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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good morning, everybody. Well, we've got really important things to talk about today and want to make sure that people of the city understand exactly what we are seeing in communities around this city. So, we're actually going to do something different today and talk about our daily indicators upfront, but it's also important to say we're going to provide a new piece of information from this point on, because it's really important to understand what's happening in the context of the whole city while we're dealing with specific challenges in specific neighborhoods. We'll talk about that as well, but let me start with the notion, something we've talked about before, the seven-day rolling average, that means looking at the tests that we're getting back from New Yorkers all over the city. That's what gives us our daily percentage, that positivity number we talk about each day, but now looking at not just in a daily context, but in the context of a seven-day rolling average – this gives us a more accurate look at the whole picture from the whole city. Obviously, this is particularly crucial with the discussion of what we're going to do, going forward, with our school systems. So, based on the seven-day rolling average right now in New York City, our positivity level for coronavirus is 1.38 percent – 1.38 percent on that seven-day rolling average, well below threshold. Now, we still obviously have a serious problem, and the problem is primarily in nine ZIP codes, and that is affecting the overall daily number, as opposed to the seven-day number. The daily number is being very much affected by the challenges we're seeing in those nine ZIP codes and we must address those intensely. And we're going to talk about that. So, for the first time in months, you're going to see a daily number over three percent – and, obviously, everyone is concerned about that. That is something we all have to work on together to address and something that says to us we have to be on high alert to make sure we fight back this challenge. I know we can do it. I've seen in communities around the city where we started to see upticks, the ability of the community, working with the Test and Trace Corps., Department of Health, the whole City government to beat back and outbreak. We need to do that again on a bigger scale, and, we can, but the fact is for the first time in quite a while the daily number is over three percent and that is cause for real concern.

Okay. So, we'll talk about what we need to do in those nine ZIP codes, but, at the same time, we'll talk about the fact that in the rest of the city now, it's important to know there are 146 ZIP codes in New York City. So, in general, what we're seeing in the other 137 ZIP codes is we're doing well in those, generally speaking. Some areas we have to work on, but the central problem is the nine ZIP codes with a particular problem. Okay. This, of course, means based on the seven-day average, we are moving continually forward with our schools. We'll talk more about the opening today of our elementary schools, but let's now go over the indicators upfront with the inclusion of the seven-day rolling average. So, first of all, daily indicator number one, daily

number of people admitted to New York City hospitals for suspected COVID-19, threshold 200 patients – today's report is 71 patients, confirmed positive rate for a COVID-19 of 16.4 percent. Number two, new reported cases on a seven-day average threshold is 550 cases – today's report is 338. And percentage of people tested positive citywide for COVID-19, threshold five percent, today's report 3.25 percent. So, again, we have not seen a day like that in quite a while, and we don't want to see days like this. But, again, the seven-day rolling average for the whole city, 1.38 percent. So, keep including that number, going forward, so you can see exactly where it's going and we're going to do everything possible to push that number even farther down.

Okay. Now, on the problem we're having – as I said, nine ZIP codes where we have a problem. Each ZIP code is different. Some we've seen some noticeable progress, but, overall, unfortunately, we have not seen enough. In fact, in some ZIP codes, the numbers have been going up. So, this is an inflection point. We have to take more action at this point and more serious action. And we will be escalating with each day, depending on what we see happening on the ground and the test results we're getting. It's crucial to stop the spread of the virus in these nine ZIP codes and everywhere in the city. So, my first message today is the thing that everyone can do – go get tested. To everyone in those nine ZIP codes, it is crucial we get a true picture of what's going on. We need a lot more people to get tested. We need the whole truth. Typically, as more and more people get tested, we see, of course, a more accurate picture. A lot of times we see the numbers go down when we see more people tested, but we need that for everyone in the city at this point. It is crucial that people not let up on getting tested. If you've never been tested, we need you to go get tested. If you have not been tested for a while, we need you to go get tested. We need a clear picture of what's happening in the city and the more testing that happens, the clearer picture we get. So, we're going to keep telling everyone that message reminding you, it is free. It is fast. It is easy. We're making it easier all the time. We're using the self-swab testing – not the long contraption that goes up your nose – a simpler testing, thank God. And, again, free, fast locations all over the city.

Now, in the specific areas of greatest concern, those nine ZIP codes, there'll be a lot more community outreach today, a lot testing on the ground, testing centers being set up in those communities. You'll see hundreds of Test and Trace Corps. members out in the communities, hundreds of additional City agency personnel, handing out masks for free, encouraging testing, getting people good information, pushing back against misinformation. And, today, two additional enforcement measures immediately. One, anyone who is not wearing a face covering will be offered one, will be reminded it is required. And anyone who refuses to wear a face covering will be told that if they don't put one on, they will be fined. And anyone who is still refuses, will be fined. So, that will happen aggressively, clearly. Our goal, of course, is to give everyone a free face mask and get them to wear it. We don't want to fine people. If we have to, we will, and that will be starting on a large scale today. Second, Department of Health has ordered nonpublic schools and childcare centers to close if they don't follow the Commissioner's Order on health safeguards, and the Commissioner will speak to that in a moment. So, we put out new safeguard measures. We want to work with every nonpublic school and childcare center to get it right, so that they can keep going using the right safeguards. But those that are not able to, or won't, will have to be closed down by the Commissioner. Again, our goal here is to cooperate with the community. And I want to say, we just had a very productive Zoom call with a number of key leaders of the community, some of the most prominent leaders of the community. Dr.

Katz and I spoke with them to give them the update on the numbers, on the enforcement measures, we experienced tremendous cooperation and support that community leaders have been now for days telling members of the community how important it is to wear a masks, to abide by social distancing – even in synagogues on the holiest day of the year that we just had passed, Yom Kippur, we heard many, many reports of a lot of social distancing, a lot of masks wearing. We want to see that amplified today by community leaders and the reminder that everyone should get tested and that we all need to solve this problem together. And we're seeing tremendous support and cooperation from community leaders and institutions. I want to thank them for that, thank them for joining with us a few minutes ago on the call and we're going to stay in constant contact.

So, those are the immediate steps. I have to affirm that if we do not see progress quickly, there are additional steps, and the Commissioner has laid this out at the end of last week. If necessary, we will have to prohibit gatherings except for very small gatherings. If necessary, we will have to close nonessential businesses. No one wants that to happen if it can be avoided. If it does have to happen, we would obviously try and target it as carefully as possible, but it is a situation at this point that's very serious and we have to have all options on the table. I'm going to turn to Dr. Mitch Katz, with a thanks to him. He has been leading this effort, working with community leaders, and I've heard tremendous respect from those community leaders for Dr. Katz and for his compassion, his concern for his community, his understanding of the community and all the time and energy is put into working with community organizations and leaders to help get the right message out. So, with that, we'll get an update now from Dr. Mitch Katz.

President and CEO Mitchell Katz, Health + Hospitals: Thank you, Mr. Mayor, for all you're doing to keep us safe. You know, that South Brooklyn is where I'm from, where my older brother and sister still live. And so, I'm very concerned about the infections that have increased in Brooklyn, and in Queens. We fought so hard as New Yorkers. We can't give up the progress that's allowed us to reopen our city. Last weekend, and over the weekend, we did extensive engagement in the communities where we're seeing the greatest increases. We spoke to community and religious leaders. We handed out masks. We distributed literature. Over the Jewish high holidays, we made sure that more than 300 synagogues had the masks they need. And, as we heard today, Mr. Mayor, people heard that and multiple leaders reported that in their synagogues everyone was wearing a mask and that people were keeping their distance. So, I know that work has been happening and has been successful. It's all part of the four simple steps that every New Yorker can take – the core four – stay home if you're sick; keep physical distance between yourself and others and limit indoor gatherings; wear a face covering; practice healthy hand hygiene. And, as the Mayor said, get tested so we have a full picture. We want to be sure that this message is getting out and reaching those who need to hear it. I'm happy we haven't yet had to take any sweeping actions, but as positivity rates rise, we become more and more concerned that we will have to, if we're not able to decrease these infections. Over the weekend, we continued our education efforts that we started last week. We're going to keep building on them. We're going to increase testing sites and testing capacity, augmenting engagement, and adding more people on the ground. We have moved 11 mobile testing sites into these cluster areas. We're tripling capacity to Health Department COVID express testing sites. The Crown Heights and Fort Greene locations will now be able to test a lot more people per day. Tomorrow, we're going to add new rapid testing capacity at community provider offices in Orthodox

communities. We're also adding rapid testing capacity at three of our Health + Hospital locations, one in Queens and two in Brooklyn. 11 community-based organizations have partnered with us to do street level outreach, mask distribution, and education, going to increase this ability to do it in Yiddish, working with additional organizations. As you said, Mr. Mayor, there'll be 350 people on the ground today, including our Test and Trace Corps., community engagement specialists. We have seven sound trucks out across the cluster area and we're making rowboat calls to all households in the cluster area. We're using every tool and we're open to suggestions of other tools. If people have ideas on how we decrease infection, we want to increase testing and increased compliance so that we can all stay healthy so that we never have to have the tragedies that we had in March and April, and that so many of us have been affected by them. Thank you, Mr. Mayor, for all you're doing to keep us safe.

Mayor: Thank you. And, Mitch, thank you. Really appreciate the intensive effort that you've been putting into with your team, working with the community. And, again, there's been a lot of communication over the last a week and more, and the central message has been let's all work together to solve this, to turn this around. We know we can turn it around, but everyone has to be a part of it. But we also know that there have to be very tough measures ready to go and that we will use them as quickly as needed. And here to talk about the specific constructions that he has provided to the community, our Health Commissioner Dr. Dave Chokshi.

Commissioner Dave Chokshi, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. And, as the Mayor said, we are deeply concerned about the alarming increase in COVID-19 in the ZIP codes in Brooklyn and in Queens. The Health Department is making every effort to address what's happening in these communities. For weeks, we've worked with community members through providers, organizations, the media and other partners. We have heard from them and we value their feedback. As Dr. Katz mentioned, we'll bring even more testing capacity using all of the resources that the entire city has at its disposal. We intend to shore up safety protocols in every corner of these communities, as well. As you know, last week, I issued a Commissioner's order to nonpublic schools in six Brooklyn and two Queens ZIP codes for the safety and the health of nonpublic school students and staff. We did this swiftly out of concern for what we were seeing. After issuing the order we heard from community members and educators. Based on their feedback, we amended it so that it would be more appropriate for the context of these local schools while staying consistent with State guidance, and, most importantly, safeguarding health. The order requires nonpublic schools to maintain at least six feet of distance between individuals, unless it creates a safety hazard, and, based on community feedback, if barriers have been erected between people; to wear face coverings in school buildings at all times, except in cases of medical exemption; to coordinate with the Health Department and the Test and Trace Corps. on investigations, namely to identify, isolate, and prevent the spread of COVID-19, and follow the protocols established by the Department for opening and closing of classrooms and schools if a student or staff member is confirmed with COVID-19, following all the guidance for exclusions and close contacts. We will continue to update the order if conditions and circumstances compel us to do so. Any school found to be out of compliance will be issued a violation.

But I would like to thank community members, leaders, local press, and many others for what they have done to ensure that people have the facts when it comes to COVID-19. This is so

important for us all to work together for every single person, leaders, and every-day New Yorkers to consider yourselves ambassadors for what we all have to take on together. One fact in particular that I would like to point out, which is something that I've said before, but wish to say again, there is still no evidence of herd immunity in any community.

Finally, the best way everyone can help is to follow the core four, avoid large gatherings, especially indoors; wear a face covering; keep social distance; and stay six feet apart. Thank you again, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Thank you, Dr. Choksi, and thank you for your leadership. I know you've been engaging the community intensely, you and your whole team, and I thank you for that. I think those conversations are leading to a lot of support and cooperation at the community level, working with the Health Department's instructions. And that, again, is key to turning this situation around. Now, again, we're going to keep talking as we have now for months about the focus on health and safety, this is what we need to do to protect our fellow New Yorkers. This is what we need to do to help our city come back from this crisis. And we now experience a challenge, we're going to fight to overcome that challenge. But, in the meantime, so much continues in this city. And, in everything we do, we have to focus on health and safety. So, today, is a crucial day, again, in the history of the city and the fight against this disease and the effort to bring back our city – today, the first day of school for elementary school students, kids in K-to-five schools, K-to-eight schools. And you see the image today, the Chancellor and I were at the Island School, a tremendous school in the Lower East Side. I want to thank everyone at the Island School, particular shout out to the principal, Suany Ramos, who did an amazing job, watching her organize everyone and greet all the kids, and she knew their names, each one, it was just beautiful to watch. But the energy in the building was palpable. The kids really ready to be back in school, their parents ready for them to be back, the teachers and the staff, ready to have kids back and to support those kids. There's a lot of love in that school. So, congratulations to everyone at the Island School. And I think for Richard and I, it was striking and really moving just to see a classroom – yeah, it didn't look like a typical New York City classroom. In some cases, it was nine kids, for example, not the full classrooms we're used to, but still a classroom of kids focused on their teachers learning and the energy of their teachers that they were picking up on was so positive. So, I want to thank everyone at the school and we are going to continue moving forward, because nothing helps a child as much as being in the presence of an educator and other caring adults. And that can only happen in our school buildings. So, this coming Thursday, October 1st, we will move forward with middle schools and high schools as well. In the course of this entire week, as many as 500,000 kids could walk through the door of a New York City school. So, this is a huge step and one that has been called for and welcomed by so many families and we're going to do it carefully and we're going to do it safely. And there's been a tremendous focus on health and safety at the Department of Education, working closely with Department of Health and all our other partners to get it right for our kids and our families and our educators and our staff. And I want to thank you, Chancellor – to you and your whole team for that effort, that constant focus on health and safety. And, obviously, our kids are there to get a good education and the best education happens in-person. But we know, because of a blended system, a lot of kids, some of the time, will be in-person, some will be at home certain days, learning online. Other kids, all remote, for now – in November, families will have another opportunity to decide if they want to go back to in-person learning. But, let's be clear, all of this

is unprecedented. All of this is incredibly difficult and complex. Everyone is doing their best. I thank all the administrators, educators, the staff – everyone's trying to make it work. And when you get to an actual school, you see tremendous spirit, a willingness to find a way to make it work, a lot of creativity. We've seen tremendous creativity at the school level. And let's be honest, the first days will take some adjustment. There will be a transitional reality and the first days are not going to be everything we want him to be. It's going to take several weeks with the in-person, with the blended online, with the fully remote – it's going to take time to get them all to the level we want to get them to, because it's an unprecedented and massive endeavor. But I have total faith in our educators that we will get there and be able to provide a great school year for our kids. With that, I want to turn to the Chancellor to give you an update as we all celebrate another step forward in the reopening of New York City public schools. Chancellor?

Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. And good morning to everyone. It's a pleasure to join you – everyone on the call here today, as we kick off the first day of in-person school for our K-five and K-students. As you recall, last week was the first day of school for everyone. But, today, was the first day for in-person learning for our K-five and K-eight students. Mr. Mayor, you and I had the opportunity as you mentioned this morning to welcome students and faculty and families at the Island School this morning. And I also want to add my voice to Principal Ramos and her incredible teacher, paraprofessional, food nutrition, custodial staff – everyone that welcomed our students. The excitement was unmistakable, and it was such a joyful reopening, something that I experienced last week on the first day of pre-K in Queens and in every other borough across the city. I can't wait to experience that again on Thursday. And I'd like to take this opportunity to invite Dr. Chokshi and Dr. Katz, if they're available, to come join us and have some of that love.

So, we've come such a long way over the past six months. And we would not be here without the hard work of New Yorkers to beat back this disease and the dedication of our entire school system. I am deeply grateful for our students and families, teachers, principals, and staff, for their commitment to each other and this city, during this time of crisis. They have shown remarkable perseverance, not only continuing learning from home and getting all of our buildings ready for another opening, but they're extraordinary contributions to each other and helping them – helping each other problem solve and be creative. This week, students all across New York City will be walking into safe classrooms to receive in-person education and interacting with their teachers, peers, and others in face-to-face experiences that our children have sorely missed and one that is so important for our students, teachers, and families. We are keeping a very close eye on our indicators and won't hesitate to take quick action where that's necessary. The Mayor, Commissioner Chokshi, all of the doctors and I share a commitment to keeping the health and safety at the center of and above all else what we do for our children and staff. Despite all that's new about this school year, one thing never changes, and that's the health and safety of our students and staff and the academic excellence that we strive for every student that remain our highest priorities. We are all hands-on deck to serve our students from the classroom, to monitoring the safe entry and exit from the building. While we created more flexibility for our teaching force, the safety and health of our students while they learn in-person is of paramount concern for us. If a principal needs their staff on-site, they are required to report to the building. The number-one job we all share right now is serving our students, and, oftentimes, that need will be inside of a school. It is the responsibility of our staff to show up for our children each day

and ensure a safe school community, whether in-person or remote, after months of struggle and months of shared work, New York City students are safely kicking off this 2020 school year in-person learning together – a historic moment that we'll look back on for years to come.

Now, this morning, as the Mayor and I visited the Island School, I need to share an anecdote that I think encapsulates why this is so important and even despite the complexity why it's important to us. As I was visiting the school, I had the opportunity to chat with a third grade young girl, and she was bubbly and she was excited and she could – was brimming with energy to get to her classroom. And she was showing off all of her stuff that she had brought. And as she left to go to her classroom, one of the staff members whispered in my ear, this child and her sister had been in three foster homes for the time that they've been with us at the school. In fact, their mother has lost custody three separate times. The only stable environment they have are the people that love and care for them at this school. You see, my friends – that's why it's so important that while we can do this safely, we do what we do for our children, because our children need us. We need them. And we owe it to the children of New York City.

Mayor: Amen. Thank you, Chancellor, very, very much. And when you spend time with kids and you spend time with families, you remember what this is all about, and we want to support our families. Public school families made clear how important it was for them to have in-person learning come back. They also made clear, a lot of them need all the support we can give them. And so, I want to talk to about the childcare initiative, the Learning Bridges initiative, give you an update on that, because this is free, a safe care and supervision for students on the days they're learning remotely within the blended approach and for families that need help, for folks who are working and don't have a choice and don't have the ability to take care of their kids themselves, for families that are dealing with particular challenges, essential workers or families in shelter, families in public housing – we've made a priority to make sure that they get the support and we're going to keep building it out and provide for as many people as possible. So, right now, by the end of the week, there'll be 30,000 seats available as part of the Learning Bridges approach. And we will keep building that out in the weeks ahead. And we'll keep you updated. Anyone who wants to apply for that free childcare for the days when kids are not in school can apply at schools.nyc.gov/learning-bridges.

Now, one more point about our schools, and again, it's about health and safety, and this is about testing. And starting next week, we're going to be doing regular testing for the coronavirus in all of our schools. And we'll be doing a monthly medical monitoring approach. Every school, every one of our public schools will be a part of this – a different day each month for each school. There'll be testing – taking a sampling of the school community, students, educators, staff, everyone. So, we want to make sure that students are signed up for the testing. Obviously, they need parental permission. We want to get all parents to understand how this is going to work, that it will be part of making sure school communities are safe. It will provide us a lot of valuable information, overall, but also obviously the results for each individual will be given to them. So, parents will get the results for their kids within 48 hours and they'll know exactly what's happening. What we're asking parents to do is to help us out by sending back those consent forms as quickly as possible. So, they'll be sent home in the course of this week with a family letter and a frequently asked questions chart along with that consent form. We're asking parents to go ahead and send it back, or, if they have concerns, raise them, and we'll get them

answers, but we want as many kids as possible to get into this testing approach as quickly as possible.

Look, this is how we stay ahead of things. The more testing the better. So, I'm going to pick up that point one more time, whether it's parents getting their kids tested, whether it's our school personnel get tested, whether it's people in communities experiencing a higher level of the coronavirus or in any other community, the answer keeps coming back to where we started months ago, testing, testing, testing. The more testing, the better. We're providing on a vast scale. There's plenty available now for New Yorkers to take advantage of for free. It is always free, fast, easy – again, the self-swab test, the one was just moving the device around the nostril, not the longer device that many of us found troubling. It's easier now than it's ever been. So, we want people to go out there, get that test, help us all move forward.

Last topic, and then a few words in Spanish. And this is a very, very important topic, but one where there's now some real lack of clarity, because of what's happening on the federal level. So, the census – we have here our census countdown, but there's a question mark now – was supposed to end tomorrow, and we are continuing every effort today, tomorrow to pump up that New York City response rate for the good of all. But something important happened last week – a district court judge – federal district court judge in California issued a preliminary injunction, preventing the Trump Administration from closing down the census. Remember, it was originally supposed to go to the end of October. Trump Administration brought that forward in a move that many of us criticized as an effort to undercount a lot of people in this country and a lot of parts of this country. Federal court now is saying, it must continue for another month. We, obviously, unfortunately, expect the Trump Administration to try and stop that again and appeal. So, we're going to keep moving intensely over these next days and prepare to keep going for a whole other month. We're waiting to see what happens at the courts – in the courts. But if it's a matter of fairness and justice, this census must go on for another month. That was the original plan. It will help us get the most accurate count. It'll help us right the wrongs of all the efforts to misinform and undermine the census that came from Washington. So, I'm hoping and praying the courts will agree. In the meantime, everyone, please, if you have not filled out the census, it's so simple, 10 minutes, you can fill it out for your entire family. Go to my2020census.gov or call 844-330-2020. We need everyone involved. This will determine so much of the future in New York City, our representation Congress, whether we will get our fair share of federal funding, billions of dollars on the line. We need everyone to take that 10 minutes for the good of all of us. A few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, we'll turn to our colleagues in the media. Please let me know the name and outlet of each journalist.

Moderator: Good morning, all. We'll now begin our Q-and-A. As a reminder, we're joined today by Dr. Choksi, Dr. Katz, Chancellor Carranza, Susan Haskell the Deputy Director of Youth Services at DYCD, Deputy Chancellor of Early Childhood and Enrollment Josh Wallack, and Senior Advisor Dr. Jay Varma. The first question today goes to Juliet from 1010 WINS.

Question: Yes. Good morning to all. Good morning, Mr. Mayor, how are you doing today?

Mayor: Good morning, Juliet, hanging in. A lot going on, but we're going to fight our way through. How are you doing –

Question: Great – a lot going on, yes. So, my question to you and perhaps the Health Commissioner is, who will be going into the private schools in the affected ZIP codes to make sure they are in Department of Health compliance?

Mayor: Go ahead, Commissioner.

Commissioner Chokshi: Sure. Thank you very much for the question, Juliet. We have a multi-agency team going into the nonpublic schools with a particular focus on the ZIP codes of concern. So, the multi-agency team includes people from the Health Department, it will include colleagues from the Test and Trace Corps, as well as from enforcement agencies, including the Office of Special Enforcement.

Mayor: Go ahead, Juliet.

Question: Okay. Thank you. A follow up on that, and then if you don't mind, so is there – is this starting tomorrow and is there any sort of grace period with compliance, and also who was handing out the masks or the tickets if people are refusing to wear masks?

Mayor: So, I'll start, and I'll turn to the Commissioner. Juliet, there's been a lot of dialogue, a lot of information all through last week, as we saw this problem start to emerge, meetings with community leaders constantly. Again, Dr. Katz, his team, Dr. Choksi, his team, and many other members of administration have been in constant touch with community leaders. A lot of public information was put out, obviously, in the course of last week. I think the message has been sent clearly, and we have seen – the good news, Juliet is we've seen an uptick for sure in mask usage. We've seen an uptick in social distancing, as you heard, even on the holiest day of the year in synagogues, people were practicing social distancing more than ever, which is very important. In terms of the schools, there's been a lot of dialogue, as Dr. Choksi mentioned, back and forth to help make sure the rules made sense and were effective. So, I don't think anything's a surprise to folks at this point because that predicate has been laid down very, very clearly. We're moving forward now, today, with the enforcement on face coverings. As early as tomorrow, we may have to take additional steps, additional restrictions, but we're going to make that decision in the course of today. But in terms of the agencies, every agency, literally, that has personnel to offer will be a part of this, obviously, Department of Health and Test and Trace, but Special Enforcement, Sheriff's Office, NYPD, and then other agencies that have enforcement personnel are being asked to send them in as well, hundreds and hundreds of people, hundreds of Test and Trace, and then hundreds more from other City agencies as well. Do you want to add doc?

Commissioner Chokshi: No, Sir, nothing to add.

Mayor: Okay, go ahead.

Moderator: The next is Rich Lamb from WCBS 880.

Question: Hi, there. I'd like to just follow up. Good morning by the way.

Mayor: Good morning, Rich. How are you?

Question: I'm doing okay. So, just to follow up on what Juliet had to say, in regard to the additional restrictions, the additional measures, what would those be and what would the trigger be for them?

Mayor: Well, as always, Rich, you got to the heart of the matter there. I'll start and I'll have Dr. Choksi weigh in and Dr. Katz as well. Look, I think the fact is we are watching the numbers constantly, and we want to see more and more testing. This is something where if you're going to make tough decisions about, for example, whether businesses can be open, whether yeshivas can be open, you want to make sure you have the very best number. So, we're strongly encouraging, and have been since last week, the maximum testing in the community. But we're watching the specific numbers by ZIP code and even finer than that by census tract, to understand exactly what is happening. We're going to look at those new numbers that we get in today, see what it's telling us, if there's been an impact yet from a number of the efforts, and then make further decisions. As was laid out on Thursday and Friday, the additional options include business closures in certain areas and, obviously, a wider scale closure of community institutions like yeshivas and childcare, and a limit on gatherings. Those are all on the table. None we want to do, but all on the table, if we don't see enough progress quickly enough, Dr. Choksi –

Commissioner Chokshi: Sir, that's right. I'll just briefly add, first none of these things are actions that we take lightly, as the Mayor has said, given how significant they are. However, we do know that there are actions that work from a public health perspective and the ones are what we have talked about, making sure that we expand testing and we have effective contact tracing as we do, but also making sure that there's as much distancing and mask wearing as possible. And so, any additional restrictions that do need to be put in place would be to further those public health goals, which really the ultimate goal is to interrupt the spread of the coronavirus.

Mayor: I want to turn to Dr. Katz, to the question Rich asked, because I think it's important to talk about how much acclimation has happened with the community as to the extent of the problem, what can be done about it, what the consequences might be, and just what that dialogue has been like. You've been leading this effort and you've put a lot of time into that dialogue. I think it'd be helpful for people to hear about it.

President Katz: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. We've been talking since last week and I want to be very clear, as the Mayor has said, our goal is to enable people to do the right thing. It's not to catch people doing the wrong thing. When we're going through a private school, our focus will be, this is what you need to do to stay open. Not that we're closing you down because of what we see now, if we see, for example, kids too close together, or they're not the sneeze guards between the desks, we're going to say if in order to stay open, you have to change this. The goal will always be on trying to enable people to comply. Same with the masks. When we met – talked this morning with a group of Jewish leaders about the masks, that we were going to fine people,

as soon as they understood that what we were saying was we would be handing a mask to someone, we'd be saying, 'please put on the mask, I don't want to fine you,' they were completely supportive of that. So, again, I think the key has been, Mr. Mayor, the engagement, which you've initiated since last week, and showing that our whole focus is health. It's not about catching people.

Mayor: Well said, thank you. Go ahead, Rich.

Question: Okay. Now, I don't want to be Debbie-Downer here, but I have to ask you this – so you had mentioned a three percent figure as a trigger to close the schools. Now, is that the rolling – the seven-day figure and how close – I mean, what are you optimistic that we're going to avoid that?

Mayor: Well, no, you're not being a downer. It's really important to clarify. I said very clearly at the time we announced the standard that it was a seven-day rolling average. That is a much more accurate measure than going by any one day, to say the least. And it's a momentous decision, obviously, and we wanted it to be based on consistent information. So, from the very beginning, I said, seven-day rolling average. The three percent obviously is a measure we put forward to be out of an abundance of caution. We're seeing a different situation than we've ever experienced to have an outbreak specifically – and, again, the numbers speak for themselves. Nine ZIP codes out of 146 in New York City. So, the geography is very specific. This is not like what we've seen previously. But yeah, the number today on the seven-day rolling average for the entire City of New York, Rich, is 1.38 percent. So, today, well below that three percent threshold. We will watch carefully over the next days, we'll report this number daily. If we see a trend line, we will talk about it very openly, but again, all roads lead back to testing. The more people get tested, the more accurate the number, and we want the true number. We want to really encourage people to get out there in every community and get tested.

Moderator: The next is Brigid from WNYC.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor, I want to actually follow up on Rich's question. Just to be totally clear, when it comes to school closures, would you consider closing schools in these ZIP codes where we're seeing these spikes? And is there a way to determine that by that, you know, geographic ZIP code? Would it just be the seven, excuse me, the three percent for the seven-day average or is there another threshold? Can you just clarify the decisions are going to be made citywide or by these places where you might see spikes?

Mayor: Thank you. It's a very important question, Brigid. It is – it has always been a citywide measure. So, I want to state that really clearly again, announced from the beginning, talked about consistently, three percent, seven-day rolling average, citywide. That's the standard we've held from the beginning. And we continue with that. The question of neighborhoods, so, what we're seeing, again, nine ZIP codes, not even the full ZIP codes in a number of cases, nine ZIP codes, and, obviously, another fact we're looking at closely is what is our situation room telling us. We are not seeing an uptick in cases in the schools, in those ZIP codes. So, we obviously have the ability to look carefully at what's happening with testing. We've sent additional testing to schools in those ZIP codes to public schools. We are not seeing an uptick in any way in the public

schools, in those ZIP codes. We also have, again, an unusual situation, one we did not anticipate, of an outbreak in a specific community in this fashion. And it's a known fact, there is not a lot of interconnection with our public schools in these particular areas. So, so far, we do not see any evidence that would suggest otherwise, and we'll continue with one standard only, the citywide standard. Go ahead, Brigid.

Question: And on a different topic, we reported this morning that voters across Brooklyn are receiving absentee ballots that are mislabeled envelopes. In many cases contain the wrong person's name and address. People in your old neighborhood are being impacted. I'm wondering if you've heard about it, what's your reaction, what's your message to voters? Have you talked to the Board of Elections about this and are you concerned about this feeding into a narrative about [inaudible] distrust voting by mail?

Mayor: All of the above, Brigid. It's appalling. I don't know how many times we're going to see the same thing happen at the Board of Elections and be surprised. It is, there's some good people there, and I know there's some people that are trying hard, but it just is not a modern agency and it must be changed. It just structurally doesn't work. In the meantime, they have to fix this immediately. This is appalling. It is so easy to avoid this mistake and it is very easy to fix this mistake. So, first of all, just a message to all New Yorkers. And if you got the wrong ballot call this number please 866-VOTE-NYC, 866-VOTE-NYC, and demand the right ballot immediately. The Board of Elections simply has to identify every one of these mistakes and alert the voter and send them a new ballot immediately. Look, it's 35 days to the election, thank God, there's time. But this kind of thing really frustrates voters, and this is the most important election in our lifetime. So, the best thing the Board of Elections could do is really over-communicate with the voters of the city and apologize to the ones who got the wrong ballot and get them the right one immediately while there's still time. Go ahead.

Moderator: The next is Marcia at WCBS.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor. Thank you for taking my question. Mine has to do with education and with schools, the schools that still have to open on Thursday. Right now, there's about seven schools, seven high schools, including Tottenville and Susan Wagner High School in Staten Island and five others who have suddenly had to move to remote learning because they didn't have enough teachers. What do you say to these schools about getting enough teachers eventually? How many more teachers do you have to hire and how many more teachers do you have to hire so that the people from the Department of Education who are going there to fill in can go back to their jobs at DOE? And –

Mayor: Okay. Marcia, Marcia, it's a lot of questions. Let me stop you there –

Question: [Inaudible] –

Mayor: Marcia, Marcia, Marcia, Marcia, you can't do four questions. I can't keep up with them. Let me answer your core question and then you'll have a follow-up. First of all, as I said, I want to express appreciation to every educator who's dealing with an absolutely unprecedented situation. No one has ever had to figure out, no principal, no teacher, no one's ever had to figure

out how to do in-person learning with blended learning for kids who are home that day with full-time remote all at once in the middle of a pandemic with the safety measures. It's incredibly complex and everyone is working their way through it. And what I've seen now in the schools that I visited, the Chancellor reports it to me from the schools he's visited, is everyone's working together to solve problems and move forward. They're not clinging to what is wrong. They are figuring out what is right and what they can do together.

Now, several schools have been reported to be “going all remote” and the Chancellor will speak in more detail, but I know some of those reports have been absolutely inaccurate, that schools are getting the support to be able to do the maximum they can do in person and to have that blended approach. So, the notion of a school suddenly going all remote out of the blue is just – that's not been the experience we've had up to now. We will continue to send as many educators in as needed. You're right, some have come from the DOE central staff. And if they're – if and when they're no longer needed, they'll go back to other responsibilities. But getting the largest school system in the country up and running in the most unprecedented moment in our history requires everyone's effort. And it will take several weeks, to say the least of transition, to get things to work well. It makes sense. It's an incredibly difficult transition, but people are making it happen. We will keep providing the educators each school needs. It's as simple as that. And when that process is complete, in a typical school year, honestly, it takes weeks to get down to their final teaching roster. When we have the final teaching roster for every single school, we'll add it up and we'll give you the grand total of what we had to add, but we're not going to do it day by day because it's a moving number on purpose, because that's the reality of opening school every year. Chancellor, to the question of schools saying that they have to go all remote, could you clarify for everyone?

Chancellor Carranza: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Marcia, so especially at some of the larger schools, we've given them flexibilities. So, when a school says, they're all remote, that means no one's on campus, everyone is home and they're logging in and they're doing their work from somewhere else. Some of our schools have some portion that they're doing virtually, which means students come to the school and they're doing some work virtually, but there are adults there, they are receiving services there. They're receiving counseling services, social work services, they're eating lunch there, eating breakfast there. So, there's some virtual aspects of their day, but they're not fully remote. Now, as the Mayor has mentioned, as we build capacity and get more and more teachers onboarded, more and more substitute teachers onboarded, you're going to see that this will stabilize much more. What you see on the first day is not going to be the same as what you're going to see on the first week, at the end of the first month, etcetera. We're going to continue to build capacity, but especially in some of those schools, they do have some flexibilities because they need to meet the needs of their students.

Mayor: Go ahead, Marcia.

Question: So, Mr. Mayor, I have to ask you a question for another reporter. She says that she has captured video of people shooting up drugs out in the open on Manhattan sidewalks. Obviously, I'm sure you think this isn't acceptable, but what is the City seeing and what is being done about it? How are you addressing the quality of life issues in New York City?

Mayor: I appreciate the question, Marcia. No, it's not acceptable. It's not acceptable on any level. God forbid someone is addicted to a drug. Our job is to help them to get them to substance misuse services, which the Department of Health does. And I'll turn to Dr. Choksi on that. We've long had an understanding in this city that God forbid someone is addicted, that you don't arrest your way out of addiction. You provide services to help people get well and support them. If people need mental health services, you provide them. That is the way forward, but we cannot just leave people on the street. We have to get them that help and get them in where they can get that help. And that is the responsibility of the Department of Health working closely with allied agencies, with the Department of Social Services, with NYPD in terms of their work at the community level. And we have to intensify those efforts. We have had so many challenges, one on top of another during the coronavirus crisis. We are, one by one, pushing back a lot of these challenges and overcoming them. But this is a problem in some parts of the city, it must be addressed. The neighborhood residents deserve better. And the poor folks who are addicted deserve better and that's our job to address it. So, in terms of what the Department of Health will do, Dr. Choksi –

Commissioner Chokshi: Thank you, Mr. Mayor, and, you know, our starting point, of course, for anyone who is suffering from addiction is one of compassion and one of making sure that we are bringing to bear all of the modalities we have to help them and to get them into treatment. Those are the things that work from the public health perspective, with respect to addiction. And so, the department is committed along with Health + Hospitals and the Department of Social Services, as the Mayor mentioned, to ensuring that we continue to ramp up our outreach and engagement to get people into the care that they need. So, to give you a specific example, over the last month we have had joint outreach teams that go to specific neighborhoods around the city where we know there are people in need of that help. We reach out to them, we engage them, we get them into care. And there have been thousands of New Yorkers who have already been engaged just in the last few weeks. And we'll continue those efforts.

Moderator: The next is Erin from Politico.

Question: Mr. Mayor, I'm just wondering, you said, or the Health Department said, last week that if infection rates did not improve by Monday night, they would go forward with this closing of the businesses and banning gatherings. I'm just wondering why the decision was made not to do that at this juncture. I know you're still considering it, but why at this point, are you not doing it?

Mayor: Well Erin you can actually see the information that was sent to you and other members of the media and publicly. It does not say what you summarized. It said that by Monday night, Tuesday morning, we could take any and all of these actions. And it was very explicit to say it was not a guarantee but we wanted people on notice that depending on what we were seeing any, and all these actions could start as early as morning. What we have decided to do, first of all, go ahead with the action in terms of enforcement on face masks, which I announced earlier. That is happening as we speak with City agency personnel out in the key communities. In terms of the situation we talked about in the guidance related to the yeshivas and child care centers. Again, a lot of dialogue has led to an obvious commitment from a lot of these locations to make the changes needed to ensure everyone is healthy and safe. If they don't, it's been made abundantly

clear that they will be shut down. There'll be regular inspections. So that piece was based on actual inspections, actual dialogue with the institutions where we saw some movement that was positive. We're reserving our rights on the additional steps, which would be the closing of businesses on some scale and a broader closing of community institutions. We do not want to do that if there's any way to avoid that. We're going to take a look at today's new numbers when they come in and determine if we think we have to start that effort. And if so, we would announce that by morning. But it's going to be step-by-step based on the data. I want to see if Dr. Katz would like to add anything to that? Hold on. We're doing a little switch out there.

President Katz: No, I think the only thing I would emphasize, sir, is how much improvement there was in mask wearing in the affected communities over the weekend. That I really felt that we, that we had turned the tide. I know it's difficult because the tests that we're seeing positive today are really reflecting people's actions last week. And so there is a catch up period of time. But I think if what you had seen, sir, over the weekend was no improvement in mask wearing we would have been in a very different position and taken much different actions this morning.

Mayor: Correct. Go ahead, Erin.

Question: Alright, thank you. And then my second question is you addressed the schools, but indoor dining is scheduled to open tomorrow. And you know, we've heard you speak about the risks of that several times and saying you would want to shut down you know if the rate went up. So is that still full steam ahead or is anything going to change with regards to indoor dining because of these spikes?

Mayor: Yeah we are going to keep an eye on that situation. And again, looking now at the seven day rolling average on the positives, 1.38 today. We're going to watch that carefully over the next few days. And I'll say, we'll publicly discuss that each morning. I want us to keep a close eye, obviously right now, indoor dining is going forward tomorrow. But I want us to keep a close eye on the situation and see what's happening in the whole city, which could be a very different thing than what's happening in those nine zip codes. So right now that is what we're seeing a real aberrant reality in the nine zip codes in terms of numbers versus the rest of the city. We have to take that into account. We did not anticipate a situation with that kind of separation of numbers. So we're going to -- bottom line, indoor dining will go forward tomorrow. We're going to watch carefully and report publicly. And if anything looks more problematic, we'll talk to the State and we'll decide together if any adjustments have to be made.

Moderator: The next is Christina Veiga from Chalkbeat.

Question: Hi Mayor. Thanks for taking my question. The first is, so we know that schools will have to close if we go above the three percent seven day average positivity. When could they reopen? What would be the standard, how many days at what threshold would we need to see?

Mayor: Let me say, first of all, I want to emphasize -- I appreciate the question, Christina and I'll turn to Dr. Chokshi as well. But I want to emphasize and Dr. Varma is on with us as well, I would note, remotely. Look where we are now at 1.38 percent, it is I still believe with intensive effort in the nine zip codes that we can turn the situation around quickly and keep that citywide

rolling average, seven day average, well, below three percent So overwhelmingly, that's the first thing to focus on. Can we keep it well below three percent with our actions? Yes. I'm convinced we can. If we were to at any point go over, we would address the situation at that time. But again, the goal would be against the backdrop of constantly trying to push down the number. So if we had a moment where we had to do any kind of closure, it would be temporary to say the least. We would want to get that number back down, ensure it was staying back down, and then we would continue with our schools. So theoretical because we're not near that point now. And if at any point that were to happen, we would keep it as temporary as possible. Dr. Chokshi or Dr. Varma, you want to add?

Commissioner Chokshi: Sir, you covered all the important points. One to underline is the idea that the goal of any time there is a halt of, you know, any activity is to mitigate, to suppress virus transmission. That will work over the course of days to weeks. And that's the purpose of undertaking that activity. And so we would continue to follow the numbers to understand when any restrictions would be lifted.

Mayor: Dr. Varma?

Senior Advisor Jay Varma: Nothing else for me. Thank you.

Mayor: Thank you, Christina. Go ahead.

Question: I didn't hear an exact threshold? It just seems like, you know, the cutoff for closing schools is pretty exact, so people are wondering what it would take to reopen it understanding that any closing at this point is still, you know, we're not there yet with the rate to close. I'm just wondering, is there a more exact standard for reopening? You also mentioned monitoring school communities and not seeing a rise within school communities. And I'm just wondering how, like, what are you monitoring exactly to be able to say that since we're not doing testing yet until October? What are the data points and how do you know that it's not affecting school communities?

Mayor: A lot of people are, have been tested already and are being tested of their own choice. A lot of our school – our educators, our staff, our kids. But we also have set up testing in and around schools in the zip codes. You'll see a lot of that today, and it will keep rotating to different schools in the coming days. The reason we know is we know when we have positive cases, we can track them by where a teacher or staff member or student lives. We can track them by which school they go to. We're not seeing a nexus to the nine zip codes. Just based on everything that we have coming in. And this has been going on for weeks now that the situation room has been up. We're not seeing a nexus to those neighborhoods. We're going to watch every single day. Because if we see something, we want to act on it quickly, but we don't see it. To your previous question, again I want to emphasize, I would really urge people to not assume anything yet. The seven day rolling average at 1.38 percent and a massive effort is being made to address the challenge we're having. And that challenge is in nine zip codes out of 146. So let's be careful not to assume an outcome. But if we were to ever have to say, it's time to close the schools, the simple way to say it is until we see that average go down below three percent and are convinced it will stay below three percent. Now, again, I'll turn to Dr. Varma and Dr.

Chokshi can help you maybe a little bit more with the technicalities. But you can see these trend lines usually pretty clearly because they don't happen – one of the things Dr. Varma taught me a while ago is this stuff doesn't happen overnight. If you get to that level, you see it coming up and then if you're moving out of it, you will see that happening in stages. But the goal is to be under the three percent in a way that is consistent. Dr. Varma, you want to add a little more to that?

Senior Advisor Varma: Sure. I want to touch on the two points that were raised in that second question. One is this question about when to reopen and the second is the question about how do we know whether or not there are cases occurring in schools right now? Related to that question, I think the Mayor covered it exactly. What you would want to see is you would want to see that the rate was below three percent. And Dr. Chokshi said it may take several weeks to see that impact. So you'd want to see not just that you're below three percent, but that the trend is declining. And we know that that process takes time. Onto the first question that you had raised as part of that, about how do we know that there are not cases occurring right now? So the answer is that we actually have the most extensive testing program anywhere in the United States, between 30,000 to 40,000 New Yorkers are being tested every day. Most of them are adults, but some of them, in fact are children as well. So we really do have a robust way for people to get tested and find out if they're sick. The monitoring program that will occur is just an added layer on top of all of the other measures that are being used for health and safety like masks and physical distancing and ventilation.

Moderator: We have time for two more for today. The next is Kala from PIX.

Question: Good morning, everybody. This question is for the Chancellor and the Mayor. The City Council subpoenaed the DOE for detailed data attendance from March until June, that's the time when schools were shut down from COVID. As far as I know you haven't provided that info just yet. What is the holdup? And will you meet today's deadline?

Mayor: Okay. Kala, first of all, just, I want to set the record straight on this. I have said more times than I can count to the City Council that they never need to use a subpoena for anything, that we will provide information. And I've said to folks at the Council that if you ever feel my agencies are not doing what they need to do, just tell me. They all have my cell phone, I assure you. Just tell me, and I will get you the information personally, if it comes to it. So there was no need for a subpoena. We want to make that information public. And the idea underneath this, of trying to understand exactly what happened with attendance. We know it was a very difficult circumstance, having to go to all remote and deal with the reality of the pandemic. The Chancellor and I were pretty honest about the fact that it was a really imperfect situation and none that we wanted to repeat. And that's part of why we've been so adamant about going back to building up in-person education again. But we want the whole truth out there because it's important to examine it and learn from it. So whatever the Council needs, we will get them. I am honestly not up to date on the specifics and if it's something that we have to do today, we'll do it today. But I want to emphasize that we want them to get the information they need. Chancellor you want to add anything?

Chancellor Carranza: Mr. Mayor, that information has either already been released this morning or will be released today.

Mayor: Good, go ahead, Kala.

Question: Okay. Earlier this morning, when the UFT was visiting schools, Michael Mulgrew said something to the effect that City Hall had dropped the ball in this conversation of going back to schools. So my question is he said that you didn't come to the table until July. Do you and the Chancellor wish you started the conversation of reopening schools earlier?

Mayor: I don't know specifically what he's referring to and I'll let the Chancellor speak to it. Again. I know the Chancellor's had literally endless conversations with the UFT and the CSA. Our First Deputy Mayor Dean Fuleihan has. I've gotten more and more involved over the last months. You know, I don't know where there was a lack of dialogue. I think everyone was dealing with the extraordinary complexity of this kind of three part education system, blended in-person, blended at home, and fully remote. I do think there was a problem of sort of clinging to past procedure and approach that everyone needed to break out of and understand that we were in, you know, an absolutely unprecedented situation. I think that's an area where we all could have done better. But not because people weren't at the table and weren't in dialogue all the time. That part doesn't make sense to me. Go ahead, Chancellor.

Chancellor Carranza: I would only add that we've been in constant daily, sometimes hourly, most definitely weekly conversations and work sessions with all of our labor partners since March. That has not stopped. It has not wavered. We will continue to be in that kind of communication mode throughout the entirety of this pandemic. Because it does require as the Mayor said for us to work in a very different way and really problem solve in real time. Which makes it as circumstances change, you have to pivot and you have to make different changes. And the only way to be able to do that is to be in constant conversation. So I'm actually very proud of the kind of working relationship we've been able to afford. It's not always perfect. Brothers and sisters don't always like each other, but we respect each other. And today when we saw the smiles on childrens' faces, it's all worth it.

Mayor: That's for sure. Go ahead.

Moderator: Last question for today, it goes to Jeff Mays from the New York Times.

Question: Hey, good morning, Mr. Mayor. Just a couple of questions for yourself and the Health officials there. I'm wondering if you could tell us exactly how many cases have been detected in that Ocean Parkway cluster, since it was identified? And would you also be able to tell us specifically which Hasidic and Orthodox groups is the City working with to help tamp down infections in some of these zip codes?

Mayor: Let me start with Dr. Chokshi and Dr. Varma on the statistics over the last days to answer your first question. And then Dr. Katz and I can talk about the people we've been working with over the last week in particular. But Dr. Chokshi, Dr. Varma, you want to talk about what you're seeing in the numbers?

Commissioner Chokshi: Sure, Mr. Mayor. I can start and thank you for the question. So I will clarify, you know, the areas that we are looking at are broader than what was originally named as the Ocean Parkway cluster. It is zip codes of concern both in Southern Brooklyn as well as in parts of Queens. But what we do know is that in those areas over the past two weeks, which is the timeframe that we've really been monitoring this as carefully as we have. The cases there account for 25 percent of the overall city's cases, despite accounting for seven percent of the overall citywide population. So we do have the specific absolute number of cases, and we can follow up about that as well.

Mayor: Dr. Varma, you want to add?

Senior Advisor Varma: Nothing for me.

Mayor: Okay. Jeff I'll start and Mitch will follow up on the other part of that question. So for example, on the call we were just on, big citywide organizations were a part of it. Jewish Community Relations Council of New York City, New York City Board of Rabbis, umbrella organizations that are particularly strong in the Orthodox community, like Agudath Israel. I saw representatives from a variety of neighborhoods, Midwood, Borough Park, Williamsburg. I know folks have been involved over the last week from the Satmar community, the Bobover community, the Lubavitcher community, among many others. The Sephardic community has been very actively involved in these discussions and working with Dr. Katz. So from everything I've seen, it's very broad ranging. If you look across the neighborhoods in the nine zip codes, it is a variety of communities across the spectrum, a variety of people, a variety of different communities within the larger community. And to the best of my understanding pretty much every piece of the larger community has been represented. Go ahead.

President Katz: That's great, Mr. Mayor, over the weekend, one of the colleagues we've been working with sent us a picture of the Bobovoich wearing a mask with his shtreimel and that picture had gone viral all over the city. So I feel like we've reached all parts of the Jewish community. Also the mask distribution was to 300 different synagogues, which I think shows, you know, how both the dynamic diversity of the Jewish community and our intention to reach all parts of it.

Mayor: Yeah. And I will say Jeff, that image of the Bobov rebbe wearing a mask was very deeply felt by a community that's obviously very spiritual. That was a very important sign. Go ahead, Jeff.

Question: Thanks for the answer. I want to follow up about the Board of Election absentee ballot issue. I'm wondering, what do you recommend, you gave out the hotline, but you know, people we've spoken to have said that when they call either the line is busy or there're 80 people ahead of them. I'm wondering what else they could do? And you didn't really answer Brigid's earlier question about whether you think these issues now are giving any sort of credence to President Trump who has been questioning the safety and security of vote by mail.

Mayor: I apologize, Jeff. I thought that was more of a question about people's faith in the Board of Elections. But no it's totally unrelated to what President Trump is saying. The President is

trying to purposely discourage people from voting and purposely sow confusion. And obviously he is, I mean, let's just speak plainly. He's trying to lay the groundwork for his own version of a coup d'etat. It's totally transparent at this point. It's not going to work. I think the election results are going to be very clear and to the extent they take time to come across, they're still going to be clear in terms of the impact. I also think the various institutions in this society that he thinks will rise to his defense won't. Starting with the United States military that truly does believe and has always believed in the democratic process and the peaceful transfer of power. So we see something incredibly cynical happening with the President. But, you know, Jeff people have been voting in droves around the country. I mean, you've seen really extraordinary turnout including in places that depended a lot on mail in ballots. And folks are not buying the hype. They want to make their voices heard and they understand it's the most important election of our lifetime. That's happening even before we've gotten to this election. Even other types of elections, people are feeling tremendously engaged in. So, no, I do not believe this mistake by the Board of Elections will dissuade people from voting or cause them to believe Donald Trump's hype. What we will do today is determine if there's anything we can do to work with the board that isn't always very cooperative, but I wish they would be in this case, to ensure that every single person who calls gets addressed immediately. If the Board is unwilling to be responsive, we'll see if we can create an alternative place for people to call and get help and a way to get them the help that again, this Board just consistently doesn't provide meaningful service to the people of this city. That's our problem. Our problem is not Donald Trump. Our is a Board of Elections that consistently fails the people it's supposed to serve. And I really wish once and for all it would be changed.

With that said, look, everybody, we've been very upfront about the challenge we face today. We're giving you a lot of facts, a lot of data, a lot of hard numbers about what's happening. It should cause us all to be on alert. It should cause us all to redouble our efforts. The answer here is to remember what worked, what has worked for New York City. What all of you have been doing? Social distancing, the mask wearing, being smart, being disciplined. We need to do it again. We need to double down. We know how to fight back this disease. We fought back a lot tougher situation than what we're dealing with right now. We were dealing with a challenge in every zip code, not nine zip codes, every zip code in March and April. And we fought it back and we will fight this back. But it's going to take everyone's effort. So again, anybody, everybody can help. Go get tested, put on that mask, remind the people in your life to do the same. And we're going to fight this outbreak back and we're going to move New York City forward. Thank you. everybody.

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