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

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good morning, everybody. A very happy Easter to all New Yorkers who are celebrating this joyous holiday, even in the midst of this pain and this crisis. It's a time to think about renewal and to think about what comes ahead, a time to think about how we support each other, and to everyone continuing to celebrate Passover, a *ziken Pesach* to all. I just want to say this simply upfront, this is a season where we focus on faith and so my message to all New Yorkers is keep the faith, keep the faith in this time of challenge, not just your faiths that you practice your beliefs, your values, whatever they may be – keep your faith in New York City. Keep your faith in your fellow New Yorkers. I'm watching what all of you are doing with such pride and admiration because you're showing this whole nation what it means to act as one to help each other and protect each other. That's faith. That's something greater than any one of us. That's something powerful. That's something beautiful. That's something worthy of this season we are in, a season where we reach for our highest ideals. So, thank you, New York City. Thank you for the way you have shown everyone that no matter what's thrown at you, you keep the faith, you support each other, you stand up for each other. We're going to need it. We're going to need it in the weeks and months ahead. That faith will sustain us and then we're going to need that faith to build something better in the future. Not just to get to a day when we're over this disease, but a day when we reach for something higher and I have faith in you and I have faith that we will get there.

So, this week we went through a lot in New York City. It was a very, very tough week in our hospitals. We lost some of our loved ones. We lost some of our fellow New Yorkers. It's so painful to think about, but I also want you to remember what we thought this week was going to be like originally. We thought it was going to be something, honestly, even much worse. And we have never, ever underestimated this enemy we're fighting. Coronavirus is ferocious and has presented us with challenges that we have never ever seen before. And that certainly our nation has not seen anything like in a century. So, this was a tough and painful week, but it was also a very different week than the one we expected. And thank God for that. You know, last Sunday was a moment that we were preparing for the worst and then we started to see some improvement and we're thrilled – I'm thrilled to be able to tell you that just when we thought it was really going to get even worse, we started to see some improvement, and I'm a first one to always say, let's not overrate that improvement, let's not draw too many conclusions too quickly, but let's be very clear and let's be willing to, of course, not only see the good, but see hope in the good.

Last Wednesday, I told you we had seen something real that was the beginning of change and that has continued over these last days. Starting tomorrow, we're going to give you a new set of information, a new set of indicators that will help us to determine where we go in the future. I've said it's going to be three indicators we are going to watch every single day and you're going to

watch all of you because it's all going to be public. We need to see those indicators move in the right direction consistently to be able to start to talk about changes that we can make to move us towards the next phase of fighting this epidemic. But what's so important to recognize is that even as recently as a week ago, we were seeing in our hospitals, people coming in and needing to be intubated more every single day, more and more people in need of those ventilators, more and more people would not live without them. A week ago, it was 200 to 300 more people each day coming in, every day, 200 or 300 more than the day before. We thought that was even going to go up more. And then by Wednesday we were able to say no, in fact, thank God that number had come down to about a hundred people more per day. Still way too many, still more each day, but fewer than projected by a lot. Today, I can tell you that number has gone down again – 70 more people per day now is what we're seeing on average. But again, I don't want anyone to mishear it. It's not, things are definitively, clearly, permanently getting better. It's still 70 more people each day, but it's a lot fewer than what we feared.

When it comes to the equipment and the supplies that we need to get us through this next coming week, I'm very pleased to say I want to thank everyone. Let me just say everyone in our team has been working so hard – an incredible operation at our Emergency Management Office where people from all agencies are working together, all of our colleagues in the private sector have been helping us, the federal government, the State government, FEMA, everyone has been part of this. Thank you, because we are now at a point where we can say for the week ahead based on everything we know now we will have enough ventilators to get through this coming week. I will keep updating you because we never know when something may change and we always have to have our guard up and we're always looking for new supplies to get ready for what's ahead because this won't be over tomorrow. This is going to be weeks and months ahead. So we're not letting our guard down but we do have enough ventilators based on what we know now to get through next week. Also, on personal protective equipment, PPEs – for the coming week, and I'm going to talk about the crisis standard. I want to emphasize – and I say this to all New Yorkers, but particularly to our heroic health care workers that we've got to be always honest with you – no one can tell you truthfully that we are providing what would be the peacetime time standard where we'd love to have a true abundance of PPEs of every kind that could be used once and thrown away. We would love to be in that situation. That's the situation we were in for a long time. We're not in that situation over these last weeks.

Once this crisis hit and earnest, we went to a crisis standard and that means always protecting our health care workers, always protecting our first responders, and anyone who needs these PPEs. But with a standard that our CDC says and our Health Department says is acceptable but not the one we would use in peacetime. Based on that crisis standard, we will have the N95 masks, the surgical masks, the gloves we need for this week ahead. And I will say we will have the surgical gowns and coverings of different types and we'll have the face shields, but barely enough in those two categories. It's going to be a struggle this week to make sure that we get them to the right places to make sure that they are conserved. This is something I've spoken with Commissioner Jimmy O'Neill about, that he's playing such an extraordinary role making sure that our hospitals at the front lines in the hospitals are receiving what they need, distributing the right way, doing what they have to do to support each other. This week's going to be one where we're going to do very dynamic and precise, making sure that each hospital gets what it needs in those categories. But for the next week we absolutely must have resupply in surgical gowns and face shields. I've had this conversation with the White House. We are continuing to press the federal government. We'll, of course, press the State government, private sector. We're

contracting everywhere we can, but trying to get those deliveries in on time, which is always a challenge in this environment right now. So, this week we will get through, next week we have real challenges we must address over the next few days. And again, when I say this week, I mean this coming week, the week just beginning Monday, we will get through. The week after that, we have a lot we have to work on in advance.

Now let me talk to you about testing, this is an area where there's so much concern obviously, and I just want to remind everyone this basic history and these basic facts. The basic history is we pleaded for weeks and weeks for the federal government to provide testing upfront in the kind of quantity that could have helped us contain this crisis and change the whole course of it. We never got that help. We continue to plead for more testing. Still has not come any anywhere near the numbers that we need, but we will not stop. We're continuing the conversations with the White House, with FEMA demanding the testing. We are the epicenter of this crisis. We must have the testing to help us move towards that next phase where we get out of widespread transmission of the coronavirus and move to low-level transmission and on to something better. We also have to remember that testing helps us in many ways, but it does not provide all the solutions. It is a fact that someone could test negative one day and a few days later, tragically contract the disease and test positive. It's a fact that if you test negative, it doesn't mean let your guard down, you still have to take a lot of precautions. And it's a fact that if you test positive, you have to follow through and we have to help you follow through to protect your own health and the health of everyone around you. So, there's a lot that has to be done to take testing and make sure it is used in the best way possible. But there's still – it remains the fundamental problem, there's just not enough testing.

The priority has been clear. We have focused on hospitalized patients, those who were in greatest danger, those whose lives we have to work hardest to save. That was the testing priority. Protecting our health care workers, keeping them doing their lifesaving work, protecting our first responders so they could protect us all. That's been where the priority has been in what's essentially been phase one of what we were able to do with testing. But now we're going to talk about phase two where we intend to expand testing more to the community level as we get sufficient supply. And I want to emphasize every time I say the word testing, that it is contingent upon getting the supply we need. This is something that has to come from, I'm sad to say outside the city, we cannot produce here in any kind of way that anyone's explained to me, at least. We need to get these supplies in from elsewhere. And the testing must come in for us to do phase two the way we intend.

But here's why phase two is so important and this'll be targeted testing in communities with the greatest needs. I said the other day, this virus is not the great equalizer. It does not, in the end, have the same impact everywhere. It hurts people everywhere. Every community, every ZIP code has been affected, and we all know people who are suffering or even people who have passed away. But we see disparity. We see a clear disparity in the impact, who's been hit hardest, communities of color, lower income communities, immigrant communities, folks who are vulnerable already because they haven't had the health care they needed and deserve throughout their life. We cannot accept this inequality. We have to attack it with every tool we have. So by the end of next week, we will create community testing sites and these are targeted to have the biggest impact. We will create these sites in the following locations – and these are all Health + Hospitals locations in these communities, existing locations – in East New York in Brooklyn, Morrisania in the Bronx, Harlem of course in Manhattan, Jamaica in Queens, and the Vanderbilt

Clinic on Staten Island. We will be setting up a system, we'll announce the details soon, for people who live in those communities particularly hard hit to be able to access this testing. There will be a priority system focused on those who are most vulnerable. And again, to do this effectively, we're going to have to keep getting the supply of testing we need and we're going to have to keep getting the PPEs we need. Because remember for the professionals who administer the test, they must be protected. We need those PPEs so we are going to work on a game plan that says let's keep finding the tests. Let's keep finding the PPE so we can get this up and running by the end of next week.

We will update you on the details. And obviously if there's any changes in the specifics because of supply, we will update you on that. But here's the key point. The federal government really needs to step up. Again, they have not been doing what we all needed and this is true all over the country. We have not gotten the help we need on testing. Here's a chance to get it right. I will be asking the federal government today for test kits to allow for 110,000 individualized tests. That will allow us to get started with this community effort and to continue everything else that we are doing. Specifically, 25,000 of those individualized test kits would be focused on Health + Hospitals for their current needs and for the new sites that I have just described. And we need to get these test kits in this week. If we can get that done, then we can keep building out our testing program. Now this is a beginning. Want to emphasize, those bigger phases we talked about a few days ago, to get to that next phase, that low-level transmission phase, we're going to need much more testing. To get to the phase where we've basically defeated the coronavirus and there's basically no transmission, we're going to get a lot more testing, really, really widespread testing. We're nowhere near that now. This is what our national government should be focused on first and foremost, if we're going to really help us get to those next phases here and everywhere, so I will have that conversation today with the White House again, but this is going to be the decisive in determining, not only have we got through the next weeks, but how we get to something much, much better. Couple of other points –

A week ago, I shared new guidance with New Yorkers, said we're advising all New Yorkers to wear face coverings in public and that it was about protecting other people. It was about protecting all of us. That was the idea. It was an idea of doing something that would help reduce the spread, doing something that would help hasten the day where he could get out of this crisis. It was very clear that by putting on that face covering you're protecting everyone else. And that was for the good of all. I want to say thank you again to all New Yorkers. It's been amazing. Wherever I've been around this city, I see so many people wearing face coverings and you know, they made their own, they use bandanas, they use scarves, whatever they had. But it's been really impressive how many people took that guidance and ran with it immediately. And everywhere I've gone, I've talked to my team, people are seeing the same thing. Tremendous follow through on the guidance. So, thank you. I want to add to the instructions we're giving. Starting tomorrow, Monday, I am requiring all City workers who come in contact with the public while on duty to wear face coverings. This'll be a requirement of their work. We've already provided 1.4 million face coverings to City workers. We will provide as many more as are necessary for our City workers to consistently, constantly have a face covering on when they interact with the public. So this will be a requirement starting tomorrow Monday.

On another topic, I've said that unfortunately and painfully we're not just fighting COVID-19 as a disease and in terms of health care and protecting lives and saving lives, COVID19 has also robbed a lot of people of their livelihood. Hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers have lost their

jobs. Today we're announcing a new initiative to help some of the folks who have lost their jobs to get work again. And I want to do everything I can to give people back their livelihoods, to protect people not just in terms of health and safety, but in terms of their ability to pay for the basics, to support their family. In times of distress what our government should do on all levels, especially the federal government, is step up and provide support for people and help them continue through the crisis and get to the other side. And that includes putting money in people's pockets.

So we are establishing a new initiative to hire New Yorkers to do absolutely crucial and heroic work in our hospital system, starting with our public hospital system, Health + Hospitals. But we're also going to be expanding that effort, working with the voluntary and independent hospitals as well. So, I want to say to all New Yorkers who are looking for work, join a team of heroes, help out in our hospitals, fighting back the coronavirus and saving lives. Right away, Health + Hospitals will be hiring 500 non-clinical staff. So not medical staff – folks who can help transport patients, who can work on the clerical team, who can help the hospitals running with critical work, including cleaning and maintenance. Health + Hospitals is starting with 500 jobs immediately that will build out to thousands. And as I said, we're going to also have jobs available in the other types of hospitals, all of whom are going to need this support and help.

These will be temporary jobs starting with a 90-day assignment. But for so many families that do not have enough money right now, they're going to be a real lifeline. So, I want to ask anyone who wants to help us out and wants to get that opportunity to get employed again. Go to nyc.gov/coronavirus – again, nyc.gov/coronavirus. You can apply right away and we need you right away. And I want to remind everyone even while we're trying to get new employment opportunities to New Yorkers, we will not let any New Yorker in this crisis go without the food they need. We will not let any new Yorker be evicted from their apartment. I want to be very clear that the City of New York, we will protect our people and anyone who needs food and can't get it, call 3-1-1. Anyone who's being told by their landlord, they have to leave their building because they're sick or they're being threatened with eviction, call 3-1-1. We will get you a lawyer, we will stop it. Our job is to protect our people.

Now, another point, just a few more before we turn to questions from our colleagues in the media. Yesterday, Chancellor Carranza and I talked about the painful reality that our schools would not be able to open up again for this school year. And we explained, obviously, why that was the right thing to do in terms of health and safety, why it was the right thing to do in terms of recognizing what would be possible academically with only a few weeks in person. But we had a reason in making that decision to know that we could keep supporting our kids. And we had laid out a five-point plan of the ways we're going to support our kids and our parents, prepare for this phase and beyond. One of the reasons that Chancellor Carranza and I are confident in the decision we made is that we have had amazing partners working with us really, really deeply and with great passion, great energy to create a distance learning system, an online learning system that New York City has never had before. And again, this was put together very rapidly, but I want to give credit where credit is due. Not only is it the great folks at the Department of Education leadership who put together this plan and implemented it so rapidly, not only the educators who have been absolutely outstanding in taking on a whole new approach and starting to make it work - and I said from the beginning and Chancellor says, not going to happen overnight, it will get better with each week – but our educators have been front and center very

devoted to making this work and I thank you all again, but I want to also thank the private companies that stepped up.

You know, we ask these companies to come in as partners to work with us. Yes, it's part of their business, but to work with us in very, very different ways than they even had before, to do it very fast, very agile to really work with government as partners, think the way we had to think in a crisis and follow through in real time. And I want to thank these companies who have done that because it's allowed us to keep making distance learning work. First of all, Apple they have been outstanding partners. We said from the beginning, we needed 300,000 iPads. They were very quick to prioritize the children of New York City and I want to thank them for that. And yesterday I talked to the CEO Tim Cook, and the outstanding challenge was we needed 50,000 more the iPads to fulfill our order. We needed them really quickly to be able to meet our deadline of putting the iPads in the hands of each child by the end of April. I spoke to Tim Cook yesterday and he said, no matter what it takes, Apple will get those iPads to us in time. So I want to thank him and everyone at Apple for all they are doing to make sure our children will have these iPads and to make sure every child has an equal opportunity to learn. And I know that is a labor of love for them. So I want to thank you, Tim, and thank you everyone at Apple.

T-Mobile has been supplying the LTE data plans. They've been great partners. We ask them to move quickly. They did. Thank you. IBM, setting up our iPads with apps and resources for learning. Everything we've asked, they've been doing. Thank you, IBM. Microsoft, Google, ProTech, creating apps and tools for learning. They've all again been willing to answer the call, answer it quickly, make sure that we could give a rich experience, a powerful experience to our kids. It's not the same as being in a classroom, obviously, but we are trying to make it the very best it can be even if it's distance learning. And then the folks who actually get the devices to our kids. And I want to not only thank the companies, but thank all the hard-working delivery workers. These folks are unsung heroes in this crisis and you don't think to stop and thank the FedEx guy or the UPS guy, but just should because they're actually helping things keep going and so many cases delivering vital supplies. So, thank you to FedEx, to UPS, to NTT and Deluxe, all of whom have been delivering these devices to our students.

And finally, our library systems, Queens Library, the Brooklyn Library, the New York Public Library, all had been working to make sure the apps are loaded on the iPads, giving kids access to thousands of wonderful books they can use. So think about that for a moment. A lot of kids who would never have had that access at home, families that could never afford to buy a lot of books, a lot of kids who have never had the opportunity to have their own personal extraordinary library. It's now happening because of all of these combined efforts.

So I'll close before a few words in Spanish wishing everyone again a very happy Easter. Continuing to wish everyone a *zizen pesach*. I know today and every day in this holiday season, people are finding a way, whether it's FaceTime, whether it's Skype or whatever it is, to connect your loved ones, to stay connected as best we can. Thank you for keeping traditions alive, even when it's hard. And again, thank you for your faith. And the last thing I want to say about that word of faith is we connected to the word endurance. Boy, New Yorkers have shown us that we can endure even the hardest times and our faith traditions always talk about what our ancestors went through and they went through so much. But we're showing that we in our time can endure as well and that's what our faith helps us do. So, everyone, continue to keep that in mind as you fight your way through this crisis.

Few words in Spanish, just quick summary –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, we will now turn to questions from our colleagues in the media.

Moderator: Hi all. Just a reminder that we have Commissioner Barbot here in person and Chancellor Carranza and Senior Advisor Jimmy O'Neill on the phone. We will take one question from each reporter in an effort to get to as many outlets as possible. We'll start off today with Debralee from the Manhattan Times Bronx Free Press.

Question: Hey, good morning everyone. How are you?

Mayor: Morning.

Question: So quick questions on this new roll out of the testing plan, Mayor, and also to Commissioner O'Neill. Essentially, I know that your role will in ongoing conversations with the federal government. Are there tests though in place, additional tests the way you've described to actually begin testing in a more expanded fashion to these communities essentially in five days?

Mayor: Well, again, Debralee, we want to, if we can get the testing in, we want to be up starting the end of this coming week and it may not be the same exact start date in each location and it may alter a bit depending on when the testing comes in. The testing we've had to present has been overwhelmingly taken up by the - again, the patients in greatest urgent need, the health care workers who we needed to protect, the first responders we needed to protect. So we've got to get more to sustain an effort like this at the community level. I'm going to remain hopeful that we will find that supply and start to be up and running at the end of this coming week. But I'm also being honest that – we have the locations, we have the personnel, we have a game plan, we're going to lay all that out, but we have to make sure we have the supply of tests and PPEs to actually make it start. And again, right now we're going to need more to be able to guarantee that. But this'll be a day to day thing. We'll keep updating as we go along. I know you said something about Jimmy O'Neill, I want to make sure that's put in that upfront next time just so we can make sure we get it. What was your Jimmy O'Neill point? Can you hear us?

Question: [Inaudible] Can you hear me?

Mayor: Yeah, just go ahead and finish on the point about Jimmy?

Question: Right, just sort of a reflection of the same query. If in fact, what is in place now and what deployment - what could deployment possibilities are in place now? When we talk about waiting for the federal government and having these ongoing conversations, that's one thing I understand, but what's in place now in terms of the supplies, the testing, and the equipment to actually be able to start? What's in what's in place now?

Mayor: Yeah, so again and I think Jimmy – this is less about what Jimmy is doing, which is obviously about making sure that at the hospitals the supplies are there and usable and getting to the right people in all the hospitals. This is more something new we're creating, of course,

through Health + Hospitals. Debra Lee, we'll give an announcement later this week on the specifics. What I'm trying to signal very clearly is we will need the PPE supply to be secure and we'll need the testing capacity to be secure. That varies. The testing, the amount of testing we're doing, even with the current capacity varies, of course, by week depending on what's happening with this disease. So, it's literally something we'll know more about as we get into the week. I can say with assurance to sustain what we are talking about here and build it out the way we want to we will need additional testing. Now the federal government is my first destination, but we're continuing to work on private market constantly. So, I don't want you to think it's the only, we have been working with private companies constantly over recent weeks to try and find additional testing supplies. So, we'll have more to say on the specifics in the course of the week.

Moderator: Next, we have Myles from NBC New York.

Question: Mr. Mayor, happy Easter to you.

Mayor: Happy Easter, Myles.

Question: Just the question about the time table from yesterday's announcement. I know the Governor's Office told us yesterday that they had only been made aware of the decision to close schools five minutes before your press conference. Can you talk to that and about your thinking behind that?

Mayor: Myles, Chancellor Carranza and I, as I said, consulted widely with health care experts, with the folks who do the work in our schools, the unions that represent them, and we had those conversations through to Friday evening and we came to the firm conclusion that this was the only thing possible, honestly, the only right thing to do and that it had to be done. And as soon as we were convinced that to be done, it was important to tell our community and tell our parents that this was a decision so people could plan accordingly. It's as simple as that.

Moderator: Next we have Shant from the Daily News.

Question: Yeah. Thank you, Mayor. Just wanted to ask a little more about the dynamic with Albany. You know, Governor Cuomo, since the outbreak has said that [inaudible] not a time for politics as usual to ask if you feel he's lived up to that? And also, just what you would say to New Yorkers who might be vexed to see you clashing with the Governor over schools?

Mayor: Shant, I respect the Governor. I think the Governor has done a very good job in this crisis. I've said that before. I want to say it again. We've talked a lot during this crisis. Our teams talk literally many, many times a day. I think there's been a lot of agreement on the direction that we've had to take. So that's my statement. We've been managing to work everyone in common cause. When it comes to a decision like this, I know the Chancellor feels the same way, our job is to protect the children in New York City, to protect the families in New York City, to protect our educators, and our job is to make sure that we beat back the coronavirus once and for all. It's abundantly clear that to do those things we have to keep our schools closed for the remainder of the school year. So this is just about doing our jobs and making sure people are safe.

Moderator: Next we have Sydney from Gothamist.

Question: [Inaudible] This is Sydney with Gothamist. Just on the schools matter. I'm wondering, do you have a – my understanding is there's about 175,000 devices that need to go out to families and I'm wondering, is that the correct statistic or up to date number that you have and how do you – how does the city plan to do that by the end of April, considering the rollout of devices so far and has anything changed to be able to do to distribute devices more quickly?

Mayor: Sydney, I'll start and pass to Chancellor Carranza. So when we started and we announced there would be distance learning and obviously being created essentially from scratch on a vast scale. There's no places tried to do it on this scale before in this country that I know of, certainly. We said expect that the first few weeks would be tough because there was not time to distribute in the schools. We had to obviously, immediately get out of the schools. We didn't have all the devices. We knew it would take some time. The pace has been picking up. Chancellor will go over the exact numbers, but here's the reality with Apple, which is obviously been crucial to this equation with the iPads. They have been expediting and prioritizing supplies for New York City kids. We had that last piece, that 50,000 we needed, that was outstanding until yesterday, when we got the affirmation from Tim Cook that they would be here rapidly. We're just going to be turning them around constantly and getting them out to families.

So we're in a position now to do something we couldn't have done a few weeks ago, including that we had to get the supply. There wasn't 300,000 iPad sitting around in a DOE warehouse. And as the Chancellor keeps saying, 300,000 kids is bigger than, you know, any other school system in America basically except for our own. So, it's a massive, massive undertaking, but now it's really gathering steam and we set that deadline because we need kids to get them and that deadline is going to drive action. Chancellor, you want to jump in?

Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. So, Sydney, yeah, the – we've actually distributed a little over 175,000 devices. We've shipped approximately 70,000 devices of the 200,000 that we need to still distribute. Yesterday's conversation with Tim Cook is critical because it's been really a supply chain issue. If you think about every school system in America right now is transitioning to online, remote learning as well. It's not – we're not the only ones in need of devices. So this is – it was just a game changer for the Mayor to have that conversation with Tim Cook. And as soon as we get them, and we get them set up, we're shipping them right out to students and families. So it's important that we have their information and we know who needs them, and I'll just keep repeating. You can go onto our website, schools.nyc.gov, there's a link right on the landing page for the survey – tech survey, or you can call 3-1-1 and they'll put you in contact so we get that information.

Mayor: I want to ask all our colleagues in the media who are reporting on this issue, please let people know that website and they can call 3-1-1, because we are doing this very, very rapidly and we have obviously a good sense of kids who need them but we don't have a perfect sense. We need parents or the young people themselves to let us know immediately if they don't have a working device so we can get them one.

Moderator: Next, we have Katie from the Wall Street Journal.

Question: Hey, good morning and a happy Easter to everyone who celebrates. I know you've asked this, but if you could just explain, Mayor de Blasio, for the sort of everyday anymore for listening who maybe isn't as well versed in the kind of interpersonal conflict that the City and the

State often find themselves in, can you just explain what happened with the closing schools? when the Governor was notified? And also, why this weekend, it was a holiday weekend, was there a reason why this was announced yesterday as opposed to maybe Monday? Thank you.

Mayor: Katie, thank you and happy Easter to you. The decision was made on Friday evening. It was imperative to announce it as soon as it was made. People have been asking for days and days. I think you're one of them in fact. Many people have asked us for days to help people know where we were going, to give people that measure of security, of knowing the direction we were going in, and to allow everything to be planned accordingly. I was a public school parent, obviously, for the entire upbringing and my kids and whenever we get to a decision we owe it to parents to announce it immediately. Again, the decision was made based on the health and wellbeing and safety of our kids, our parents, our families, our educators. So we were quite certain it was right thing to do. The state was notified yesterday morning and we made the announcement. I believe that even though New Yorkers are observing this holiday weekend, obviously against the backdrop of a painful crisis, it's not stopping people from wanting clear information and it's something also Katie, that I told people from the very beginning, I thought this is what was going to happen and I feared it was going to happen. And it was just important to make it as clear as possible as soon as we were certain.

Moderator: Next we have Yoav from the city.

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor, I just wanted to clarify, and forgive me if you explained this, but the expanded testing and H + H is that going to be a new city ability to test or are you moving resources from somewhere else and is the capacity going to be there?

Mayor: So, Yoav, good question and it picks up on Debra Lee's question. I think people have understood that a lot of times in recent days and weeks we've had to say to you, this is what we project, but we're going to talk to you again, you know, in a day and two days and three days to tell you what the latest is. Sometimes we've had to tell you the projections came back very negative, very tough. Sometimes we've been able to tell you the projections came back better. So this policy that we're announcing today, community-based testing, focused on community's greatest need, focused on people who are most individually vulnerable, starting later this week. Specific locations, five locations, and again there will be targeted testing for people who are particularly vulnerable. That that will be contingent upon two things like so much else in this crisis has been that we give you a game plan then we tell you there are realities that we have to adjust for according to supply. So, we need to make sure that the testing capacity is there. We need to make sure the PPEs are there to protect the people doing the tests.

The PPE supply in general has improved in the last few weeks and we have a huge number of orders out around the world that if we started to see a little more consistency on the deliveries, we would be a much better shape. I've told you, you know, this week where we stand, which is we will get through, but on a crisis standard. Next week, we still have this coming week again, we will get through on a crisis standard the following week. We have a lot of work to do still, but our goal is to reserve enough PPEs to make sure that we can do this testing properly. And then with the testing supply we have now, to see how much of it would be available to put into this new effort while simultaneously working federal government and private market to get more testing. So this is the plan, we feel good about at this hour that we're going to be able to get this plan moving by end of the week. Although, as I said, different sites may start at different times.

If we need to vary the days of start a bit because of supply, we will. But this is what we plan on doing.

Moderator: Next we have Alex from Chalkbeat.

Question: Hey Mr. Mayor, happy Easter. Two quick questions. One just on the device numbers, just wanting to make sure I understood that correctly. The 175,000 number is that the number of devices that have already been distributed. And my second question is just, have you and the Governor spoken since his press conference yesterday? I mean he seems to be under the impression that the final authority about the school closure decision is his. So, I'm just wondering if you can comment on that at all.

Mayor: I'll start and I'll pass to the Chancellor on the specific numbers. It's as simple as this. This is something the Chancellor and I had to do. We had to protect our children, our parents, our families, our educators. The New York City Public Schools have to remain close for the remainder of the school year. So yes, the Governor and I communicated, our staffs communicated, but the bottom line here is it's about health and safety and it's about getting us out of this horrible phase we're in with widespread transmission and getting us safely to the next phase and we have to be real smart. And I've said cautious, careful to not allow resurgence of this disease. So, this is the right thing to do and we're going to keep moving forward. On the question of the exact numbers around the devices and that 175,000 number, Chancellor, do you want to pick that up?

Chancellor Carranza: Yes, sir, Mr. Mayor. So, the 175,000 devices – it's a little over 175,000 – these are school-based devices that have been distributed. We've also now shipped a little over 70,000 iPads that are Wi-Fi enabled as well. Those are the specific numbers.

Mayor: Okay. Thank you.

Moderator: Next we have Abu from Bangla Patrika.

Question: Can you hear me?

Mayor: Yes, thank you.

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: Just speak up – I'm sorry to interrupt, speak up a little more.

Question: Are you hearing me now?

Mayor: Yes, I am.

Question: So, this is Abu Taher from Bangla Patrika [inaudible]. Do you know [inaudible] –

Moderator: Sorry, Abu –

Mayor: There's something wrong with your line. Something's moving that's causing a sound. Could you stay real still and stable so we can hear you better?

Moderator: I think you have to stop typing.

Mayor: Yeah, don't type during it – that would be real helpful.

Question: So, my question is, do you have any program for the people who are undocumented in New York City? Because there is a lot of undocumented people that are here. They don't have any programs where they can apply for an unemployment or, you know, any other benefit, which is a government benefit. But they're staying in the home, they don't have money to buy the food, they don't have any place to go for help. So, do you have any program, anything you can offer for the people who are undocumented in [inaudible]?

Mayor: Absolutely. Abu, it's a great question. Thank you for it. Look, there are hundreds of thousands of people – let's be really clear, there's a half-million of our neighbors, our fellow New Yorkers, our coworkers, the parents who go to – you know, whose kids go to the same schools as us – there's a half-million human beings who are undocumented in New York City. They're very much a part of our community. And we in this city have for these last six-plus years tried every way we can to respect them, to acknowledge them, to value them, to support them. Right now, in this crisis, what do people need most? They need to be protected. They need to be protected in terms of public safety and they need to protect in terms of their health. We are going to make sure always – and this is something that NYPD has done, I think, with extraordinary skill and respect and compassion – people will be protected regardless of documentation status. Health care, our health and hospital system – anybody who needs help and support, it will be there for them regardless of documentation status, regardless of ability to pay. Having a roof over your head – no New Yorker can be evicted at this point. And if anyone is threatened with eviction, they should call 3-1-1. If anyone is told to have to leave their apartment, even temporarily because they're sick, they should call 3-1-1, we will get you the help you need. Food – anyone who is hungry, we will get food too. It does not matter what your documentation status is, we're all New Yorkers. Anyone who does not have food can go to any of the 435 sites all over the city. You can get them through 3-1-1, you can get them that nyc.gov. All three meals for a day will be provided for all family members every day those sites are up and running. Anyone who's vulnerable at home and needs a food delivery can call 3-1-1 and we'll arrange it quickly. That is all regardless of documentation status. So, I know how much fear there is in immigrant communities right now. There are people who are undocumented who are very, very afraid. There are people even who are documented, who are afraid because of all the fear that's been created around this country, particularly coming out of Washington. And that fear has exacerbated this health crisis and exacerbated the disparities, because there's a lot of people who have been so fearful they, they haven't even been going to the doctor, they haven't even been going out to health care facilities because they're so worried about being deported and put in danger. So, Abu, the bottom line is, on all those really basic things the human beings need, the City of New York will protect and support all immigrant communities, including undocumented folks. And please let people know that all that help is there for them regardless of documentation status.

Moderator: Next we have Maya from Patch.

Question: So, on the topic of City workers, are there any plans to institute – like, if policy is at all city agencies to protect essential city workers who are older or have underlying medical conditions, like authorizing all of them to work from home? Because, right now, it seems to differ by agency. Just last week, I was talking to DEP workers with preexisting conditions who said they still had to report to the office while, at the same time, the City's Board of Elections had announced that all employee is over 60 or with underlying health conditions could work from home.

Mayor: Good question, Maya, and I'll certainly get our Health Commissioner into this one. Let me make it clear, any city worker who has underlying conditions that pose a direct threat I'll give – I'm a City worker, I'll give an example. I have asthma, but it's not the kind of asthma that causes a threat in this situation. Other people could have very severe asthma and it would be a threat to their health in this crisis. So, any City worker who is particularly vulnerable, we do not want to make them more vulnerable, to say the least, and we're very comfortable ensuring that they can work from home. Or if they even are in a position where it's impossible work from home, but it's not safe for them to be at work, we want to get them home and we'll obviously continue them on the payroll during the period of this crisis. We just have to make clear with every agency a single standard. And I think you're raising a good point, we have to quickly make sure all agencies are working off a single standard. But what I can tell you immediately is, anyone who has any of those serious preexisting conditions that might create a threat I don't want them any place that might be a danger to them. I want them home. And we'll make sure that guidance has given again tomorrow.

Commissioner, you want to add?

Commissioner Barbot: Mr. Mayor, I think you got it, obviously, just right. The only thing I would add is that we have been giving guidance to our City workforce to ensure that everybody is safe and giving guidance about the use of face coverings and ensuring that if and when, at all possible, remaining six feet within someone that they may come in contact with. And so, obviously, many of our essential workers don't have that opportunity. So, certainly, working with individual agencies to see what can be done based on those priority groups I think is an important thing to consider.

Mayor: Right. And, obviously, look, I want to be very, very clear that job-one is to protect lives. And I don't want any City worker who is in a compromised state to be in a situation where they may be in danger. We have a huge workforce, and even though we've seen a lot of people go off duty for a period of time because they were sick, we're seeing more and more than coming back now. So, anyone who is threatened, we're going to take care of we. We do not want any confusion in any agency or with any supervisors about that. It's first and foremost about protecting our people. And again, it's about protecting each other, which is why, starting tomorrow, we are requiring the face coverings for all City employees come in contact with the public.

Moderator: Next we have Henry from Bloomberg.

Question: Mr. Mayor, how are you? Happy Easter.

Mayor: Thank you, Henry.

Question: I wanted to ask you about these – about the online schooling. As I understand it, no attendance is taken. Is there any exams? Is there any way to gauge whether students are engaged in this? How do you – how do you quality control this kind of education experience?

Mayor: Yeah, it's a great question. I'll start and I'll pass to the Chancellor. I think a very important way to think about this, Henry, is, you know, this started just a few weeks ago on an unprecedented scale and it's being – you know, this is a classic example of building the plane as it's going down the runway. But you know, ridiculously large scale – 1.1 million kids. Every week, we're seeing more and more capacity, meaning more and more kids with devices, more and more teachers figuring out the best ways to work with their kids, connect with our kids. We need to take another big jump in terms of working with not just educators, but with parents to really ensure that kids are engaged. It's not shocking in the first weeks where there was a lot of disruption and everyone was learning a new way of life that it was hard to know who was engaged and how often and trying to get the system up and running was the first priority. But what we need to do now is really ensure that parents are close allies with their teachers in a way, honestly, that we would love all year round in a school year in peacetime. Maybe in this wartime dynamic, a new cohesion will occur where educators and parents will get to communicate more and think together about how to best serve the kids and make sure the kids are focused. Kids are going through a lot right now. It's really tough time for kids cooped up in doors and all, but with the support of parents and other adults, you know, helping them get focused and then we'll have a better ability to engage them and know when they're part of the learning experience. So no, and we do not have an easy traditional attendance measure. What we know so far is there's nowhere near the participation that we would like to see, but we do expect that to change with each a week as a devices are in hand, as the parents are engaged. One of the things we announced in our plan yesterday was to have a much higher level of engagement with parents too who are looking for answers, meaning to be able to have a number they call constantly through 3-1-1 where if they want to understand how to approach getting their kids connected to this and keeping them connected, they have problems, they have questions – that parents have a place to turn and they have a help line in multiple languages that's available to them constantly. They have, like, coaching, if you will, how to figure out how to do this best, because, you know, the parents are going to be, and the, and the family members are going to be eyes and ears to make sure the kid engages. So, we're going to have a lot more beefed up capacity to do that, starting in just the next few days. Chancellor, you want to follow through on this?

Chancellor Carranza: Yes, sir. And with a great deal of respect, I'm going to disagree strongly with the premise of the question. Attendance is being taken. What we've had to do is shift the system of taking attendance because, obviously, students aren't in class and we can't take it the way it used to be taken. So, we've started a new way of collecting attendance. We'll report that out this coming week. But attendance is being taken. And grading and academic standards are still in effect. What we've asked teachers to do is to be flexible in terms of what they're doing and how they're assigning grades, only because, as we've mentioned, not everyone has a device yet. So some students are working off of packets, some students are working online. So the two words that I keep emphasizing during this time period is flexibility and patience. We also are looking at our grading policy. I have mentioned that I've been speaking with focus groups of parents and the number-one concern that parents have expressed to me is it's fine that we are continue to have academic standards, that we're doing homework, that things are getting graded and collected and students are getting feedback, but the real need that they have is around

trauma-informed supports for students. Parents are very, very vocal with me that their kids are going through a lot, their families are going through a lot, and whatever we can do to help them to help their students navigate, they would appreciate. So, there's going to be a lot more of that support commune as well to our teachers. Finally, the other thing that I would say is that, I have seen just many examples of teachers going above and beyond in terms of what they're doing in terms of engaging students and how they're engaging students, and being creative, and while still being flexible, they're being innovative. So, I can assure you, that as students are engaged there's some, there's great learning happening. It's just not the same as when we're in person.

Moderator: Next we have Roger from 1010 WINS and then we'll take one more after him.

Question: Mayor, how are you? Happy Easter. I'd like to ask you – and forgive me if this is something I should know – but what exactly are the rules and the laws when it comes to who has the authority to close schools? Because that seems to be, you know, I think, confusing to a lot of New Yorkers who are hearing something from you yesterday and then something different from the Governor.

Mayor: Roger, thank you for your question and Happy Easter to you. Roger, look, the more important even than the question of the rules and the laws – I'll speak to it – but again, it's sort of the moral question. What's the right thing to do for our kids, our families, you know, our parents, our educators to protect their health and wellbeing and all of the people that they come in contact with? The right thing to do is to keep the schools closed and the right thing to do to beat back this pandemic is to keep the schools closed. And that's really what it comes down to. And that's why the Chancellor and I believe very simply, this is something we have to do. Obviously, what's clear is, I'm responsible and the Chancellor's responsible for the health and wellbeing of all our kids. And we are dealing with something that is different from pretty much any place else. I want to absolutely respect the fact that the Governor has an important, crucial role to play in a crisis and particular powers in a crisis for sure. And again, I think he's done a very good job and he has to think about the whole State for sure, he has to think about coordinating with other States. But my responsibility is to the children of this city, my responsibilities to the parents of this city, to the educators who serve this city. That's my singular focus. And, to me, this is not about legal or jurisdictional questions. This is a moral question. How do we protect people best? The best way to protect people is to keep our schools closed.

Moderator: Last question for today. We have Jeff Mays from the New York Times.

Question: Hey, good morning. Happy Easter, Mr. Mayor. Wanted to ask, again, this is not the first time that you and the Governor have had the sort of spat during a crisis. Is there anything you think that can be done to improve you guys' relations, especially during moments of crisis?

Mayor: Jeff, I think respectfully – and Happy Easter. First of all, most importantly, Happy Easter to you. I think it is not surprising – and I respect the media deeply and I think you guys understandably focus on what you see as exceptional – but I want to remind you that this is exceptional in this sense. From the beginning of this crisis, from the beginning of the challenge of coronavirus, the Governor and I have agreed on the vast majority of things. I have been supportive and appreciative of his leadership. I've said many times I think he's doing a very good job. We agree – and we've looked at the main strategic things we had to do throughout – it's been

a high, high level of agreement. Our teams are working constantly together. So, you know, there may be times when people have different perspectives, that's not unusual. My singular focus is on the children, the parents, the educators of this city. The Governor is thinking about other parts of the equation, that's fine. But I don't think if you literally look over the whole course of this thing, you're going to find very many times where there was a substantial disagreement. You're going to find on the vast, vast majority of the moves that were made, agreement on the nature and the timing of what was done. And the teams work together constantly. And so, in the end, when you think about what do we all tried to do together? We've all, City and State together, we have worked to make sure that our hospital system was strong and could sustain this crisis. Thank God for our health care workers, our doctors, our nurses – our hospitals are holding. That's been something we've all worked on together. We've all worked together to get the, the supplies, the ventilators, the PPEs, that's been moving. We all work together making a lot of the big decisions on how we would address this crisis and it has shown in terms of the fact that we're seeing some progress. You know, we believe, all of us, City and State, we believe in social distancing, we believe in shelter in place. It's been working and New Yorkers are the real heroes, obviously, they've been the ones following through on it. So, I think if you really do the composite, if you really do the big picture of what's happened over months now, there's a hell of a lot more of agreement than there's ever been any disagreement. And sometimes when there's a difference of perspective, it's just because there's different jobs to be done. I'm always going to tell you what I think will protect my people and I'm going to be real, real clear about that. Keeping our schools closed will protect New Yorkers, period. But we're all going to keep working together for sure.

Okay. Thank you, everybody. A very Happy Easter, again. A *zizen Pesach* to those continuing to celebrate a Passover. One last thought, and I think it's on the theme – again, so many powerful themes in the holiday season – and another theme is renewal. That is part of the faith traditions. That's obviously something we feel at this time of year. As spring begins, renewal is coming. It's a tough moment we're going through, but renewal is coming. One thing we've known from the beginning, this crisis would have an end point. We still don't know exactly when it is or how it'll happen, but we know this will end. We know we're going to come out the other side and we're going to be together. The renewal has to be true to the word, not just a replacement of what was, but something different, something more fair, more just, something that addresses the problems of where we were before the coronavirus and helps us towards something better. So, renewal, because we will come out of this. But, renewal, because we will build and create something together different and new and better. I am convinced we can do that. And again, God bless you all New Yorkers, you should be so proud of what you have done throughout all this pain. And on this very holy and special day, I say, God bless you all and keep the faith.

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