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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON CNN'S NEW DAY

John Berman: Hospitals in New York, quickly reaching the breaking point. Governor Andrew Cuomo says they will be out of ventilators in six days. Hundreds of doctors and nurses and therapists are needed in New York City by Sunday. Some patients are now being treated at a field hospital set up at the Javits Convention Center, but most of the beds on a Navy hospital ship now docked in New York Harbor are empty. There's room to treat 1,000 patients onboard the Comfort, but it has just 20 at this moment. Let's get all the latest from New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio. Mr. Mayor, great to have you on this morning. Thank you for taking the time to speak with us. The Comfort has 20 people on board. It has 1,000 beds. I know it's not to take COVID patients. It was never for that, it is to free up capacity for other patients. But if it has only 20 patients on board, how was it doing that?

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Yeah, John, I've spoken to the Navy about this. There's no question in my mind that's going to get resolved very quickly and you're going to see that number grow. And having the Comfort here is a very, very important thing for New York City, both in terms of the number of patients who will be served, but also it has given us an extraordinary morale boost when we needed it. So, I don't have a doubt in my mind, the Comfort is going to be filled up soon, the Javits Center is going to be filled up soon. That's the easy part, John. The hard part is our hospitals dealing with a massive surge in the coming days of not just COVID cases, but folks who need ICU care, folks who are really fighting for their lives and we need more doctors and nurses and ventilators for that most urgent care. The people who literally – if we have the personnel, if we have the equipment, lives are going to be saved. If we don't, people will die who did not need to die. That's the part of the equation that's much more troubling to me. And that's where I still don't see enough action from the federal government. I asked the president and the military over a week ago for 1,000 nurses, 150 doctors, 300 respiratory therapists. I said, I need those folks in our emergency rooms, in our ICU, in our hospitals, right at the front line, fighting the worst battles over COVID, the toughest cases. And I don't have anything yet.

Berman: It's interesting you asked them a week ago, you say, so you've been having these conversations with the federal government because Jared Kushner, the president's son-in-law, who's involved now I guess with the supply chain, yesterday at the White House said that he took some kind of action after the president got a phone call from a friend. Listen to this.

Jared Kushner: *I got a call from the President. He told me he was hearing from friends of his in New York that the New York public hospital system was running low on critical supply.*

Berman: So, it took a phone call from the friend of the president to inform him of that. But you say you've been telling him that for weeks.

Mayor: Yeah, John, I have. I've spoken – and I want to say the president's been very available and I appreciate that and we've gotten some of the help we need for sure, but the real help going forward, and I've said this explicitly to the president, his entire team, a FEMA, the military, everyone. I've said that this coming Sunday is D-Day because we know that as of Sunday we start to run out of ventilators. We start to get really stressed in terms of our personnel. Think of it this way – for weeks and weeks and weeks, these heroic, doctors, nurses, health care workers have been fighting this battle. A number of them are out sick now with the disease. A lot of them are just stretched to the limit. They need reinforcements. They need it now. So, what I've said to every one of our national leaders is we need to get on a wartime footing.

This is very strange to me, John. Right now, essentially the country is still on a peace-time footing, but we're fighting a war against an invisible enemy that is increasingly taking the lives of Americans in vast numbers, and this is just the beginning. Next week is going to be much tougher. The military has come here and I appreciate it, but nowhere near to the extent we need. There's no effort so far, literally none, to mobilize doctors and nurses from around the nation and get them to New York and other places that need them. I've called for a national enlistment of all medical personnel who can free up from their day to day jobs and go to the front and the only way that's going to happen is if the military organizes it. The U. S. military is the finest organizational, logistical entity on Earth. They could actually organize a national enlistment and get those doctors and nurses to New York and then wherever else they're needed moving around the country.

But I've said this for weeks and we have – there's no plan. There's no order that's been given by the commander in chief. The nation is in a peace-time stance while we're actually in the middle of a war. And if they don't do something different in the next few days, they're going to lose the window. If there's not action by the president and the military, literally in a matter of days to put in motion this vast mobilization, then you're going to see first hundreds and later thousands of Americans die who did not need to die.

Berman: You've talked about Sunday as a critical day when you're going to be running out of things that you need. How close are you to meeting the challenge you set with yourself to get those supplies that you need?

Mayor: I can get to Sunday when it comes to ventilators. Monday, Tuesday – 'm not sure about yet. That's the blunt truth, John. I'm not sure, in the nation's largest city, after we have asked our federal government constantly, we've gone to every company we can find literally on Earth that we could purchase from. We're trying to create homegrown solutions. We're trying to come up with every creative way and approach, but I don't know after Sunday if we're going to have what we need and that's just the ventilators. Actually the toughest part of the equation is the people part, the personnel, because if we don't – think about this, we predict by something like Monday or Tuesday, 5,000 people in our ICUs, intubated, fighting for their lives with COVID cases. 5,000 and that number will then grow. That's a staggering number. Every one of those people will need a ventilator. Every one of those people would need doctors, nurses constantly checking on them and adjusting their treatment. We can only get to Monday or Tuesday at this point. We don't know after that.

How on earth is this happening in the greatest nation in the world and how are our military at their bases, I don't think they want to be there. I think they want to be at the front, but they have

not been given the order to mobilize. There are doctors right now all over the country in private practice going about their business. We need to treat this like the war it is.

Berman: Mr. Mayor, you have asked New Yorkers to wear masks when they go outside, face coverings. Exactly when and how much, and you know if you go for a run, if you're going for a walk for exercise, should you be wearing it? When should you be wearing that face covering when you leave your house?

Mayor: John, for the first time, just in the last few days, we've gotten some evidence from studies from around the world that having a face covering on can help avoid accidentally transmitting the disease. Because what we're seeing now is the asymptomatic people, people not showing any signs of disease, might be able to transmit it. So out of an abundance of caution, this is what I'm saying to all New Yorkers, take a scarf, take a bandana, just anything you have at home, just cover your face if you're going to be in close contact with people who are not your own family under your own roof. Now, if you're socially distanced, you don't need it. But if you might, you know, even accidentally get closer to people in the course of your day going shopping or anything else to the grocery store, have something you can just cover your mouth with, even if it's for a temporary period of time. That just helps protect other people. It's not a way of stopping you know, the possible infection that you might experience. It's a way of making sure the whole community is safe by people not inadvertently spreading the disease.

Berman: It's an act of altruism. Mayor Bill de Blasio, we appreciate you being with us this morning. Thank you for your time. We'll check back in with you as soon as we can.

Mayor: Thank you, John.

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