

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 2, 2020, 5:30 PM

CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON CNN WITH ANA CABRERA

Ana Cabrera: Let's bring in New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio now. And Mayor, good to have you with us. What is your reaction to the crowds out at Central Park today?

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Ana, we expected this and prepare for this. NYPD is out in force and a lot of other City agencies out there with a very clear message I've been given people all week, which is, if you want to go out for a while, get some exercise, get some fresh air, that's totally understandable. Don't linger too long. Get back home while you're out there, keep that face covering on, keep that social distance. But anyone who tries to resist these basic rules and tries to create a public gathering for example or tries to put together, you know, a sports event or anything like that, the NYPD is going to immediately give them a summons, and these are hefty summonses, and we're going to be very uncompromising about it, Ana. If everyone follows the rules, that's great, but if not, there's going to be very intense enforcement.

Cabrera: And what does that look like so far? Have people been following the rules or do you have an update on how it is working?

Mayor: Yeah, I saw the enforcement numbers from an hour or so ago and they looked actually quite good, that the vast majority of people have gotten the message and that's the story of New York City over these last week, Ana. People have heard that we need them to stay home, overwhelmingly they have, even with good weather, they've gone out for a while but then they get back home. Our kids, obviously, have been at home. That's been tough on them, but families have been doing that the right way. And people are overwhelmingly abiding by that social-distancing, more and more people putting on the face coverings. We're giving them out for free today all over the city to make it easier for people. So New Yorkers have been pretty amazing and following rules in a place where it's tough. There's so many people in one place and yet New Yorkers are doing their job here

Cabrera: And like you said, it seems to be having an impact. There are a number of positive signs that we've seen this week from the Navy Ship Comfort departing to the Javits Field Center no longer accepting any new patients. The Central Park hospital will stop taking new patients as well on Monday, I understand. And we also know that NYPD is getting healthier from at one point having 20 percent of the workforce out sick to now 7 percent out sick. So these are all positive signs. Is it safe to say the worst is behind New York?

Mayor: Ana, I want to say that, but I want to also acknowledge this is a ferocious disease. Never turn your back on this disease. Never discount it. The way we're going to ensure that the worst is behind us is by keeping up these tough rules. So we of course – we all want to restart, but we're not going to restart until we have harder evidence that we've turned the corner. I agree with what the Governor said earlier, we're talking about New York City alone. Thousands more people testing positive each day, hundreds more deaths each day. We are not out of the woods and we're not going to rush it. We're going to make sure that we're absolutely certain beat back this disease. Now to do that on Ana, this month we're initiating a huge testing program, testing people and then tracing their contacts and then those people get tested too and quarantining people who test positive to help reduce the spread. We do not have all the testing capacity we need. This is still one of the biggest problems in this whole horrible crisis we've been through. The federal government has still not led the way on testing, even at this hour. We do not have the lab capacity we need to get to the kind of level of testing, tens of thousands, even hundreds of thousands a day is what we really need. So this is going to be a struggle and if the federal government will do its job, we can do it a lot quicker. But I haven't seen that evidence yet.

Cabrera: So, you're talking about diagnostic testing. There's also been a lot of antibody testing happening in New York and we've learned about 20 percent of those tested in New York City have tested positive for antibodies. What do those numbers tell you and where would you like those numbers to be in terms of making decisions on how best to move forward?

Mayor: The antibody testing is imperfect. We know this. Dr. Fauci and others have been very clear about it, so it tells us something. It tells us something about exposure. It does not tell us for sure that people can't get the disease again. We tell anyone, even if you've had the test to keep taking all the precautions. The diagnostic testing, I think, is, in many ways, more valuable for what we have to do now, which is to figure out who needs to be isolated while they might be transmitting the disease, so we can really, really squeeze that you know, the disease and reduce the transmission. So, we'll be using both. But my goal here is widespread diagnostic testing as the leading edge of this.

Cabrera: And yet time is ticking and people aren't getting paid. You told Wolf Blitzer here on CNN last night that you have a \$7.4 billion gap in your budget and that you along with mayors all over the country are having to think about furloughing or even laying off public employees like police officers, firefighters, health care workers, sanitation workers, teachers. I mean is that something you are seriously considering? Those jobs are on the table?

Mayor: Ana, it's horrible to say, but it's not only me considering it. I have talked to mayors around the country, Republican and Democrat, both, some of them are already instituting a furloughs. Some of them already are planning on layoffs, not because they want to, they think it will be horrible for their cities. They think it's going to hold back the recovery. I can tell you if we have to make those kinds of choices, if we cannot provide basic services, it will be much, much harder to ever get to the day where we restart our economy and lead a national recovery and New York City and all cities have to be part of a national recovery. Right now, if we do not get stimulus funding, that makes us whole, in my case, a \$7.4 billion budget deficit just for the next year, let alone for the future, and the same as happening to cities and counties and states all over the country. If we're not made whole, we cannot be a part of this recovery because we'll

laying people off just when you want to be hiring more and more people. And Ana, I remind you that last stimulus three gave \$58 billion to the airline industry alone. How on Earth are America's cities and counties and states being left out? We cannot let that happen if we expect to see a recovery in this country.

Cabrera: Well, according to the White House Economic Advisor, Kevin Hassett, that may be what happens. He said there may not be another stimulus bill. Here he is just this morning.

Kevin Hassett: Right, well the President has said that he categorically rejects the idea of a bailout for states that have been irresponsible for a long time. But to the extent that the costs of COVID on states, you know, blue and red, you know, all of them are high enough that maybe they need financial support, then he's willing to negotiate about that should there be a phase four a deal. I think right now, because there's been good news really, that the opening up is starting to happen, you know, faster than we expected. It appears to be doing so safely, then there is a chance that we won't really need a phase four.

Cabrera: What's your reaction to that?

Mayor: Ana, it's outrageous. And it really disgusts me, right? You have city and states, it's not their fault that this horrible coronavirus came to our country. The only fault lies in Washington, that when it could have stopped it with testing, our federal government did not provide it to us. And so now you have cities and states that are suffering. People are suffering and are – is this guy serious? If we end up without the support we need and we have to lay off firefighters, police officers, health care workers, teachers, sanitation workers, is he saying it's our fault that the coronavirus came to our shores, to our city? That's outrageous and that's inappropriate. And anyone who says that bluntly should be fired because it's disrespectful to the first responders and the health care workers who have been the heroes in this crisis and now have to wonder if their job's going to be there in a few months.

Cabrera: Mayor Bill de Blasio, we appreciate you taking the time. It's tough task that you have ahead of you. Thank you, and we wish you all the best, and, of course, all people of New York City.

Mayor: Thank you, Ana.

Cabrera: Thank you.

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