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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON FOX-5**

**Lori Stokes:** It is a grim milestone. As of today, more people in New York City have died from coronavirus than died on September 11th. While the numbers are staggering, Mayor Bill de Blasio says that he sees a light at the end of the tunnel. And the Mayor, joining us this morning live from City Hall. Good morning, Mayor.

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Good morning, Lori.

**Stokes:** Hard to fathom you seeing the light at the end of the tunnel when we had those staggering numbers yesterday when it comes to deaths. So, help us to understand, where is that light?

**Mayor:** Yeah, Lori, it is hard to fathom in this. This disease has been so tough and so unpredictable and every part of our city, every part of every borough is hurting right now. Everyone knows someone with coronavirus. So many of us know people who we've lost. So, the fact is that, you know, it's surpassing 9/11. Think about what that means. I don't think any of us could ever have imagined a disease causing more damage than the worst day in the City's history. But at the same time, as this is really a painful, painful milestone, we have seen something in the last few days, Lori, that, honestly, we did not expect to see certainly this soon. The number of folks going into the hospital, we've seen some decline. We've seen a decline in the number of people who need ventilators compared to what we were projecting. We thought this by this point this week we thought we'd be seeing about 300 or more people each day, more people each day who needed a ventilator. Now, it's about a hundred more each day and that may even be going down. So, we're not out of the woods at all. I want to really emphasize what this says to me, Lori, is that New Yorkers really have achieved something here. And I want to thank all the New Yorkers, everyone who, no matter how tough it was for us to do social distancing, and it is – we're warm, emotional people, were used to being close together, but people did the social distancing, they did the shelter in place. And Lori, I believe that is having a real impact. We're finally seeing evidence that all that hard work, all that effort is making an impact and I think it says to us, don't take your foot off the gas, but double down on it, actually, stick with it to sustain it and make sure we can turn this corner. Lori, there's a danger, we saw this in some parts of Asia – people got over confident. They got a little too comfortable and complacent and they started to open up too quickly and, bang, the disease reasserted itself. We won't let that happen, but we are – it's really good to see at some of this is starting to work.

**Stokes:** You talk about the complacency, Mayor, and how people may have reacted too late or not enough or still aren't practicing social distancing, but if we go back, you do have critics that

said that you were little bit late in missing the ball to get the word out, even going back to January when Dr. Barbot and yourself boasted that we should continue to live like we're living, that it isn't that much of a threat. Even into March there were times when you were saying that we couldn't casually get this disease.

**Mayor:** Lori, every step along the way – and we have – look, we have the best Health Department in the nation, we have the largest public hospital system in the nation. The health experts – and I would tell you one thing, those of us who are public leaders, we should always listen to the health experts and they talked about the evidence and what to do based on it. We're all getting a painful education in this disease, obviously, a disease that literally did not even exist six months ago. But I think the key part is, once it became clear that we could really make an impact with shelter in place with social distancing, I was one of the first public officials in America to say we needed to go to shelter in place. And I'm glad we did it when we did it, because that's part of why we're finally seeing some relief now. But look, the bottom line now is to figure out how we save lives. We are far from out of the woods. I'm still concerned about our hospitals, for sure. Even if we've had a few days that we're a little bit better, our health care workers are still fighting extraordinarily difficult struggle. We've got to remember, the first thing, job-one is to keep reinforcing our hospitals, keep making sure we have the PPEs and the supplies, the equipment we need, getting more medical personnel in. This is still a long battle. So, I want New Yorkers to know, you've done something very important here, because what you've done with all the sacrifice with the social distancing, with the shelter in place is making a difference. But no one should assume for a moment this will be an easy or short battle. It's still going to be a long battle.

**Stokes:** We're starting to see though the numbers when it comes to minority communities, African-American, Latino, the Bronx now really being hit so hard, communities where we're not getting the exact numbers, we don't even know how many people might not have been tested, passed away at home or were ill from it at home, and the disproportionate numbers that are coming in now. So, what can we do about that? I was hearing Jumaane Williams yesterday, he was talking about that 85 percent of those on the front line are of color, whether sanitation workers, nurses, supermarkets, essential workers, transit, postal, and that we are in war time and he feels as if there was no plan put in place.

**Mayor:** Clearly for many, many weeks now the plan has been to reinforce our hospitals, to protect our health care workers and our first responders, to educate the public to create a whole new way of life in this city all in the matter of weeks. And again, New Yorkers have done that, but the disparities we're seeing now – more and more real, more and more documented. We should not underestimate for a second this horrible phenomenon of people dying at home. Think of what that feels like to those families, Lori, what they've gone through, that needs to be in the statistics here because that's clearly being driven by the coronavirus.

**Stokes:** So, will we have a breakdown on the numbers?

**Mayor:** We do have the numbers and what I've said to our health care experts is, we should just acknowledge this is overwhelmingly being driven by the coronavirus. Not every death, but clearly the vast majority are related to the coronavirus. We should count them as part of the

overall very painful count. And the disparities are real and I'm going to be going over it in detail later on this morning, clearly the African-American and Latino community, and particularly in lower income communities, the kind of health disparities that we've known for too long, clearly our evidenced now in this crisis and it's going to take an even more aggressive effort to reach deep in those communities to help protect people. But it still comes down to one thing, and the number-one thing still is, that the hospital system must hold, the place that people are going to go where we can save their lives must get the support and resources it needs. That's still job-one and it will be for quite a while, because so long as our hospital system is there, we can save lives, meaning so long as we give it the resources, so long as we have enough personnel, so long as those incredible heroes, those health care workers have been going through so much get reinforcements and some chance to rest and some support, we can keep fighting back, we can keep saving lives. And that's particularly true in our public hospitals, Lori, which is exactly where most communities – or, many communities of color get their health care.

**Stokes:** How does this city rebound from this? Even begin to? I mean, when we talk about rent, people being able just to pay their rent, there are no food banks around, the restaurants that have lost their businesses, small business owners. When you think about the total – Scott Stringer talking about tax revenues, we could be down \$6 billion. Where do we even begin to recoup?

**Mayor:** Okay. So, Lori, it's going to be a tough road back, but we're going to get there. We came back after 9/11. We came back after the Great Recession. We will come back. I think one of the most important things to start thinking about is, we need – and we're going to need the federal help to do this – we need to do the kind of large-scale testing that should have been on the front end. If we could replay this whole thing, what we learned in some other countries is if you had intensive testing on the front end, you had chance to contain it. That obviously wasn't here. We pleaded with the federal government for that – never came. But on the back end, while we start to recover, while we start to reset, if we have really extensive testing, it will be one of the ways to allow us to actually restart. If we can get the kind of ability to finally understand exactly what's happening where, and direct our strategies accordingly so we can really contain this thing for the long haul. This is – by the way, this disease doesn't just walk away. It's now going to be part of our lives, but we can approach it if we have that universal testing. I think that's probably a few months away in truth before that kind of capacity exists for us or for any part of the country. But I do think that's part of how you restart.

**Stokes:** All right. We have to think optimistically, I guess.

**Mayor:** Amen.

**Stokes:** And I know even in the light of so many deaths that are around us, we had a lot more we could've gotten to. Appreciate your time, we know you're busy. Thank you, Mayor.

**Mayor:** Thank you, Lori.

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