just want to see if there's any sort of understanding as far as what the cutoff would be? How much time is enough time? And also understanding that people have been pretty good about abiding by these rules as far as businesses goes, what the sort of potential enforcement or penalties might look like if you encounter anyone, particularly obstinate?

**Mayor:** I'll start and I'm sure the Commissioner has a view too. First thing I want to say is the NYPD every single day, and I would say this about Parks Enforcement and you know, depending on how this plays out, we could easily get other agencies involved as well. But the story that I think is missed, and I don't ever blame the media for telling the exceptional story or the dramatic story, but I would like us all to do a little bit more particularly a time of crisis to acknowledge what is exceptional and dramatic and unusual versus what is typical. When you hear the number of inspections were made and you only had 11 violations, as I mentioned earlier out of 13,000 inspections, that that really says something not just about store owners, but about what people in general are understanding about this crisis.

And I have seen it in many places I've been in recent days. I really think there's a deep understanding that something profound has changed and it has to be handled differently. And I have a lot of faith in New Yorkers. I have a lot of faith in everyday people. Will there be some individuals at 8.6 million people that don't get it? Of course. And our officers for time immemorial have had to deal with people who don't get it. People try and make their own rules. People who think they're smarter than anyone else, I assure you there's no one more worldly wise than the New York City Police Officer. There's no one understands the human condition better than in New York City Police Officer. And they are extraordinarily resourceful, our officers, so sometimes they use humor. Sometimes they use firmness. Sometimes they illustrate their point, whatever it is. I've seen it throughout my life. They know how to talk to people. They know how to talk to young people and old people. They know how to talk to every kind of person. They'll make clear what you got to do.

And I believe the vast, vast majority of New Yorkers will listen. We're not to the point yet of specific sanctions because we're starting down a road and we'll decide with the State if we need to get into sanctions more deeply. But I don't think that's going to be the case. I think the number of people who truly don't get it and try and stand apart is going to be limited. And I affirm, if someone really wants to disagree with a police officer and acts in a manner that's inappropriate and illegal will then they will be handled the same way as anyone else who obstructs the work of a police officer. But I don't think we're even talking about the level we might see of that in normal times because we're dealing with a crisis that's being felt in every inch of our city. I predict you're going to see a different reality in the word will spread. And I'll turn to the Commissioner to one more point.

How much time? Well, you know, we're going to work on this and I think it would be helpful to give people some guidance, but I just want to start with common sense. How much time does it take to exercise, folks who go for a jog in the morning, know how long they go for a jog. People go for a bike ride, know how long their bike ride is. People go for a walk, know how long the walk is. You know, if you're exercising now and you have a basic thing you do, for a lot of people, I'd say it's a half hour, 45 minutes, something like that. Go get in your exercise and get home or go do your exercise, go to the store and get home. The point is, maximize the get home part. Get only the most basic exercise – I understand you need to walk your dog, walk your dog, and then get home. Your kids understand you have young kids are going crazy inside. You need to get them outside for a while. Get them outside for a while. As soon as you get them through a little bit of real, you know, working off their steam, get them back home.

So, we'll give some guidelines, but this is also about personal responsibility. This is about common sense, which is what the vast majority of New Yorkers have. We're not going to allow gatherings. We're not going to allow loitering. We're not going to allow someone just to hang out. And you know, for a long period of time, if an officer sees you and you're sitting on a park bench, they're going to say, hey you know, you need to get home. And the person says, all, you know, I'm only going to be here for a few minutes, then I'm going home. Fine. If someone thinks they can hang around for a long period of time, I assure you that officer will remind them again energetically. But people just have to get it. We have to help ourselves and each other by taking seriously, you know, just what you need, nothing more and get home. Commissioner?

**Commissioner Shea:** I – as I hear this discussion, I'm thinking – and I laugh at the reputation that we have as New Yorkers of running around, running from one location to the other, bumping past each other, probably like no other city. I've seen the opposite in the last two weeks and I'm sure you have too, whether it's in parks or walking around. There's a forced politeness these days of allowing one to pass before you proceed down a path. And that's what I saw in the parks yesterday, and not universally, but you saw people giving each other that wide berth. In two weeks, we've learned to distance whether – it may not always be six feet, it may be three to four feet, but you're seeing this all over. And I saw it yesterday in every park that I visited. Not universally. Some issues – we will double down on the education piece.

And this, I'll tell you on a personal level, this hurt. The last thing you want to do is tell kids that they are doing everything we want them to ordinarily, but not under these extreme circumstances, get out of a park. But we have to, we'll continue to educate and again, I think the message here is you can find three or 10 or whatever it is, messages on Twitter. I was out there myself and saw it firsthand. By and large, there were no large organized sports, there were people getting out on a beautiful day in a really difficult situation. And we'll continue to monitor it. We'll step up the presence as well as the audio messages and the speaking. And again, this is probably the least of my concerns.

**Commissioner Barbot:** I want to just build on the –

**Mayor:** Please, Commissioner –

**Commissioner Barbot:** I just want to build on that to say, as the Mayor mentioned, we want New Yorkers to use good judgment in terms of time, but I want them to pay special attention to ensuring distance. This is about distance. This is not so much about time as it is about distance. And the longer – given the density of our city, the longer someone stays outside, the greater the risk of coming in contact with someone within that six feet perimeter. And so that's why, focus on distance, not so much on time.

**Mayor:** Right. I want to just – that's great. And I want to just put a point on that and then we'll keep going. I think Commissioner Barbot said something that's really good, common sense guidance. Yeah, if you stay out longer, your chances of bumping into someone, your chances of being put in a situation that's not the ideal, which is six feet apart, those chances increase. Where do you know you're not going to bump into someone or end up coming in contact with someone else who, God forbid, may have the disease at home, right? When you're at home, you know

what you're dealing with. So, you get the exercise you need, keep it as tight as you can in terms of time. You go to the store – even if you go to the store, keep your time as tight as possible, observe that six-foot distancing, soon as you're done, get back home because that's the safe thing to do. And it's not going to be fun. It's not going to be easy, but it's also not going to be forever. And we want to keep people safe. Go ahead.

**Question:** Well, one more in that vein, Mr. Mayor. Governor Cuomo, this morning floated the ideas of potentially opening up some streets or I should say closing them to vehicular traffic and opening them up for people who want to get out, stretch their legs, get a little fresh air. Is that anything that's being considered. And thank you all for your time. I appreciate it.

**Mayor:** Thank you, Aaron. I spoke to the Governor about this and we had a great conversation and we're going to again. We're going to codify in the next 24 hours our approach here in New York City, share it with the State, with the Governor's team, and we'll take it from there. But we had a high level of agreement in the conversation earlier today. We're certainly going to consider over time the possibility of opening up some streets for recreation. But I want to caution, the first frame is the first frame here, which is we want people to get that exercise, get that time they need, but we also need to enforce it. And our ability to enforce directly correlates to knowing where we need to put our focus, our energy, and our officers. We know where that is right now in terms of our parks and playgrounds, because right now the NYPD patrols those areas, the parks enforcement patrols those areas. That is something that we can focus on, have a strategy for, and do the right way.

If we're going to expand, we're going to expand very purposefully. If we're going to look to have a street that's opened up for recreation, we're going to do that very smartly and carefully because we have to attach enforcement to it. It cannot be, oh, we're just going to close off some streets and leave it be. If we do that, I guarantee what will happen is a whole lot of people start to congregate. And again, because we're humans, we're social, it's natural, and people won't remember and they'll fall into – I see it all the time in the last few days, people start to reach out their hand to shake hands or start to want to hug someone they know and they stop themselves. Almost without exception, I find that sort of sudden stop. It's going to take us a long time to get used to it.

So, if your block – you know, if you put barriers at the end of your block, everyone's going to come out and hang out like it's normal. We can't have that. We got to do this in a systematic, careful fashion. So that's an idea that's on the table. What I would say is, think of it this way, we're going to start with the parks and playgrounds we have that we know how to patrol, determine over the coming days if we need to expand that – and if so, how? – but most importantly, how do we enforce it, how do we keep eyes on it, how do we make sure it works? So, one stage at a time and we'll keep people updated as we do. Go ahead. Thank you.

**Cheng:** Next we have Alex from the Daily Beast.

**Mayor:** Go ahead, Alex.

**Question:** Hi. Can you hear me?

**Mayor:** Yep.

**Question:** Okay, great. There's growing concern among a lot of gig economy workers, not delivery people, but freelancers in general. We've now passed a cycle of a single paycheck and some people are out of money. If someone is entirely out of money, let's say, and that goes everywhere from rent to food, what actions should they be taking?

**Mayor:** It's a very painful situation. I'm glad you raised it, Alex, because this is – I think the gig workers are facing some of the toughest dynamics here. Obviously, it depends on each individual. Anyone who, again, everyone's different, everyone has a different situation. Anyone who does have the opportunity to apply for unemployment insurance obviously should but we also know that system's overloaded. I'm not belittling that fact. We are hoping and praying that the Congress acts very quickly on a stimulus that is direct money into the pockets of working people, including gig economy workers. Obviously, there've been some other actions taken, which I'm happy about, including by the federal government, like limiting student loan repayments and actions that had been taken by the City and State to ward off evictions. All of those things help but we're going to have to do a lot more.

And again, the place where we need help the most is a federal government because the City is, you know, really struggling right now to cover needs with what we have and with our own resources and our revenue that's clearly declining rapidly. So, I think it is that stimulus bill and then it's the things we're going to try and do. God forbid there's a gig worker who, as you said, hasn't gotten that paycheck, is starting to struggle to find food. That's exactly why Kathryn Garcia has been named to this new position to create a food network, you know, a food distribution network to help people who honestly, maybe a few weeks ago, never in a million years would have thought of needing food and government support like that but now they will. So at least with no evictions at this moment hopefully people can pay the rent on time, but if they can't they won't be evicted right now.

And we're looking to find other ways to provide support and relief to ensure that people who don't have money are not forced to pay rent that they just can't afford. Hopefully we can ensure that there's a steady supply of food and that will at least get us a fair amount along the way. And I remind people, in terms of health care, there's going to be people who won't be able to afford medicine. We're going to try and work on that issue too. But anyone who really is dealing with a serious, serious health care issue, thank God for our public hospitals and clinics that will always back people up regardless of ability to pay.

**Question:** Thank you. And one more question. It's being reported right now that two dorms and 45 people incarcerated at Rikers are refusing to leave their dorms for work duties and meals, in protest. And I'm just curious, is there a way that you guys could be possibly, like, speeding up the release and relief of certain prisoners in our jail system?

**Mayor:** Yeah, we are absolutely going to move very fast now. We have to work through some legal issues that were complex issues as I said, involving DAs and the State. We have a clearer template. We were working on this literally past midnight. I was here in City Hall after midnight

still on conference calls with people working this through because this stuff is very complex. But I am confident now that we have the ability to figure out what that right number is. I don't know the number yet. I want to be real with you and honest with you. And there are some people who clearly, we are not going to feel comfortable releasing. But we will steadily increase the number to the point that we believe is appropriate. I cannot confirm the report that you just gave. I've heard that but I have not heard it in a confirmed manner. So, we will get that information clarified. But suffice it to say, over the next few days those who can be released to the maximum extent possible, we're going to try and do that over the next few days. Go ahead.

**Cheng:** Next up, we've got Amanda from Politico.

**Mayor:** Go ahead, Amanda. Amanda?

**Question:** Can you hear me okay?

**Mayor:** Yep.

**Question:** Hi, how are you? I have a question for you and Dr. Katz. So, I was hoping you could circle back to the Jacobi [inaudible] –

**Mayor:** Yes, Dr. Katz is not in the room, but through the miracle of technology, I think he can hear us. Dr. Katz, can you hear us? Dr. Katz? Paging Dr. Katz. Is there a doctor in the house? He's on? He just can't – he can't respond to me. Is that right? But he's talking on the line. Okay.

**Cheng:** Amanda, we'll come back to you.

**Mayor:** We'll be right back around. Okay. Who's next?

**Cheng:** We have Ashley from the New York Times.

**Mayor:** Go ahead, Ashley. Ashley –

**Question:** Good afternoon.

**Mayor:** There you go.

**Question:** The question I want to ask is for the Police Commissioner about exposure since officers are basically intensifying their role in the corona – in kind of making sure that everybody adheres to the rules. I'm wondering if you can give us raw numbers on people who are infected and out sick due to coronavirus inside the department and tell us how it is and how the NYPD tracks exposure.

**Commissioner Shea:** So yeah, actually I – at the beginning I had a little trouble hearing you, but I think I got the whole thing. The most current numbers that I have, and they are moving, is 98 members of the NYPD have tested positive for corona. Of the 98, 70 are on the uniform side, 28 are from the civilian side. It's important to know that in terms of how they contracted it, you



know, the belief at this time, with very limited information obviously, is that it's not necessarily contracted at work, that some are contracted sick family members. We are New York. So as society contracts this disease and you know – so do we. In terms of the testing, the numbers are going up because the testing in the entire city is going up so that's not unexpected. In terms of sick rate, I'll stay away from exact numbers, but I can tell you that our normal – if you have a normal sick rate, and we do for the department, it's approaching about double that rate and we saw the numbers start to go up when this really took hold, roughly March 17th. I can tell you that we are still, what I would consider, in very good shape in terms of resources. But we plan for it literally every day. If I told you how many phone conferences I had in the last 24 hours, I'd be lying because I, literally – Terry Monahan is sick of hearing from me. Rodney Harrison, the entire executive staff –

**Mayor:** Let's be clear. Terry Monahan is not sick. He's just sick of hearing you.

**Commissioner Shea:** Yes, that's right.

[Laughter]

So, we are not at the point where we're close to going to 12-hour tours. What we are doing though is planning for all eventualities and moving people from units that are less important right now to, you know, be ready for any and all eventuality. So, I think that we are in a good place still and the planning is literally ongoing hour by hour.

**Mayor:** The other thing I just, before Ashley follows on, I just want to say is, again, as we've heard from Dr. Barbot, a typical younger – and this is again, most PD officers, younger person, 20s, 30s, 40s, a healthy person, their experience with this disease will be something like seven to 10 days and it will not be a fun seven to 10 days. But at the end of that seven to 10 days, they will be right back in uniform, right back at their posts. So, this is a number that goes up but will have an element that starts to go right back down from that original group that got sick. A lot of them will come back online. We'll be going through this for weeks and months. I don't want any misimpression that a person who contracts coronavirus is not coming back to work. They are coming back to work in the vast majority of cases and soon. And we got to keep that in our calculations and in our planning. And obviously we're very happy that most people are going to have a mild experience.

**Commissioner Shea:** Yeah, I can tell you Ashley – and if I miss one point, I'll circle back to you at the end – I can tell you that we've had people come back to work that had been put on quarantine and I am really looking forward to when those people that are out sick with this virus come back to work for the obvious reasons. But I think again, we're in good shape. Of the now 98, I think there's three that remain hospitalized. And that's including one that was discharged today. So that brings it to three. And that's with pneumonia-like symptoms. I think I mentioned that the other day. So, the vast, vast majority – 95 of 98 are recovering at home.

**Question:** But for those officers who had contact with the public, is the NYPD tracking that and are you telling members of the public that they've had contact with an officer who has now been confirmed to have COVID?

**Commissioner Shea:** You're talking post?

**Question:** Yeah, post – once the officer tests positive, are you going back and telling members of the public who they've interacted with in the course of doing their job that they have interacted with them? Do you have numbers on that?

**Commissioner Shea:** No, I don't. And we'll take a look at that with Legal. Obviously, you run into some HIPAA issues and things of that nature.

**Mayor:** I go beyond it and I'll pass to the Commissioner. I think we are at such an advanced stage in this crisis but for a very particular situation where we thought – where our health people thought it was important to do that follow through. I think the honest truth, Ashley, is we're in a new reality here where that generally is not going to be doable, nor is it necessarily going to make much sense – and I think the Commissioner is going to follow this [inaudible] – because of the sheer spread that we're experiencing overall.

**Dr. Barbot:** As I've been saying for the past couple of days, which feels like the past couple of weeks, we do have widespread community transmission. So that means that it's very likely that a large number of people are already exposed and there is no real way to track down, back to the point source. The other thing I want to just emphasize is that even though we are learning more and more about how this virus is transmitted, we still don't think that just casual contact passing someone in the street is going to infect folks, right. We're asking people to remain six feet apart because that's the general distance that a good, healthy, strong cough or sneeze has to get from one person to the other. And so, I just want to remind us of the basics. And it's not just passing someone in the street. It's not even limited contact. It goes back to those basics. And so while the tendency may be to want to let everybody know who it is that may – they may have contact with that may have had contact with yet another contact and you know, that kind of becomes irrelevant when we've got widespread community transmission. And that's why I have been so, dare I say, militant about having New Yorkers stay indoors.

**Mayor:** Amen. Okay. Who's up?

**Cheng:** Dr. Katz's issues have been resolved. Dr. Katz, can you hear us?

**President and CEO Mitchell Katz, NYC Health + Hospitals:** Yeah, sorry. I could hear you always, but I had a technical problem.

**Mayor:** Alright.

**President Katz:** Thanks so much for the question. With Jacobi [inaudible] –

**Mayor:** Is Amanda – hold on, is Amanda back on the line? I'm sorry, Dr. Katz – is Amanda back?

**Cheng:** Yes.

**Mayor:** Okay.

**President Katz:** Amanda, we changed the method of testing from more of a walk-by or drive-by model at Jacobi. It will reopen tomorrow to relieve the emergency department. [Inaudible] the Mayor says that we need to focus our testing on those people who are most sick and help to decompress the emergency rooms where people are coming with mild symptoms. We need to focus our attention on those people who are [inaudible] –

**Question:** Dr. Katz, I hope you're feeling okay and getting some sleep. Is this transition going to happen across all Health + Hospital facilities or are we starting with Jacobi [inaudible]?

**President Katz:** Thank you, Amanda. All of our hospitals will have a tent outside as a way to decompress our emergency rooms. Several of them already had it. I visited the tent that was at Elmhurst and the tent that was already at Lincoln. Jacobi had the other model and that's changing to the tent outside of the emergency room for this week coming.

**Question:** Okay, great. Thank you very much.

**President Katz:** Thank you.

**Cheng:** Thank you. We have Craig from the Post.

**Question:** [Inaudible] are you today? The unions have been calling for additional testing for Fire, EMS, and NYPD. I was wondering, since these are the guys on the front line, they're, you know, going in there and getting people out of parks, is there going to be any plans to maybe do expedited testing for them if they're considering that they have coronavirus since they're out in the streets?

**Mayor:** I'll start and my colleagues have joined in. Again, the entire testing system is based on the priority needs. There's a priority given, of course, to protecting our health care workers and our first responders, but that's done still according to the health care priorities overall. If someone is young and healthy and has symptoms, there's many, many cases where they're just going to ride it out and they're going to be well and they're going to come back. If after those three or four days, and we're not seeing them get better, that's a different discussion, but it's about a priority structure that – we have to remember that the testing has to be there to protect the people in greatest danger. You want to speak to that, Commissioner?

**Commissioner Barbot:** Certainly, I think to the extent that they fall into the prioritization categories of being over 50, having one of the chronic underlying illnesses, being sick, not getting better, and having their doctor determine that knowing that test status is going to change the course of therapy, then of course we would want to test them. But the basic message of if you're sick, stay home, stay home for at least seven days since your symptom onset or three days after your fever has gone away, whichever is longer, we'll continue to apply.

**Mayor:** Okay. Who's next?

**Cheng:** Next, we have Katie.

**Question:** Hi, can you hear me –

**Mayor:** I'm sorry, who is it?

**Question:** Can you hear me, Mayor?

**Mayor:** Yep, go ahead, Katie. How are you doing?

**Question:** I'm great. How are you? I'm calling to ask if the City discussed if there might be any changes to property taxes which are due in April?

**Mayor:** At this point, and we'll obviously be looking at everything, Katie, but we are in a really tough situation right now in this city and I need to be very plain with New Yorkers about this. In the Congress, as we speak, there is a real discussion going on. This is directly responsive to your question. There's a real discussion going on about relief for states, counties, and cities – direct relief to the tune of hundreds of billions of dollars because right now all local governments are just hemorrhaging money and dealing with massive new challenges and plummeting revenue. An example – I believe this estimate is right from our OMB, when the president canceled, or postponed, I should say income tax payments that immediately took about \$1.7 billion of revenue away from New York City at the height of the coronavirus crisis. That's a massive amount of money to have taken out of our hands just when we need it the most.

So, revenue is being stressed very, very deeply. Expenses are skyrocketing. We have a lot of tough choices ahead. I'll certainly consider all options, but it is not my instinct to take away other forms of revenue because we literally will not be able to pay for basic services. Now, if we get a massive direct federal stimulus, and I know Senator Schumer, Senator Gillibrand have been fighting for that very hard. I spoke to both of them yesterday. If we get that support, if it's really showing up quickly, that will affect our thinking, that will affect the equation. But I've heard in the course of today that unfortunately Republicans in the Senate are trying to remove any form of direct support for cities, states, and counties, which makes no sense in the middle of the biggest national crisis since the Great Depression, and that's going to hurt red states and blue states alike. It makes no sense. We need that support. We need the hundreds of billions for localities and for hospitals, also hundreds of billions to be able to keep everything going. We have no guarantees of if and when and how that's going to happen.

So, the answer to your question is certainly I'm not ready to say that today. I don't think that's something we're going to want to do, but we're going to look at everything.

**Cheng:** Next up we have Gersh.

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

**Mayor:** I can.

**Question:** I promise you no unauthorized dinging today. I've turned off my notifications.

**Mayor:** Excellent.

**Question:** So, you mentioned 10,000 new placards for health care workers. And, as you know, most New Yorkers will completely agree on the need to help essential health care workers do their jobs. But doesn't this emergency order actually reveal how completely unnecessary the vast majority of the city's other 150,000 placards are? Because those, are after all, in most cases, just a job perk.

**Mayor:** Gersh, that's a fair question, but, honestly, not a question for today. We've talked plenty of times about the need to change the approach to placards. I believe that it not only needs to be fundamentally changed, it will be as we bring on automated enforcement systems and we're going to be very quick to take placards away from those who abuse. And I think we're going to have the greatest ability to know that next year or so that we've ever had in the history of city. But, right now, that's, bluntly, a secondary issue. This is about making sure that people who are desperately needed can get where they need to go. They're working very long hours. This is an emergency measure that we need to do. We'll deal with the rest of that when we get back to normalcy.

**Question:** All right. Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

**Mayor:** Thank you.

**Cheng:** Next, we have Jeff Mays.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, I wanted to ask, the Governor painted a very different picture of what he saw yesterday in New York City when he drove around. He was very frustrated and talked about how there were a lot of people out, a lot of people in the parks, but that's very different than the picture that yourself and the Commissioner painted just now. What's the difference there? Why is the Governor of seeing one thing, but you guys are seeing something different?

**Mayor:** Well, look, first of all, people can be at different places at different times, Jeff, and see different things. I think there's a tremendous consistency in the sense that we all are looking for where we think there's a problem or lack of adherence. And when we see it, we don't like it, we're going to deal with it. And we all agree that's not most people. In fact, I think the Governor's frustration was directed at the few who were being disrespectful of others, not at the vast majority who are following the rules. But again, I spoke to the Governor today in detail and I'm confident that in that conversation we aligned fully. We're going to have a strong enforcement apparatus from the finest law enforcement organization in the world. And I am certain it's going to be very, very effective. And, you know, I think there's going to be a certain amount of pressure from fellow New Yorkers too. I think the point that you heard from my colleagues about people, like, literally – I think you said, cutting people a wide birth. And we were talking about the ways people are adjusting and changing. I'm seeing it 100 percent. Folks used to just walk by each other. They're now like, stopping, figuring out who goes first, you

know, is there enough room to have your six feet – that's only going to deepen. We're about to really feel that change in our lives with this new rule in effect and so many people home. I think it's going to really jolt people's consciousness. And this is the beginning of the crisis. I've been blunt, it's going to get a lot worse before it gets better. So – Governor and I are aligned and we're going to say to anyone who's not getting the message, we're going to help them get the message. And then, obviously, I believe people will start to fall in line even more deeply.

**Question:** Just another follow-up. Do you know what's happening to the prisoners that are being released? Are they being monitored? Where they're going? And then quickly, have you still been in contact with federal officials? You mentioned earlier this week you've spoken to Dr. Fauci and the Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman. Have you had further conversations with federal officials?

**Mayor:** Yeah, I just want – I'll answer Jeff, but I want to, again, in the name of rationing as we do these calls, I think we're saying that people try and keep it to two areas and please try not to do multiple run on many, many topics at once, because I think we want to make sure it's fair to everyone else. I spoke to the Veterans Affairs Secretary yesterday. I am trying to reach Vice President Pence. I am trying to reach the FEMA director. I know my team has spoken to the FEMA director. This will be ongoing. I've spoken to Senator Schumer almost every day, spoke to Senator Gillibrand yesterday. This will be ongoing- spoken to Dr. Fauci a number of times. Again, what I'm looking for is the big answers on what will be delivered to us. On the question of folks who are released from our jail system, there will be monitoring for sure. There'll be individualized monitoring and follow-up and supervision. Who's next?

**Cheng:** Next step is Marina, from AP.

**Question:** Hello. I was wondering about the – what the conditions are at the local city hospitals? We're seeing some videos on social media of patients and masks lying on the floor because there are no beds. Is that real?

**Mayor:** Mitch, are you on the line still? Dr. Mitch Katz –

**President Katz:** Masks lying on the beds? I don't understand that.

**Question:** We're seeing a video of patients on – we're seeing video of the social media of patients who are wearing masks, lying on the floor because there are no beds. Is that real? Is that fake?

**Mayor:** You mean the patients that – I'm sorry, Marina, just to clarify, you're patients who instead of being in a bed or a stretcher are on the floor?

**Question:** Yes.

**Mayor:** Okay. I have not heard that previously. Mitch, what have you heard?

**President Katz:** No, it is not true. There are no sick patients lying on the floor at any of our hospitals.

**Mayor:** And if you have details, Marina, we want them. If there's any place where something's not being done right, we want to know about it. There's definitely some real stress now on our public hospitals. I've been very blunt about the fact that the next 10 days are going to get harder and harder and we desperately need resupply. But we welcome from our colleagues in the media, if you have a specific situation, which might mean honestly there's something wrong in a particular place, a particular moment that needs to be addressed by management, please get us those specifics even if you want to do it confidentially so we can follow up and help people.

**Question:** And are you aware of any nursing homes who are experiencing any sort of high number of cases like the retirement community on Long Island? Are there any plans to test everyone who's working or a resident of a nursing home?

**Mayor:** I'll turn to Dr. Barbot. The primary regulation of nursing homes is by the State. And obviously, there's a lot of division of labor going on right now with so much to do. But Dr. Barbot does try and stay in regular touch with the State health commissioner, Dr. Zucker. On this question, are you hearing about any particular areas of concern with the city nursing homes?

**Commissioner Barbot:** So, we are in close coordination with the State – excuse me, close coordination with the State on nursing homes. And prior to the start of this – the upscale in this outbreak, we had actually sent out, a number of surgical masks to the nursing homes in anticipation of increasing cases. And to my knowledge, there aren't any ongoing outbreaks, but again things are moving very quickly. They're always in flux and my staff and the State staff are working closely to ensure that we are especially vigilant with nursing homes, long-term care facilities. The Governor has restricted access to those facilities, again, trying to minimize the number of individuals who may show up to them who are symptomatic.

**Cheng:** Next, we have Mark Morales from CNN.

**Question:** Hey guys, how are you doing?

**Mayor:** Good. How are you doing?

**Question:** Good. So, I had a couple of questions. The first was in regards to the testing centers in Manhattan. Why were they canceled and what's the status of what FEMA is doing?

**Mayor:** So, let's see – I want to make sure we're getting the right person on this one. We're not talking about Health + Hospitals, you're talking about the work that we're now going to be doing with FEMA for testing. Is that right?

**Question:** Right, right. And the location that was going to be there in Manhattan.

**Mayor:** Right. So, I think that Deanne Criswell, I believe, is on the line, our Emergency Management Commissioner. Deanne, do you want to speak to – and, Deanne, I want to remind everyone served – she's done many things in her life, firefighter, air force officer, but also served

at FEMA. So, she's quite familiar with how to coordinate with them. Deanne, can you speak to that situation?

**Commissioner Deanne Criswell, Office of Emergency Management:** Yes, I absolutely can. So, FEMA did provide some testing equipment and personal protective equipment and we were originally going to set up five separate drive through sites. Right now, in an effort to utilize the limited resources that we have while still expanding the city's overall testing capacity, we are going to be co-locating these testing sites now with our Health + Hospitals location so we can maximize their use in those locations while making the best use of some of the personal protective equipment that is in really limited supply.

**Mayor:** Yeah, and, Mark, I want to emphasize we're, you know, it's so painful to think of the greatest city in the world with the greatest health care organizations, the greatest professionals on earth – I mean, we, we are so blessed, but if you don't have equipment and you don't have supplies, it's a whole different ballgame. And we all know that when we really needed the testing, when it could have been absolutely strategically crucial, we didn't have it. And now, we're at a point where we have to treat testing on a priority basis given this massive community spread. But even that has to now be thought about in terms of the supplies and the equipment needed, even just to keep the testing going as much as we want because the first obligation is to save human lives. And when we're having to wonder, are there going to be enough masks, for example, for medical personnel, first responders, for everyone who is at the front line saving lives, it gets more and more complex by the day, the considerations that all of our health care and emergency management professionals are making with, you know, no guarantees of resupply and supplies dwindling constantly. I said, originally, you know, I thought the thing we needed to worry about is the first or second week of April. I unfortunately can't say that anymore. Right now, even getting through the month of March is getting harder. Certainly, we expect tremendous difficulties in the first week of April if we don't get resupplied. So, everything is changing by the day in our calculations. And, you know, it all comes down to if we don't start to change that supply situation, we don't get the help we deserve, we're going to have to make even more challenging decisions.

**Question:** The other question I had was in regards to Rikers. It's about those two dormitories, about the inmates who were inside who are not going outside of their dormitory and I think there are the refusing meals. What's being done about that? What are the conditions there? And can you give more specifics as to the monitoring process of inmates when they're going to be released?

**Mayor:** We'll get you more on the monitoring. We are obviously creating this approach as we go along, but it's based on some of the other work that we do with supervise release. So, we'll get you details on that. In terms of the situation on Rikers, we again don't have confirmation of the specifics, so don't want to comment until we do have confirmation. Our job is to protect everyone. There's a lot of extraordinary professionals who provide correctional health on Rikers and other facilities. Obviously, our Corrections officers who protect everyone. And we, obviously – look, the one positive X factor here is compared to compared to six years ago, we literally have half the population in our jail system we had six years ago. We used to be around 11,000-plus and now we're between 5,000-5,500. And we do think we'll be in a position very



soon to start acting on hundreds of releases. But this is being created very, very urgently and also in a way we've never had to do before. And so, there's a lot being worked through. We'll have more to say on all of that, you know, in the coming hours as we have more detail.

**Cheng:** Next we have Rosa –

**Mayor:** Who is it?

**Cheng:** Rosa, from The City.

**Question:** Hi, Mr. Mayor. How are you doing?

**Mayor:** Good.

**Question:** Good. So, I'm hearing from construction workers who don't understand why they're still building luxury condos and offices. They're cramming into an elevator to go up 50 stories to work on a luxury condo right now. And they want to know why the DOB is not shutting down sites, including sites with reported positive cases. Why should construction on these sites – these kind of sites – be continuing? Why aren't you instructing DOB to shut down building on sites like that?

**Mayor:** Rosa, we are working within the parameters of the State emergency order. This is something I know like every other piece of the equation that's being constantly assessed. And I care about the safety of those construction workers. And I want to be very clear, if any construction worker is sick, they should stay home. If anyone gets sick on the job, they need to get immediately home or if it's something urgent, of course, to care. But, right now, the State guidance – and this is true in California to the best of my understanding, it was certainly true in San Francisco, but the guidance was to continue that work because it is outdoors, because clearly any part of the economy can still allow people to have a livelihood that's so important as we see so many other people losing their livelihood, and because a lot of what is constructed obviously is crucial to our future. You and I would agree that luxury condos are not the priority in this city, but there's a lot of other things being worked on that are important because we will come out of this crisis and we will be playing the long game, as Commissioner Shea said. So, as I understand it, that is the State guidance at this moment, and I believe it is the same in California, but it's something we're going to monitor all the time, and if they're specific sites we don't think are safe for specific reasons, we always retain the right to act on those. If there's any particular site, you know of, we want to understand that so we can do follow up inspections right away.

**Question:** Yeah, I do. And I've passed them on to DOB. But just to follow up – I understand that the State does not make any differentiation between essential construction that, you know, [inaudible] infrastructure and things that are, you know, like I've referred to, the offices, the condos. I've talked to people who are outfitting corporate offices right now, like, that are – that are totally empty, the insides of them. I mean, do you personally think that there should be some differentiation here?

**Mayor:** Rosa, I want whatever's going to keep people safe and I'm also concerned simultaneously, obviously, that anyone who can keep making own living within the parameters of the State pause order, that still has value. So, I am moved by your question to say we need to look at any individual situation that might need to be treated differently. And I certainly think it's a very important conversation for us to have with the State about whether we want to think about differentiation by type of construction. But I'm not offering personal opinions in the middle of a crisis. I'm hearing your question. I think it's a fair question. Best way for us to handle this is to have a real conversation with the State and get us all aligned on how we want to handle this for this coming week. But Rosa, I'll say to you and all your colleagues, any rule, any approach, you know, could change by the week, by the day, depending on changing conditions.

**Cheng:** Next we have Shant from the Daily News.

**Question:** Yeah. Thanks for taking my question, Mayor. I just wanted to go back to the possibility of closing some streets to vehicular traffic. Are there any details under consideration at this time, like the number of blocks or which parts of the city would be involved that you can share at this time?

**Mayor:** You know, I think some people, I believe Speaker Johnson is one of them, has said, look at the model from the Summer Streets program and, you know, consider that as an option. I think that's a helpful of something to look at. But I want to emphasize, Shant, we are not acting yet on that. This is – I wish I could describe to you what we are all doing in terms of the day to day, hour to hour, constant decision making, constant adjustment. It feels like our lives are one endless conference call these last days. But I say that only to say this point, we are constantly making changes and updates. So, what I'm being blunt about is, here's how we're starting this coming week. We're starting this coming week with a focus on parks and playgrounds. That's where you go. And streets are open as normal. But we're going to see how that goes. We're going to see how enforcement goes. We're going to see how many people come out and how they handle it. If we think it's smart to open up some alternatives, we're only going to do that when we have a clear plan and we have clear enforcement in place. The last thing I want to do is create new places for people to congregate with no enforcement. That would be absolutely contradictory to the State order. So, one thing at a time, we do not have a specific plan for those streets yet. I want to affirm that there is no specific plan. There is no order that's been given, but we are going to consider it.

**Question:** Got it. And just briefly, can you say who is kind of a scrutinizing everything right now? [Inaudible] who the players are?

**Mayor:** I mean, it's – since all of this is kind of run-and-gun, obviously, because we're dealing with an ever-changing crisis, we certainly – we're going to work with the City Council. They've had a lot of good ideas, we want to hear them, and they understand their communities. We're going to work with DOT, of course. I think Parks obviously has a lot to say. But I'm going to really say, the Health Commissioner and Police Commissioner are going to be the first stops on that discussion, because why would we open those streets only if we thought it would not endanger people obviously. So, we have to solve for the negative first. If we think opening up more – or, I should say, closing off streets and opening up those spaces for recreation would

create danger. We're not going to do it, plain and simple. We're not going to do it if we think it's going to be a net negative. If we think it might be a positive, we still need an enforcement mechanism. So, that's how we're going to start the discussion. You've heard some of the others who will be in it. But I am emphasizing, I want to be crystal clear, not happening unless I say it's happening and we're going to be working closely with the State to align strategies. So, I want to be really careful in a crisis that an idea is out there – if an idea is out there that I think is absolutely unworkable, I'll say, period, we're not doing that or we're not doing that, you know, in the foreseeable future. If an idea is a good and interesting idea, like this one, I'll say we're going to consider it. But I don't want people turning, we'll consider it, into, oh this is definitely going to happen, because a lot of stuff is not going to happen in this kind of environment or we may like an idea but may turn out to be not workable where we have really sharp health and safety imperatives that we have to meet. So, definitely will be considered, stay tuned, but not happening now.

**Cheng:** Next up, we have Shayna, from the Washington Post.

**Question:** Hi. So, recognizing that the strategy is to provide tests on a priority basis, has there been thought to testing frontline city workers – NYPD, FDNY, also, I guess, private EMS – who are non-symptomatic with the idea that you could take them out of circulation and avoid spreading the virus throughout the ranks?

**Mayor:** I think, again, I suspect what the Commissioner is about to say is community spread. And again, the whole reorientation we've had to go through with a changing reality with how pervasive this disease is becoming. But, Commissioner Barbot –

**Commissioner Barbot:** Right, so the recommendation would be the same. We're not going to be testing asymptomatic individuals, individuals who are symptomatic. We want to make sure that they take themselves out of – excuse me, out of circulation as quickly as possible. The reality is that the best way to avoid propagating the illness is to ensure that symptomatic individuals stay home, limit their outside contact to only the most essential activities. If they have someone who can go out for them to get food, medicine, etcetera, that's the best thing. Reminding individuals that 80 percent of the folks who do develop symptoms will have mild symptoms and that usually within about seven to 10 days, those symptoms will resolve. We want people to then come back to work seven days after onset of symptoms, three days after their fever has gone, whichever is longest. But the most important thing is for symptomatic individuals to stay out of circulation, whether or not they are first responders, because the reality is that when we've got widespread community transmission it's implicit that anybody you can come in contact with who is not one of your household members, you have to assume that they are symptomatic. And that's why we want to make sure that people stay at least six feet apart.

**Mayor:** Shayna, I'd also say, you know, we're still in a situation of tremendous scarcity with testing. If that situation changed profoundly, we'd look at again. I don't think it'll ever have the same strategic impact it would have, you know, a month or more ago. But I think it's a common sense point, and the Commissioner can speak to this, that, you know, if you had endless testing capacity, you still have the challenge that a negative today could be a positive tomorrow. And it's, I think, the symptoms – at least, I believe, Commissioner – this is what our health care

leadership believe – since the jury's still out on asymptomatic transfer, the symptomatic people are the folks that we know for sure there's a concern, much greater likelihood of spread, and that is dispositive. If someone's symptomatic, they're symptomatic. I mean, that's something we know tangibly in a way that even testing might not give us the clearest picture. Is that – I'm trying as a layman.

**Commissioner Barbot:** Right. No, I think that's a good point. I think for the foreseeable future, I don't see a scenario where we get real-time results back. And so, any delay in someone taking themselves out of circulation then unnecessarily exposes other individuals to potentially contracting the illness.

**Mayor:** Whereas symptoms are visible and immediate and you know what you're dealing with – that kind of common sense.

Go ahead –

**Cheng:** Next, we have Sydney from Gothamist.

**Question:** Sydney with Gothamist. So, just going back to the releasing people from city jails that I know a few people have touched on here. You said that you're identifying – you've identified another 200 you hope to release. And so, I know that the Board of Correction has identified hundreds of people who are older than 50 with underlying health conditions in jail for technical reasons, but 551 of those are in DOC custody serving a city sentence of one year or lasts or under one year for low level offenses. And my understanding is that, you know, they've called on you as the Mayor to use your executive power to release those people. That's 551. So, where are you getting the 200 number from? And could you elaborate a little bit on how many people you hope to be able to release beyond those 200?

**Mayor:** Sydney, no. I'm going to be straight forward with you. We do not have a magic number at this point. This is something we've never dealt with before. And Commissioner Shea, First Deputy Mayor Fuleihan, his Chief of Staff Freya Riel, Liz Glazer, our Director of the Office of Criminal Justice – we're all trying to create a new approach here from scratch. We're all talking rapidly and constantly trying to figure this out. There is not a perfect target number. The Board of Corrections Letter gave one interpretation of reality. I respect the board, but I don't think it was most complete explanation of what's really going on. Within each of those categories, there are real variations and real differences from inmate to inmate in terms of criminal record and other factors. So, it's just not, bluntly, as that letter portrays. The group of 200 is the next pool, if you will, of people we are considering. I am not saying we're going to release X amount or Y amount. I'm saying we have 200 we're looking at right now that we're going to decide by tomorrow and then it's just going to be constantly rolling. But we have to do – I think it's a very complex equation because we need the right kind of monitoring and supervision. We have to make sure that's there. We need to ensure that the people we're releasing we feel relative comfort are not likely to re-offend or do serious crimes, because we have to balance all of the factors here. And the health conditions of people, absolutely crucial factor. But there's a deep concern that we not create a situation that we are uncomfortable with in terms of the ability to know what the outcomes will be because you don't want to create a new problem trying to solve an original

problem. And we have to take the public safety elements into account. It's very thorny. But one thing we know is we have to move quickly and we will.

**Question:** Okay. And so, just to follow up on that. The latest understanding I have is that there are 38 people who tested positive for the virus in city jails. That's a combination of staff and detainees. And so, I'm wondering, do you know the sense of the spread that is already existing in city jails? And do you know across which city jails that is? Is it beyond Rikers?

**Mayor:** I don't have that in front of me. I don't know if Commissioner Barbot knows if it's just Rikers or beyond Rikers. I think you've answered the point, obviously, numerically. We know the number of people who have tested positive. And we know, obviously, as with the whole city, they are going to be, some people have not yet shown symptoms but are positive. But we don't have a perfect model for this. We know it's an urgent matter, by definition. It just the nature of incarceration. So, this is – again, it's a tough, tough equation we have to work through very, very quickly. But we're all working together to get these answers and make decisions quickly, particularly for folks – anyone, we think there's a particular medical vulnerability that will be the front of the line.

**Commissioner Barbot:** We don't have information about whether it's Rikers or beyond, but we can get back to you on that

**Cheng:** Last up for today, we have Yoav.

**Question:** Hey, Mr. Mayor. I wanted to ask two questions about the testing priority. One of them is just based on the number of confirmed cases, the percentage of people under 50 who have been confirmed. It comprises 56 percent of the confirmations. I'm trying to understand, given the criteria for getting tested, how so many people under 50 would have even been tested at this point, because I thought the initial criteria was being over 50 with preconditions. And now, it's largely people who are either hospitalized or might require hospitalizations, if I got that correct. So, yeah, I guess, why would so many people under 50 have been tested at this point?

**Mayor:** I'll start and I'll turn to Commissioner Barbot. Yoav, I think, you know, you've seen it that in the course of the last few weeks, we've been rapidly evolving and changing from a situation where – it seems like a very quaint time long, long, long ago, but it's only a few weeks ago where we were still trying to get testing in when it could have had a more strategic impact. And, you know, we would talk about, you know, a handful of cases in a day. I think it's fair to say that the testing prioritization has changed radically over the last days in particular. And remember that a lot of folks early on were getting testing, you know, from different parts of our community without that prioritization. So, I think that's part of it. What we're seeing again on the difference between who's been tested versus who's been hospitalized is striking, that we – and obviously, who is in most danger in terms of, you know, preserving their lives. The fact that 35 percent of the hospitalizations are folks over 70, more than three times the representation of that group in the population. The fact that we've seen no deaths in people between zero and – you know, birth, I should say, and 44 years old. You know, it keeps confirming that we need to shift as much of our focus as humanly possible to protecting folks who are older and have those preexisting conditions. Now, I'll say it, and the Commissioner will say it better than me, there are

people under 50 with preexisting conditions that we clearly are concerned about and that's a group of people that obviously there are situations where they absolutely need to be tested. But I think the answer is that where we started, you know, a few weeks ago versus where we are now, it's a much tighter prioritization now and I think as you see testing levels going forward, they will follow that prioritization more and more.

**Commissioner Barbot:** I think that's right, Mr. Mayor. We, through the course of the changing nature of this outbreak, have been adapting, if you will, to the changes that came down from the CDC in terms of testing recommendations. I think that there are a lot of people who in the early period were getting the message, get tested, get tested. We're trying to change not only provider behavior, but also New Yorker behavior and having people feel comfortable with the fact that as we are in a greater proportion of people having COVID-19, meaning widespread community transmission, that the importance of being tested goes down evermore, unless you are in one of those priority categories. And even though we've said, you know, greater than 50 with those five preexisting conditions, I think the reality is that there are many New Yorkers who may be less than 50 and have those chronic conditions. So, I think what we're seeing is a shift in changing behavior between New Yorkers, providers, and the available availability of testing. And so, my hope is – and we're trying to put measures in place that over time we will see an increase in testing of older individuals and a decrease in that younger age group. Though, certainly, it is up to provider discretion if they have patients they feel are not getting better, because, again, we don't want to completely discourage people from getting tested if indeed they are not getting better after three or four days of being home sick.

**Question:** Okay. Thank you. And just along the same lines real quickly, there was a photo by my colleague David Goodman – our colleague, I guess, I should say – outside of Elmhurst Hospital of people waiting to get tested at the tent, and it looks like there's a good 50 to 80 people there standing in line. And this was after the change that, that focused on testing the folks who are hospitalized or kind of severely ill who might require hospitalization. So, I guess my question is, am I to assume that everyone out there, you know, meets that criteria? And, if so, I guess I'm just wondering if that is the best method to test people who might be severely ill –

**Mayor:** Yoav, let me jump in on that, and then Dr. Katz, it's a very good question. I don't – you know, we're trying our damndest to take an immense amount of information and make it clear and sometimes I think we don't fill in the blanks as well as we need to. So, I'm glad you raised this. But I think we've said it in press conferences, but not nailed it really, as clearly as it needs to be. Priority people – that means, you know, folks who were really worried about their fundamental health and their potential obviously have severe, severe ramifications. That's not, generally speaking, folks who are younger and healthier, but folks who could easily end up hospitalized or, God forbid, even in danger for their lives. That's one of the priorities for testing. But the other thing that we've said over recent press conferences is to relieve pressure on emergency rooms appropriately where people are coming in with specific situations that are worthy and need to be addressed and we're trying not to let the emergency room be overloaded. We have the folks outside of emergency rooms who are turning away folks who do not need to be there at all or diverting them to another location where they should be, but also the testing capacity to protect the emergency rooms, the ability to serve people who need it most. So, Mitch will speak to that. But I also want to note to Mitch and to everyone, you know, even in a

situation like that where we're trying to make sure we're serving people, if the wrong kind of lines develop, and this is something Dermot and I have spoken about, we understand there will be lines some places in New York City if folks are waiting to go the grocery store or a pharmacy in some places or to get tested – lines needs social distancing. You know, we don't like lines at all. I think Dr. Barbot does not like any kind of line, but if you have a legitimate line, you know, we need social distancing in the line and there may be times when PD for example says about something – you know, we don't think this is a smart way to do this line and we want people to go away and come back later and there's different ways we'll deal with it. But for that specific situation, let's presume our friends at Health + Hospitals would be very careful to do line management. Mitch Katz, please explain for that line why other folks there are being tested and how that fits with keeping your emergency room going.

**President Katz:** Yes, sir. When we opened up the tent, we gave tremendous relief to the emergency department so that they could focus on the sickest patients. Those patients were previously coming forward, and, of course, everyone has to be assessed, because some people really do need to be emergency care, but the tent has allowed us to have them be – mild illness to be assessed in a different place, to not take up the emergency room time. I'll add that in that picture your colleague took, you'll notice that the people online are all wearing masks. And we put the – we give people who are standing on that line of masks to decrease the chance that they will cough or sneeze on anybody else. And of course, it's also much better for them to be on line in the outside with the free air than sitting in a waiting room in a closed hospital.

**Mayor:** Well said, Dr. Katz. With that, thank you, everyone. I hope we were able to share a lot of helpful information and we will see you tomorrow.

Thank you, everyone.

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