

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 21, 2021, 10:30 AM

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

TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good morning, everyone. I'm still floating on air from yesterday. What an amazing, amazing day for this country, for this city, for all of us. The inauguration was powerful, it was moving, it was hopeful. And I just want to thank Joe Biden and Kamala Harris for giving us all energy and hope again, and for just expressing beautiful, positive values, and a belief that we can heal and we can move forward. So, couldn't have been a better start to the new administration. I feel so much better about life being able to say President Biden, Vice President Harris, and it's not just about the good feelings, it's not just about the good values – the heart and soul – it's about what they are already doing. Really encouraged by what I see from the President's plan for fighting COVID and particularly his devotion to moving the supply, and that's what we need, is to get a much greater supply of the vaccine quickly. Thank God he is invoking the Defense Production Act. That's what we need, the most muscular possible approach to maximize the amount of supply, get it to here, to New York City, everywhere around the country, because we are running out of vaccine and we need more now. So, look, again, the good news is, in the meantime, we're giving every dose we can. We have passed the half-million mark. Since the beginning of our vaccination effort, over half-a-million New Yorkers have gotten a vaccine – that's great – gotten vaccinated – that's wonderful. Yesterday alone, a wonderful number, 45,000 New Yorkers were vaccinated yesterday. That number keeps growing all the time. We're going to be at 50,000 a day and more very soon if we have the vaccine to go with it. We have to. And I think it's just tremendously sad that as we have so many people who want the vaccine and so much ability to give the vaccine, what's happening? For lack of supply, we're actually having to cancel appointments. We need more vaccine and we need it now. And we're going to fight hard for it and work with everyone to get it done, because as soon as we have the kind of supply we need, we can take this number – these numbers to a whole new place. We can vaccinate vast numbers of New Yorkers quickly, so long as there's the supply.

Okay. Look, we're going to keep talking about that every single day, but something else we need to talk about all the time – I want to focus on now, more and more, I'm going to be talking a lot about this in the coming weeks – is how, as we vaccinate more New Yorkers, as we fight back the coronavirus, as we turn the page on COVID, how this city recovers and comes back strong. And it's not just that we are going to come back and restore so much of what was just less than a year ago. It's that we're going to find new strengths. We're going to find new possibilities. And yes, we were the epicenter of this COVID crisis. And we also were the place that learned many of the solutions more deeply than any place else and put them into action. Just look at what was done in this city – amazing work was done to create our own PPE, our own ventilators, our own lab capacity. And I want to thank everyone who was a part of those heroic efforts. Look at what we did, creating the biggest Test and Trace Corps. in the nation. Look at what we did, bringing back our public schools and keep themselves safe. We've got a lot we can show the nation and the world about what works, and we will be the public health capital of the world, because we have the ability and the skill, and the great talent, the great institutions in this city to make it all

come together. And we have a mission – we have a mission we have to fulfill, not just for the city, but for everyone.

So, another big step today on our March to becoming the public health capital of the world – today, we announce \$38 million in awards to build four new biotech centers in New York City. And this is a crucial part of New York City's economy, a crucial part of what we create in this city is in the area of life sciences, but so much more is about to happen. We're going to bring together some of the top researchers in the world and some of the top entrepreneurs in the world to intensify research and development, to come up with new treatments, to come up with solutions. And nowhere do you find that ability to create and solve problems more than in New York City? So, these awards are going to fantastic organizations, institutions in this city that do so much good that are so renowned – Columbia University, Montefiore-Einstein, the New York STEM Cell Foundation, and Rockefeller University. Each of these, again, think of the extraordinary talent and capacity of just one of these organizations, but they all are going to be a part of moving forward this work in New York City. It's incredibly exciting and it's going to take off.

And here to talk to you about it, someone who played such a crucial role in those extraordinary efforts I mentioned earlier, fighting back against COVID, creating our own capacity to fight COVID here in New York City. He and his team deserve a lot of credit. The President of the Economic Development Corporation of New York City, James Patchett.

President and CEO James Patchett, Economic Development Corporation: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I have to say, yesterday was a truly inspirational day – had the chance to watch the inauguration with my six-year-old son, and he said, dad, is the first time I've ever seen you cry. This must be really important. So, thank you for all the great work together.

From the industrial revolution to the digital revolution, New York City has always been at the leading edge of innovation, and life sciences is one of the fastest growing sectors of our economy. Today's announcement is proof that we will continue to be the center of innovation and where the world's major economic trends first take shape. In 2016, biotech companies raised \$160 million in venture investment in New York City. And in the time since that number, we have reached more than a billion dollars in venture capital investing just last year in New York City life sciences companies – that's almost a 10-fold increase. We want to capitalize on this momentum and continue to maximize the number of cures created right here in New York City. There's an incredible amount of research that happens all across our city, which is fueled by over \$2 billion in annual funding from the NIH. The new network of facilities that we're announcing today will accelerate the growth of companies that are inventing cutting edge cures to treat diseases and chronic conditions, further cementing New York City as a global life sciences capital.

These four fantastic institutions offer a diverse range of expertise that will leverage the talent of people all over New York. In Upper Manhattan, Columbia University will build a state-of-the-art lab that will support top and emerging scientists so they can transform promising treatments into new companies. In the Bronx, the Einstein College of Medicine will establish a new affordable cell manufacturing facility to help companies develop customized cure to address some of the most complicated diseases, those that are often untreatable. I'm also proud to say that this will be the City's first investment and we hope will be a burgeoning area of development in the Bronx.

The New York City STEM Cell Foundation will establish its stem will expand its STEM cell research institute located on the West Side of Manhattan. This will allow for the continued growth of STEM cell-based therapies to target diseases that are also often untreatable, like glaucoma and Alzheimer's. At Rockefeller University, an institution that is world renowned for its work in all areas of science, but particularly for its work in the last year to help fight COVID-19, we'll establish a 26,000 state-of-the-art lab to help support young companies who are working on science from some of New York City's best institutions.

The scientific expertise that exists all across our institutions is a testament to the strength, resiliency, and the exceptionalism of New York City, and, of course, its people. Collectively, these efforts will be able to support local entrepreneurs, create good-paying jobs for New Yorkers, and build a safer, healthier New York for the future. Thank you.

Mayor: Thank you so much, James – an amazing effort. And I want to emphasize to all New Yorkers, this is the future. This is about saving lives, protecting people, stopping the pandemics of the future, keeping people healthy. It's the most noble work, and thank you to Columbia, and Montefiore-Einstein, and the STEM Cell Foundation, and Rockefeller University. All of them do extraordinary work. And all of the researchers, all the academics, all the people who run those institutions are helping to create solutions. That's, you could think, just good enough. That's incredibly powerful, but I want to emphasize this is also how we revitalize our economy and create tens of thousands, ultimately hundreds of thousands of new jobs. And this is going to be something that comes so much of the identity of New York City, going forward. So, it's incredibly exciting and an important announcement today. Thank you, James.

Now, recovery – we're going to keep talking about it. We're going to focus on it constantly, because the momentum is growing all the time. Every single time a New Yorker gets vaccinated, every shot in the arm is another step towards our recovery. And the recovery is going to come with a lot of energy, a lot of activity, a lot of new jobs, a lot of jobs coming back, a lot of things we need. But it's not, again, just an effort to re-establish the status quo existed before the pandemic. That is not our mission. Our mission is to create something different and better. Our mission is to address inequity more deeply and create more opportunity for all. This is a crucial element of the right kind of recovery.

Now, today, we have a major announcement that will speed the kind of recovery that includes everyone. And that is that the New York City Acquisition Fund will now exclusively focus on minority- and women-owned businesses and community-based nonprofit developers. The idea here is that when we are investing, we're investing in minority- and women-owned businesses and community-based nonprofit developers that are the key partners in these projects, the majority stakeholders in these projects, the folks who are going to really own the result in every sense, and ensure the communities benefit and ensure that there's opportunity created. This is a different way of doing things. This \$210 million fund, the whole idea was to create affordable housing. That unto itself is so important, but we want to make sure that as we're creating that affordable housing, we're supporting and empowering people in their own communities to make their own communities better and stronger. We want the wealth to go into the community and stay in the community, and build the community. This is a major change and one that's going to benefit so many good people and good efforts around the city. I want you to hear from someone who's been just a really fantastic example of what can happen if you empower community-based leaders to make a change. And she has built an extraordinary company that does such good work

on the ground in this city. She's the founder and managing principal of DEVAR Development Partners – worked with her before and really admire her. My pleasure to introduce, Dewanna Williams.

[...]

Thank you. And Dewanna, thank you for what you're doing. It's just – you know, first of all, you're just a great New York City success story yourself, what you've built. But, second, you know, that that incredible development you're putting together in Bed-Stuy, that's the shape of things to come. You know, when you're creating housing for the community, along with so many things that folks in every community need, that's what we're going to be doing more and more of – community-based solutions, community-based leaders making a difference. I want to thank Commissioner Louise Carroll of HPD, and everyone HPD. I know it's a labor of love to you to support these efforts. And thank you for the great work you've done.

And, look, for everyone out there wants to understand this approach in this model, this is kind of the reverse of trickle-down economics. This is grassroots-up economics. This is about building community capacity, community wealth, getting dollars into neighborhoods and having them circulate in the neighborhood and strengthen neighborhoods. This is a model that has to be one of the foundations of a fair and just recovery. So, we're excited. And we're excited for the jobs are going to be created, the housing that's going to be created, is going to help create a much better city in the years ahead. So, thank you to all.

Okay. Now, as you heard, as we discussed, creating equity and fairness in the city in terms of where the money goes, where the investment goes, where the housing gets created, where the businesses and jobs get built up – well, if we're going to focus on justice, obviously, we have a lot more work to do and changing the realities of policing in the city, deepening the reforms, changing the culture of policing, and strengthening the bonds between police and community. This has been the work we've been doing over these last seven years. There's much more to do, but I'm very excited about today's announcement, because one of the best ways to establish deeper trust is with more transparency and more accountability. And for years and years the work that so many good people did to create accountability, to create the ability of every every-day New Yorkers to bring forward their concerns and see them acted on, there's, unfortunately, decades of history in this town where that work got held back. For decades, just the effort to try and get a true Civilian Complaint Review Board was fought back, in some cases, very viciously, and it took until 1992 just to get a CCRB to really be established the right way with some actual power. I was literally working in this building at the time for Mayor Dinkins. It was a hugely important day when that legislation finally passed. And then, for decades thereafter, unfortunately, mayors after Mayor Dinkins did not invest and focus on the CCRB. We have fundamentally focused on strengthening the CCRB in a variety of ways, investing in the CCRB, empowering the CCRB, the Civilian Complaint Review Board is absolutely crucial to our ability to move forward as a city. And for over the last two years, an effort's been underway to provide one of the things that CCRB has needed the most, which is clear, public, transparent standards of discipline for police officers who do the wrong thing. I want to say at the outset – and I always do – the vast majority of officers do the right thing, the vast majority of our officers follow the rules. We wish – when we talk about police discipline, we wish we never have to talk about any cases, but we clearly need a strong disciplinary standard and system, and it needs to be public. It needs to be accountable.

Over the last two years, working with the CCRB, working with the City Council, with the NYPD, including the Blue Ribbon panel that the NYPD put together literally two years ago of former judges and prosecutors who brought their expertise to bear to think about the reforms needed – over that period, something has been created that revolutionizes police discipline. I've talked about it over the last few days, it's the discipline matrix. This is a game-changer. And any New Yorker who wants to see the details, go online – nyc.gov/disciplinematrix. Literally, identifies every offense and what the penalties would be. Crucially, after for what we saw happen at the U.S. Capitol, this document speaks powerfully to how we would address those to express hate speech, express racist and white supremacist views. The bottom line is, there's no place for people like that in the NYPD, and the standards are very clear here.

Now, today, we're announcing – and this is going to be made public very shortly – a memorandum of understanding between the CCRB and the NYPD. And why this is so important is this memorandum of understanding makes abundantly clear the NYPD and the CCRB are in agreement that the NYPD will follow these specific guidelines consistently that the penalty range will be followed consistently case after case after case. This is an agreement that this is the way forward. That's the only way to create clarity and consistency and build trust. This is a major moment for this city and many years in the making. Here to talk to you about it, someone I've known for decades and admire greatly, and I appreciate the leadership he's provided chairing the CCRB over these recent years and moving these reforms forward. My pleasure to introduce, Reverend Fred Davy.

Chair Frederick Davie, Civilian Complaint Review Board: Thank you, Mayor. And it's good to be here with you all this morning. Let me just say that I also was at City Hall when the CCRB and this current manifestation was actually established, and remember that finally – and remember the work of Mayor Dinkins and others to make this a possibility. So, I'm excited to be able to finalize all of this with our board in a week. The matrix is unprecedented in the history of police discipline in New York City. We are very pleased with – very pleased with the progress that we've made. I want to talk about first the matrix and then the accompanying MOU, which we also see as a major breakthrough for us and police discipline in the city.

So, on the matrix, just to highlight a few things that will help us in our efforts to exercise our responsibility as an oversight agency when it comes to police discipline and to improve the relationship between the police and the community, increasing trust and accountability. So, first, on the matrix, harsher penalties will apply in ways that we had not previously applied them to infractions by police officers. And, again, we believe this will lead to greater accountability when it comes to policing in New York City. Also, there are presumptive penalties that – for infractions that we consider crucial, one of those is a presumptive penalty of termination for chokeholds. And we all know the issues that have arisen around chokeholds by officers in New York City. Well, with the presumptive penalty of termination, we believe that moves us a long way in ensuring the public that the use of chokeholds will become a rare occurrence in policing in New York City. And then, one other thing I would note under the matrix is that it gives the public, it gives the officers, it gives the board at the CCRB and its staff just a clear indication and knowledge of what penalties will be related to which infractions. And we just believe that, again, this goes a long way to ensuring that we have really high standard, high-quality oversight in police discipline in New York City.

Now, as for the MOU that accompanies the matrix, we believe that it goes a long way in ensuring that the CCRB has the kind of disciplinary information that it needs to make its decisions when it comes to police oversight. It also has pretty clear language on the responsibility of the department to adhere to CCRB recommendations when it comes to pleas and when it comes to verdicts in cases and the penalties that are assigned to those. As long as those penalties are consistent with the matrix, then it limits the ability of the department to deviate from those penalties. It also calls for things like greater transparency in any deviations and making the record of those deviations, if they should happen. And we hope they will be rare. We anticipate from these two documents that they will be rare, but if they do, to make that information available to the public. That coupled with – these two things coupled with the passage of 50-a which we hope will be out of the court soon, I think all lend themselves to greater accountability, greater oversight, and increased trust between the department and the communities they are sworn to protect and to serve. One final word, we believe all of this then strengthens the CCRB, improves our relationship with the department while we maintain our really important independence and caring for our mission, the CCRB's mission as set forth in the charter. So, we're excited about this. We are – we look forward to our final discussion on it next week. And we look forward to its implementation and working with the department, with City Hall, with other public officials, with the community, with our advocates and friends to really bring transparency, accountability, and trust in policing and with communities in New York City. So, thank you, Mr. Mayor for this opportunity.

Mayor: Thank you very much, Fred. And Fred, I want you to do one more thing please, because it's really important that people want to learn more about the Civilian Complaint Review Board or want to bring a complaint or concern forward, that they know where to turn to find you. Could you please promote the good work one more time and remind New Yorkers where they can reach the CCRB?

Chair Davie: Sure. So, you can find us online ccrb.nyc.gov. You can also call 3-1-1 and report a complaint as well. There are also hours in many of the City Council member's offices. So if you know the office of your City Council member in your Council district you can also file complaints there. But 3-1-1 gets you to the – gets you the quickest way to file a complaint. ccrb.nyc.gov provides an online opportunity to file a complaint as well.

Mayor: Great. Thank you very, very much. And Fred, thank you and all your colleagues at the CCRB, all the members, all the staff for the really great work on this matrix. Again, truly historic and a major, major improvement in how we will do police discipline going forward. So thank you. Okay. Thank you. And now everyone, we're going to just finish off today's updates with what we do every day, the latest COVID indicators. Number one, daily number of people admitted to New York City hospitals for suspected COVID-19. That number today, 257 patients, and the hospitalization rate per 100,000, 5.16. Current new cases, daily cases on a seven-day average, 4,541. And the current testing indicator, percentage of New York City residents testing positive, seven-day rolling average 8.83 percent. So, again, this all comes down to vaccine. I'm going to continually ask New Yorkers to be tough, to be disciplined, to keep doing the things that we know protect us in each other. But this is about how much vaccine we can get to people, half million doses given already. We could be at a million real quick, if we could just get the vaccine and then these numbers start to change significantly. Okay. Few words in Spanish going back on the vaccine topic again.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, let's turn to our colleagues in the media. And please let me know the name and outlet of each journalist.

Moderator: We'll now begin our Q and A. As a reminder, we're joined today by EDC President James Patchett, by Dr. Chokshi, by First Deputy Mayor Dean Fuleihan, by HPD Commissioner Louise Carroll, by Dr. Katz and by Senior Advisor Jay Varma. The first question today goes to James Ford from PIX 11.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor, and everyone on the call.

Mayor: How are you doing James?

Question: Thank you for asking. Great. Just great. I really appreciate the question and appreciate your taking my question. The first being look, President Biden activates the Defense Production Act today, which you referenced earlier today. How soon do you hope that that translates into having adequate supply to meet your vaccination goals, especially noting that clinics have had to shut down this week?

Mayor: James, number one question, thank you for that. I've been on the phone to members of the Biden administration. I know Dr. Chokshi, Dr. Katz, Dr. Varma, everyone's been doing the same thing. We are seeking clear answers, and I want to be fair to the new Biden team, they just got in the door and they're finally getting the facts they have been asking for that they were not provided during the transition. I think it's going to take a few days to make – to get a clear picture of what vaccine is available and how they can move it around as best possible. So I think James, the first question is with the Biden team having total visibility on the vaccine picture of the country, what short-term moves they can make? I think the second question is the impact of the Defense Production Act. And understandably, that's going to take some time. But I think it will be powerful. Dr. Varma spoke yesterday about the fact that this is about fixing every link in the chain, the whole supply chain, all the different pieces that have to come together. Defense Production Act allows the United States government to utilize all the companies in that process and get them unified under a single plan. But I do think by definition, that will take weeks to have some of the effect we want. So, I think the big question right now is once they get a full picture, what can they do for us in the short term? Because we've made clear we're ready to vaccinate at a very high rate if we have the vaccine. 45,000 people in one day yesterday, that number is going to climb constantly. Go ahead, James.

Question: And I guess a related question, sort of more short term, what do you say to people whose vaccination appointments have been canceled? As you're saying, this isn't your fault. I mean, there's just not supply. Nonetheless some people are disappointed, surely. What do you say to them?

Mayor: I am disappointed for them and with them. I'm upset. It's not what should be happening. And look, I – this is sort of the last gasps of the Trump administration still playing out here. There were so many chances along the way for the previous president to use the Defense Production Act energetically. I don't understand why he kept hesitating. It's the strangest thing. But he never used it the right way. That was true, you go all the way back to the challenges we

had in the very beginning on testing, right till today. I believe that President Biden is extraordinarily focused, will use the Defense Production Act, will get us every possible dose he can get us. So, for everyone who saw an appointment rescheduled, I feel for you because it's not fair to you. It shouldn't happen. But I also believe help is coming soon. And again, I never ask New Yorkers to be patient. We're not a patient people. I do ask people to have faith because we're vaccinating so quickly now. That as soon as we have vaccine, we can give people appointments quickly and get them vaccinated quickly and protect people. Go ahead.

Moderator: The next is Michael Garland from the Daily News.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor. How are you doing?

Mayor: Good, Michael, how you doing today?

Question: I'm doing all right. So, the first question I have has to do with the disciplinary matrix. My understanding is the Police Commissioner still retains discretion as far as recommendations on discipline. You know, the memos that the Police Commissioner puts out on recommendations, are those still going to be not released to the public? What's kind of the situation there? And do you see that as potentially a mitigating factor and what I know is a big announcement for you today?

Mayor: Yeah. Let me – this is a very different reality. It's a great question, Michael. I want to just make clear to everyone how big a change this is. And I'll start and then if First Deputy Mayor Dean Fuleihan wants to jump in, or if Chair Davie is still there. This is a sea change because it says, here are the offenses. Here are the penalties, and that's the matrix. Then the MOU says the NYPD agrees to follow this particular approach consistently. What that means is there's already been after a two-year process, Michael, there's already been an agreement that this is the way things have to go going forward. A lot of work went into this. And the concept that these, you know, these penalties were really worked through. And I want to emphasize, I'm just going to hold this up for clarity again. Anyone who wants to see it, nyc.gov/disciplinematrix, but you go to page 23, here's choke holds, and here is the penalty, termination. It's just abundantly clear. Now there's due process, always. We believe in due process. So, there's a charge and there's a trial. But if you're guilty of the charge, it's abundantly clear what the penalty is. Dean or Fred, anything you want to add?

First Deputy Mayor Dean Fuleihan: No, I'll just confirm exactly what you're saying. This has the police department, CCRB, everyone involved in the process agreeing to follow the disciplinary matrix. And that's clear in the MOU.

Mayor: Thank you. Go ahead Michael.

Question: Does the new matrix change the fact that the Police Commissioner can at his discretion choose a different path – I mean, what requirement is in the new matrix that basically holds the Commissioner to that? And if the Commissioner does decide to not use the matrix in a specific instance, does the Commissioner then have to explain that decision publicly under the new matrix you guys are putting out?

Mayor: It's the matrix and the memorandum of understanding. These two go together powerfully. So, here's what is going to happen, the Commissioner, and I believe this should be the case for all commissioners going forward, having a matrix as clear and transparent as this will stick to the matrix. Now is our language that says, what if there's an extraordinarily exceptional situation, such profound mitigating factors that maybe there's something that would take you out of the matrix? It is theoretically possible that could happen. And that is important in conformity with some of the elements of State law, to have that exceptional option there. But here's what's going to happen. I don't see those exceptional cases coming. I think what's going to happen is this gives you such a clear template that this is what's going to govern discipline. You're right. If there were one of those very exceptional situations, then that specific choice would have to be made public in writing. But I want to be clear. I do not see a situation like that. I have not seen over seven years a situation like that. It's the best way I can answer it. I've been working on these issues for seven years. Everything going retrospectively, would fit squarely under this matrix and the penalties would be really clear and consistent from the matrix.

Moderator: The next is Emma Fitzsimmons from the New York Times.

Question: Hi, good morning, Mayor. I'm curious, this is a big announcement, why not have Commissioner Shea here to confirm his support for the matrix? We haven't seen him at one of these briefings in a long time, as far as I can remember.

Mayor: The Commissioner obviously is still fighting off COVID right now. And we're looking forward to him being back in-person at meetings and press conferences and all in the days ahead, but he's still not in that situation yet. There is going to be further action, because again as Chair Davie said, CCRB is going to be formally acting on this in the coming days. And then there'll be a much more opportunity for the NYPD to speak to it directly. So, you know, the bottom line is two years of work. This work began before Commissioner Shea took office as Police Commissioner. It has continued under him. And this is something that has the full support of the NYPD, the CCRB, City Hall, and the City Council. Go ahead.

Question: Thanks. And then I have a question about vaccine data. Is the City going to release data about the ethnicity, the income level, the ZIP code of folks who are receiving the vaccine? At a mayoral forum this week, Eric Adams called on both you and Governor Cuomo to release data about the ethnicity of the people who are getting it, and whether they live in New York City.

Mayor: Yeah. I'm going to turn to Dr. Chokshi and I'm going to say, I believe that transparency is crucial. We look, there are definitely people from outside of New York City who have gotten vaccinated in New York City, but those have been people who serve us. Those are our firefighters, EMTs, you know paramedics, police officers, teachers, health care workers, doctors, nurses. If they live outside New York City, but they work in New York City and serve New Yorkers of course, I want to see them vaccinated. But I think we should put that information out. I also think we should put the demographic information out because we want to make sure there's equity. We know there's hesitancy issues community by community, but we want to make sure there's equity. And transparency always helps ensure equity. And as I turned to Dr. Chokshi, I say Health Department really deserves tremendous credit. They were amongst the in the nation to document the disparities of the coronavirus crisis and put a highlight on them. Not just, you know, send it off somewhere to some academic study, but really publicize the disparities and talk

about what needed to be done. So, the Health Department really gets credit for using transparency as a tool to help force change. Dr. Chokshi want to speak about what we can do going forward to put out that data?

Commissioner Dave Chokshi, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: Yes, sir. Thank you very much. And thank you for acknowledging the Health Department's work during that COVID-19 response. We have said before that the data is really the lifeblood of our response with respect to the actions that we take. But to reiterate what you've said, it's also very important with respect to the public sharing of data for the purposes of transparency and accountability. As we have started our vaccination campaign we're already one of the foremost jurisdictions with respect to the data that is being shared today. But in coming days, we do plan to share even more data including demographic information and other ways of ensuring that New Yorkers understand how the vaccination campaign is rolling out. We want to do this in a way that shows it by age, by geography. And to the extent that is possible with our data systems, race, ethnicity and other ways as well. So as soon as we do have solid, validated data that we can share with the public in that way, it's our commitment to begin pushing out more and more in the coming days and weeks.

Mayor: Thank you Doctor.

Moderator: The next is Bob Henley from the Chief Leader.

Question: Yes, sir. I just wanted to – in light of once you get the supply back up and running of the vaccine, this question is formed by that hope and prayer. A coalition of 9/11 World Trade Center first responder unions and civilian survivors want Governor Cuomo to expedite access to the COVID vaccine for World Trade Center 9/11 health program participants. Initial data indicates that the pandemic has been particularly devastating for this population, which includes young people who were among the 19,000 K through 12 students Mayor Giuliani sent back into dozens of public schools in the World Trade Center hot zone that included Lower Manhattan and Western Brooklyn.

Mayor: Look, Bob, it's so painful when you bring back that history. That was not government being honest with the people and folks were put in harm's way. So we obviously want to be there for all of them. Now I would separate those who are older versus those who are younger a bit, and I'll let Dr. Chokshi speak to this. We – anyone who is older should be prioritized for sure. And if for any reason they are not in one of the existing categories they should be. So we certainly have folks who we think still need to be added to the right now categories. And folks who experienced the effects of 9/11, I think should be among them. Now, the younger, the kids then who are still on the early side, if they're experiencing health impacts, then I would say they need to be in one of the next priority groups. If they're not, I think there'll be the question about what we've seen, how age is such a crucial determinant here. Dr. Chokshi, you want to speak to that?

Commissioner Chokshi: Sir, you said it well. I don't have too much to add to that. For people who are older than the age of 65, they are in one of the priority groups and are eligible already. We are awaiting additional guidance about people who are younger than the age of 65 but may have an underlying health condition and exactly when they will be eligible for vaccination as well. As you said in laying out the question in the first place, all of this of course is contingent on

sufficient supply for us to be able to vaccinate even those people who are already eligible. And we really need to ramp up supply much more significantly just to work through the currently eligible population.

Mayor: Go ahead, Bob.

Question: Okay. In the debate over how New York State should raise revenue, Albany appears to be relying on encouraging the proliferation of the gaming industry – something Errol Lewis has a great column on today, rather than ending the State's decades old practice of rebating back billions from the stock transfer tax to Wall Street. Is this just another example of a political class pushing public policy that will make them more likely to get donations from the deep pocketed gaming industry while avoiding crossing the Wall Street crowd that's often funds both political parties?

Mayor: Bob, to borrow a phrase from my times in which I grew up, word. I think you just hit the nail on the head. I think that's part of what's going on, unquestionably. There's tremendous trepidation in the political class to take on Wall Street. And yes, there are people in the political class who sense opportunity when it comes to the gaming industry. And look, you don't build your economy on gaming. We've got a huge finance industry. They're booming right now. They – we've seen Wall Street, we've seen the stock market continue to thrive while so many working people are hurting. It's clearly time to tax the wealthy at a higher level. It's time to use the tools we have to get the revenue we need so the City can recover. By the way, that's good for the finance industry too, that this city fully recover. It's good for, you know, working class people, middle class people, even upper income people for this city to recover. So, the right thing to do is to utilize all of the tools available, close the carried interest loophole, create a more progressive tax system. There's so much we could do at this moment that would really help us move forward.

Moderator: The next is Kayla Mamelak from FOX 5.

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor, how are you?

Mayor: Good, Kayla, how are you?

Question: Good, good. Quick question, just some clarification. You touched on this yesterday, but I'm just curious what the City's policy is on regarding the second dose? I know you said you didn't make any cancellations of appointments for the second dose, but is the city working under the policy that if somebody receives the first dose, a second dose is then put on hold for them, or are you giving out as many doses as possible, and then relying on the promise of new shipments?

Mayor: It's a very important question, thank you. I'll start, and I'll turn to Dr. Chokshi. We – look, right now in a very imperfect situation. We're trying to get as many people their first dose, and then obviously looking forward to giving folks the second dose, but remember, depending on the vaccine, the second dose is either three or four weeks later. What we're trying to get help on and flexibility on is the ability – we have a lot of first doses needed, a lot of people wanting a first dose, and a whole supply of second doses sitting in reserve. I think it makes a lot more sense to give people a first dose use that supply of reserve to give people first dose and then get back-

filled with future shipments. That's the flexibility we're trying to get, but right now we don't have that flexibility or we're canceling a lot of appointments, obviously, which is real sad and very frustrating for the folks who were looking forward to getting their first dose.

Dr. Chokshi, you can talk about both the schedule for the second dose, and again, I think it – reiterating the point that the guidance on the second dose is we want to stay as close to the guidance as possible, but we also want to emphasize that if the second dose happens a little later than originally scheduled, it's still effective. Go ahead, Doctor.

Commissioner Chokshi: Thank you, sir, and yes, I want to be very clear on this point because it's such an important one. First, if you have a second dose appointment that is scheduled in the coming days, it will be honored and there is enough vaccine for people to get their second dose. According to that schedule this is very important because we know that the efficacy, that over 94 percent efficacy in the trials, is for people who do get both doses of the vaccine. So, that's a critically important point, and I want to make sure for any New Yorker who has already gotten their first dose of vaccine, you should continue to plan to get your second dose, and those appointments in the coming days will certainly be honored. Those are not the appointments that have had to be rescheduled.

So that's the first important point. The second one is, as the Mayor has said, we have had second doses delivered to New York City. In fact, there are about 30,000 second doses that will have been delivered to New York City. By the end of today the idea is that we can continue honoring our second dose appointments over the next few days and indeed for the next few weeks but be able to partially use that supply to administer more first doses of the vaccine with the idea that future supply would then be able to backfill our second doses over time. So, the bottom line is this: we want New Yorkers to get both the first dose and the second dose of the vaccine. We have a way to do that, that would still allow us to accelerate vaccination and particularly to get more first doses into the arms of New Yorkers, sooner.

Mayor: Yeah, thank you, Doctor. I want to bring Dr. Varma in on that other point. You covered a lot of ground there, Dr. Chokshi. Dr. Varma, go back on the point we talked about yesterday. Again in an ideal world with enough supply, we want to give the second dose exactly on the perfect day, three or four weeks later. But if we need to vary that in the future by a few days, I think you articulating again, how that still provides protection going forward and is still a solution, is important for people to hear. Would you go over that again, Dr. Varma?

Senior Advisor Dr. Jay Varma: Yeah, sure, happy to do that. So, to emphasize, the single most important reason to give the vaccine at either 21 days or 28 days is as Dr. Chokshi has said, that is the time at which you can then going forward, be fully protected. So, obviously we want to get you that full protection as quickly as possible. So, that's why getting into 21 or 28 days is ideal. The challenge of course, is that we know some people may miss their appointment because they have other issues that they have to encounter, or there may be the situation in the future where there are short term supply chain disruptions. We know that even if you get that second dose later than either the 21-day or the 28-day mark, it's still going to protect you after you get that dose, and we know that for two reasons, we know that because in the clinical trials, they did allow a window period. That window period varied anywhere from up to a week or even several weeks to allow people to get that dose and count it as a full dose, and we also know from other vaccines that the reason you give two doses is the second dose is a booster dose, and even if that

dose does get delayed, you're still going to be protected. So, again, just to emphasize, we want to get a few on time because then we know you're going to be fully protected, but if there has to be a delay, it doesn't cause any harm in terms of your long-term protection.

Mayor: And doctor just help everyone understand the – again, the first dose has an impact. We want everyone get that second dose, but just the pure impact of the first dose, the amount of protection it affords unto itself.

Senior Advisor Varma: Yeah, so, this is an area where there's still a lot of learning going on. If you look very specifically at the trials that were done and the FDA reviewed, it looks like that first dose reduces your risk of getting an infection by around 50 percent. It varies a little bit from the vaccines, but that's kind of a good back of the envelope estimate. What we don't know is because the study wasn't designed to look at one dose, whether that's going to be true over the entire population. There are some reports now coming out of Israel, where they think that based on their real world experience, it may only be 30, 35 percent effective. Either way, we know that that first dose does provide some protection. But again, because the trials were designed, we really want that second dose, but a first dose obviously is better than nothing.

Mayor: Thank you. One other point I want to make, and then we'll go back to Kayla for the second question, is that again, understanding the proportions of what we've given so far in New York City. First doses account for over 470,000 of the doses we've given, and second doses are now about 70,000 so far. So, again, 470,000 versus 70,000. Again, there's – and a lot of people got that first dose. We'll have to wait, still, two weeks, three weeks, even four weeks to be able to get that second dose, to even be able to qualify for that second dose. That is showing you some of the math about why it is so important to have the flexibility in the short term, to use whatever we have to give some protection to people and really hoping and believing that in the weeks ahead, we're going to see a much greater supply because of the efforts of President Biden. Go ahead, Kayla

Question: Understood, and on that point regarding President Biden's executive orders made yesterday, do any of those with – in relation to coronavirus, help New York City, and if not, have you gotten any indication when the Defense Production Act would be enacted? Because my understanding is that would greatly help New York?

Mayor: Yeah, no, I'll turn to Dr. Varma, but my strong belief is that the plan put forward by the President and his aggressive implementation the Defense Production Act is the single most important thing for New York City. That he has set this amazing, powerful goal of a hundred million doses in a hundred days for the nation, and he is using the tools available to him fully, and obviously has his hand on the wheel – that's what New York City needs. The ability to know what they can do, what the federal government can do with existing supply requires them to, I think, have a certain number of days to get the full picture, now that they're finally in charge, but I think the Defense Production Act is the single most important piece of the equation. Dr. Varma, do you want to add?

Senior Advisor Varma: Yeah, just to emphasize again you know, we are very optimistic, that the new administration will have an impact on our supply of vaccine, and also on a whole other range of things, including testing, including travel regulations that we've been pushing for as well. But we also have to be realistic that all of these changes take time. The manufacturing

process for a vaccine is incredibly complex. It's about as complex of an engineering processes you have in medicine. So, we also have to recognize that it may take some time until we get to that point. But we are incredibly optimistic because when you look at the report, it really does, you know, sort of the plan that they've released, it really does cover all of the important issues, and we know that because Commissioner Chokshi, Dr. Katz, and myself have been in touch with a lot of the advisors on that team, and have really made sure that they understand the real-world situation that we're facing, and so that makes sure that the policy is being enacted at the national level to benefit us.

Mayor: Thank you. Go ahead.

Moderator: The next is Jenna DeAngelis from CBS.

Question: Good morning, Mayor de Blasio.

Mayor: Hey Jenna, how've you been?

Question: I'm good. How are you?

Mayor: I'm still floating on air from yesterday, so I'm doing good.

Question: All right. My question is – the end of December video went viral of a man in his SUV in Midtown with his mother, when a group of cyclists started jumping on the car, they were breaking the windshield, yelling at them. Now, we understand not much progress has been made in the case, and a lot of people have seen that video concerned that this is the type of city we're living in. So, my question is what is the city doing to address the specific incident, such as the arrests, and are there ways to address aggressive biking groups?

Mayor: Yeah. It's not the city we're living in, Jenna. It just isn't. I respect the question a lot and it was a moment that really upset people, and the answer is to show consequences, and we'll get you the latest on the arrests and prosecutions, but that's unacceptable behavior. It was acted on quickly by the NYPD, but that's also, Lord knows, something we very rarely see, and it's not representative of the city, and it's not fair for anyone to suggest it is. This is a city of overwhelmingly law-abiding people and a city that's made a lot of progress over not just years, but decades, becoming a safer place. We had an extraordinarily tough 2020, but we are changing from 2020 into 2021, and you're not going to see that kind of thing because we're going to be much better position going forward, including to bring the community into the process of helping to make us safe more and more, and that's what we're going to see in 2021. Go ahead, Jenna.

Question: And this is regarding vaccines. The Biden administration announced it's not going to let New York buy directly from Pfizer. Since the vaccine doses are initially sent to the state, what kind of conversations are you having with the state right now to discuss how you can vaccinate New Yorkers now?

Mayor: Jenna, it's a constant conversation. My health care colleagues are constantly working with the State. Our City Hall team is constantly working with the State. Look, the State and the City share the goal of maximally vaccinating New Yorkers. Everyone wants to vaccinate the most people as quickly as possible. There's no question about that. We truly believe that the

more flexibility, the more ability to do that, but everyone's working together, and in constant dialogue. I think nothing fundamentally changes unless the vaccine supply is profoundly greater. Right now I want to just emphasize we this week said our goal is 300,000 vaccinations this week, and then it would go up next week. If we had the vaccine. No doubt in my mind that we can reach that number and go even substantially higher. This is just about getting the vaccine in our hands. We know how to implement it. We not implement it fast, a huge amount of demand. We just need the vaccine in our hands.

Moderator: We have time for two more for day. The next is Gloria from NY1.

Question: Thank you. Good morning, Mr. Mayor. I want to follow up on the question of commissioner discretion here. What in this MOU is legally binding? Is there anything in there that is actually legally binding? And can you just explain the commissioner discretion part of all this, it sounds like the commissioner still has discretion to decide whether or not he believes the punished, or the consequences outlined in this document are accurate or deserving of whatever the case may be.

Mayor: I disagree with that assessment. The MOU makes clear the NYPD fully buys in with the CCRB to this disciplinary matrix, and will honor it. State law indicates the possibility of a truly exceptional situation, and there's a provision in there for that. I do not see those exceptional situations of being relevant to what's happening here, because I can tell you again, based the previous seven years, none of what happened previously would have fit as an exceptional situation. This is the commitment by the NYPD to live by this matrix, and it's clear, and it's again, based on a two-year process, and I want to give the NYPD credit, the Blue Ribbon panel that was put together two years ago that put together some of the original concepts here and the work that's been done, including the fact that there was public hearings on this and, and efforts to get feedback since August. The NYPD is squarely committing to abide by this matrix. Go ahead.

Question: Okay, and I just – if I could follow up how can New Yorkers who are watching this right now – you were on the radio this morning, talking about this. You've been talking about the disciplinary matrix for the past couple of days. There's no one here from the NYPD, including the commissioner, or anyone else from the leadership. Everyone else has joined by phone. The commissioner has done interviews in the last couple of days. How can New Yorkers look at this and believe that the department is actually committed to following these directions if there's no one here to actually speak about that commitment that you're talking about today? When New Yorkers are, you know, encountering the police, they're not encountering you or the chair of the CCRB, they're encountering police. So, how do you get them to trust, if there's no one here to talk about that?

Mayor: Yeah, Gloria, again, I want to make clear to everyone if there's any misunderstanding. One, in a democracy, civilian leadership sets the rules, and this is an effort that was undertaken – again. I want to give the City Council credit, hey played a crucial role here, the CCRB, City Hall, but the NYPD has been a part of it, of course from day one. The matrix was published by the NYPD. So, with all due respect, Gloria, you know, again, I want to just hold up this piece of paper with the NYPD logo on it. It's on the NYPD's website, and it – come on, after a two-year process, including the Blue Ribbon Commission, then organized by Commissioner O'Neill, the NYPD is fully committed to this. There'll be ample opportunity for Commissioner Shea and

other members, NYPD to speak to it, and again, there's going to be a next step in the process with the CCRB formally adopting this, and the NYPD will be a part of that as well. But, this effort has been going on for months and months and months. It's abundantly clear, it was a very careful, thoughtful effort, and it's fully embraced by the NYPD. Go ahead.

Moderator: Last question for today, goes to Myles Miller from NBC.

Question: Hey, how you doing Mr. Mayor? Good morning.

Mayor: Hey, good morning. Myles. How you been?

Question: I am doing well. I wanted to ask you about the Biden plan to inoculate a hundred million people in the hundred days. Given where we are right now with the city, and the fact that we're at a vaccination hub right now, that the doors are closed, do you actually believe that that is something that can be done? And secondly do you – when will these vaccination hubs be back online?

Mayor: Yeah, I do believe it can be done Myles. This is all about leadership and setting a goal and, and enforcing it, but also providing what we need, which is just a really large, clear supply of vaccine. So, look at the trajectory over the last few days here. You know, as I said, yesterday, 45,000 doses in one day. We're going to be at 50,000 in a day, very shortly. We're going to keep climbing from there. When you can put up numbers like that you can move very, very rapidly. So, I think what's being learned all over the country is how to do this a lot faster, and there's tremendous commitment. It's all about supply, and the reliability of supply. We want those big sites to be up and running, and we want a lot of them to be 24/7. The demand is there. We have the staff, we have the sites, we just need the vaccine. Go ahead.

Question: I also wanted to ask. Sorry, I asked when those vaccine hubs would be back online, and on an unrelated point, when do you think that the Trump Tower security apparatus will be taken apart considering he no longer lives here and is no longer president?

Mayor: Yeah, I'll do that one, and then I'll double back to Dr. Katz and Dr. Chokshi on the hubs.

In terms of Trump Tower, we'll make sure we get you very specific updates, but NYPD announced publicly that the security was being greatly reduced, and they're doing that with the Secret Service. It's still obviously a sensitive site, but it's going to be a much lower security profile, and a lot more of the space around is going to be opened up, which is a good thing for the people of that neighborhood and for the city.

In terms of the hubs, again, we want to get everything to full bore, but we're struggling without vaccine, and we're obviously in a contradiction where you want to open something, but there's no vaccine to go with it. It sends kind of a false hope to people. So, we need some more security in the vaccines supply to really go into high gear. But Dr. Katz, and Dr. Chokshi, you want to give any updates on the 24-hour sites and the prominent sites we're talking about? Citi Field and Yankee Stadium and other prominent sites?

Commissioner Chokshi: Yes, I can start on the on the vaccine hubs and then pass it to Dr. Katz, and just as the Mayor has said, we are in a ready posture with respect to our vaccination capacity. We have, for the city sites, the Health Department's seven clinics. That includes two 24-7 sites. Those are continuing in operation in an uninterrupted way. The 15 community vaccination hubs are temporarily not vaccinating, but we'll be ready to get those up and running as soon as our supply does pick up, and there are additional city sites as the Mayor has said which Dr. Katz can speak to as well.

President Katz: Thank you, sir. Our community sites in the Bronx at Bathgate, in Brooklyn Army Terminal, in Staten Island at Vanderbilt are still running, but vaccine is running low and all of the appointments are filled through our supply. As with Dr. Chokshi, we look forward to having more vaccines so we can open up more appointments in the future and get more vaccine into New Yorker's arms. Thank you, sir.

Mayor: Thank you. All right, everyone well, look. Here's what I think is abundantly clear. We really do have a new start today. It's just fantastic to see. It's not just again about a very powerful and moving inauguration ceremony or a stunning fireworks display, that's not what matters most, obviously what matters most is the commitment to change, and you have seen it immediately from President Biden and Vice President Harris, the executive orders that they acted on yesterday, and the clear, strong plan to address COVID, which is the number one issue by far, and what we see is a commitment to be forceful and to move the vaccine supply in the way we need it. We also see a commitment to bringing people back together, in common cause, and this is really exciting to me to think about how much energy could be unleashed if people weren't fighting with each other all the time, how much artificial negativity has been created over the last four years, how much incitement and not just in the case of what happened at Capitol, but everyday incitement. When in fact we need a leader to calm and focus people on their more positive impulses and the ability to work together. That's what President Biden did powerfully yesterday, and he's doing it by his actions. So, I am very, very hopeful where this is going to take us, and I believe you can weed out some of the negativity and the noise and allow us to focus on our common need, which is to defeat COVID. I think you've got to see extraordinary energy unleashed in the next few weeks. That's going to help us turn the tide once and for all. Thank you, everyone.

###