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

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good morning, everybody. This time we're living in, it's causing us to experience so many challenges, so many painful realities, things we never could have imagined. There is such uncertainty. There's such confusion. There's such a sense of insecurity. I want all New Yorkers to understand what all of us here in the City government are devoted to doing in this crisis for you and it's really basic. Our mission is to make sure we protect your health. Our mission is to keep you safe. Our mission is to make sure you have a roof over your head, and that your home is safe and secure. Our mission is to make sure you have enough food to eat, and that's what I want to focus on today. That last point, because what is more fundamental than being able to put food on the table for your family. And for hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers, that is now a question. That is not a certainty, and that's because somewhere in the neighborhood of a half-million New Yorkers have lost their livelihood in just the last few weeks, and money's running out. Whatever savings people have is running low. A lot of people already have run out of money. And yes, there's some help that's coming in. We all appreciate that for sure, but we all know it's not enough to sustain people. So, for more and more New Yorkers, we're hearing this all the time, people are literally asking, where's my next meal coming from? That's something painful to consider in the greatest city in the world, but it's what's happening. More and more people are experiencing that kind of insecurity. That's one of the most basic, and particularly for families, parents worrying about how they're going to feed their children. That's a reality that's now gotten sharper and sharper.

So, I want to affirm to everyone out there who is feeling that fear, everyone who's dealing with this problem, even if they couldn't have imagined just weeks ago, they'd be dealing with it. Here is the simple mission of your city government, and I pledge to you, I'm very confident in making this pledge, we will not allow any New Yorker to go hungry. This is not only a mission we are devoted to because it is the right thing to do, it is the moral thing to do, we must do it. And we must do it as your City government. We must do it working with all those at the community level who for years and years have helped to make sure that people are fed. The food banks, the soup kitchens, houses of worship, the nonprofit organizations. So many people have been devoted to making sure that New Yorkers had enough to eat. We're going to need them more than ever. We're going to help them more than ever. But the city government is going to take the lead, because we will not allow anyone to go hungry.

Now, yesterday I was out in Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn, and I saw something moving and remarkable, but also it was a warning sign. I was with the wonderful people who are part of the campaign against hunger. It's an organization that's been around for decades. Started at the grassroots to feed people, help people. I want to thank Dr. Melanie Samuels and her whole team. Devoted

people from the community who keep coming out, and they know that they're taking a risk doing it, but they keep coming out with the proper protection on, to feed the residents of their community who need help. Melanie told me that even just a few weeks ago, typically 250 families per day would come to their food pantry to get help. She said now it's more like 500 families a day. Doubled in just a few weeks. And this is just the beginning, because when we look at this coronavirus crisis, we understand we're trying to make sense of something brand new, a disease that didn't even exist for human being six months ago. But we're also trying to understand the huge negative impact it's had on the rest of our lives. And we know when it comes to something like unemployment, the effects get felt more deeply week after week. It doesn't all happen at once. It actually gets tougher as we go along. So, I think what's coming up is going to be even more of a challenge. And that's why we're preparing right now to feed everyone. And as you hear this presentation from me today and from our new Food Czar, Kathryn Garcia, I hope everyone listening will understand, literally, we will not let anyone go hungry. And if anybody in your life needs food, we will get it to them. We have to make sure that word is spread. We have to make sure that no one thinks they're alone. We will not let anyone go without food. We need to make sure everyone gets that message.

Now, I was in Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn, but this challenge is literally in every neighborhood, because if you have no money, how do you get food? And we know that the massive unemployment that we're experiencing is literally every zip code, every part of the city. So, whoever you are, wherever you are, if you need food, we're here for you, and there should be no shame. I want to emphasize this. There's no one's fault that we're dealing with this horrible crisis. Anyone needs food? We're here for you. You don't have to think twice. Of course, it's for free. Just pick up the phone or go online. And if you need information, you can go to nyc.gov/getfood. You can call 311. You can find all the places, all the ways we'll get you food. Please do not hesitate and spread the word to everyone you know.

Now, this is an unprecedented moment. This is something beyond even our imagination in some ways, but we have to fight back. That's what New Yorkers do. We're going to find a way. Yesterday I talked about the amazing work that's being done right here in our own city, to do what our nation's not been able to do, to create our own test kits, to create our own PPE's, that's the New York City way. If no one else is finding a way, we'll find a way ourselves. We'll take care of ourselves. We'll support each other. Well, this is the same idea. We are dealing with an unprecedented challenge, in terms of people needing food. So, we're going to create an unprecedented response. Today I'm announcing \$170 million initiative to make sure every New Yorker gets what they need, and no New Yorker goes hungry. Now, thank God we have a strong foundation to build on. All those food pantries, and soup kitchens, all the amazing organizations out there that have been doing work all over the city for years and years. Meals on wheels, all the things that we know that are part of the compassionate approach that we take as New Yorkers to those in need. We'll be building on all of that, and we will be adding many new components, because the situation we're in now calls for a whole different strategy and approach, and one that will grow with every passing week.

So, let's talk about the sheer scale. Before this crisis, before we ever heard of coronavirus, there are about 1.2 million New Yorkers who were food insecure, who didn't regularly have the ability to get all the food they needed. And that very, very painfully included about one in every five

children in this city. This crisis is now adding to that number of people who are food insecure every day, because literally people are running out of money every single day. So, we expect it to grow. And yet there is some relief coming and we're happy for sure to see the relief that's coming from the stimulus, from the unemployment benefits, this is all very, very important. But we know not everyone's going to get that money right away. We know there's a lot of red tape that some people have to navigate. We know there'll be time lags. We know some people don't qualify, and whether that's fair or not, we know there are lots of people in this city who will never get that kind of support. And I would say it's not fair, but it's the reality. So, we know that the food crisis will grow, and that's why we had to do something different.

So, I'm going to talk to you about four things that will be the essence of how we go about this new strategy. And then you'll hear from our food czar who will go over more of the details. So, first, this has to be done on a grand scale, a really massive scale to reach everyone who needs it, and even more people up ahead. Since March 16th, when we really got in the thick of this crisis, there have been 4.5 million meals served to New Yorkers through all of these approaches we're now taking, and that's just the beginning. We're scaling this up very fast. You know, we've talked about the operation through our school sites. We've talked about what our senior centers are doing. So, the Department of Education, Department for the Aging. We've talked about the operation that's been set up through Emergency Management, led by our food czar. All of these efforts together during the month of April, will account for 10 million meals being provided to New Yorkers who need them. All for free. Now, I don't like having to tell you that number, because it says how big the problem is, but it also says how big our response is. That's April, we're ready to do even more in May.

So, the second piece of the equation is making sure that as we're providing food, we're also putting people to work, because so many people need a paycheck. So many people want to help. So, three weeks ago we launched emergency deliveries, and this means getting food to people who can't get out. Who literally can't get out physically, maybe they're disabled or seniors who can't get out and get food, and don't have anyone to get it for them. Folks who are scared to go out, because they have one of those preexisting conditions or they're immunocompromised. A lot of our residents in public housing, lot of people who if they don't get a delivery, it's not clear if they're going to get food. What we've done is we've reached out to drivers in the for-hire vehicle industry, so many of whom have seen their livelihoods upended by this crisis. We've now registered 11,000 drivers who are TLC, licensed taxi and limousine commission licensed, and they are all taking on shifts to deliver food directly to people in the greatest need who can't get out of their house, who need that delivery right to their door. These drivers are doing that, helping us feed people, they're being paid by the shift, show the game money back in their pockets to feed their families in turn. This is something that's going to have a huge positive effect on the people doing the work, but even more they're doing something absolutely crucial to help the vulnerable, most vulnerable amongst us.

Third point, we have to make sure knowing that, as I said in April, we think we will have served 10 million meals by the end of April, that's going to go up in May and it's easily going to be somewhere between 10 million and 15 million meals in May at the rate we're going, we have to make sure there's enough food to ensure we can make those deliveries, keep our food supply strong and stable. Even a small disruption in the food supply would have a huge negative effect

on New Yorkers we won't let that happen. So, in our \$170 million plan is a \$50 million investment in an emergency food reserve for New York City this will allow us to purchase and store 18 million shelf stable meals. This means we'll have a failsafe, we'll have a reserve that's just for New York City to protect us no matter what else happens 18 million meals ready at all times. Keeping that in reserve while continuing all our regular programs to feed New Yorkers it's important to have that backstop so we can keep everyone safe.

And then fourth, protecting the people who we depend on for so many other millions of New Yorkers to get their food that's our grocery store workers, our supermarket workers. I want to just say thank you to them first, you know, they are among the groups of unsung heroes in this fight. We talk and we rightfully talk about the heroism of our health care workers, our first responders they've been absolutely amazing battling through this crisis, keeping the health system going, keeping us safe. But let's give a lot of appreciation, a lot of respect to the people who make sure we get fed those grocery store workers, those supermarket workers, they get up every day, they go to work it's a tough job we need them and they keep coming through for us. So, first of all, anytime you go to the supermarket, you go to the grocery please say thank you to them because it's not easy for them or their families, we appreciate them. But also remember this is not what they expected, these are folks just trying to make a living for their families they did not expect to be on the front lines of an international crisis, but they're acting with the same resolve and the same spirit as all our other heroes. Now we have to protect them, so we've been working with the different companies, supermarket companies and the grocery stores to make sure that their workers get the PPEs they need of one kind or another, there's all different kinds of PPEs, different kinds are needed for different situations. We're working to make sure those supplies continue to get to those supermarket workers and grocery workers so they can be safe and confident. And finally want to mention in this category we're giving some new guidance today and it— about when you go to the store, when you go shopping for food what makes sense to do. So, I'm giving the guidance to all supermarkets and groceries require customers, require customers to wear face coverings when they come in. Put up a sign at the entrance around the store making clear that that's the right way to do things and that's a requirement of your particular store that is legal and appropriate, the City will back you up. This will help everyone to remember when they're in that kind of space, it's so important to protect each other, to protect the whole community that face covering is a smart thing to do. Every store has the right to put up that guidance and make it a requirement in terms of entry into the store and anybody who will not, any customer who says, no, I refuse, I should not be allowed in. And again, we will back up those stores; we will help you to enforce the rules. You have a right to have those rules in place, it's the smart thing to do for the health of all New Yorkers, and the City of New York will back you up. We need to keep each other safe, we need to keep these groceries and supermarket workers safe so they can keep serving us, this is the smart thing to do. So, that's the big picture and I think you hear throughout that big picture, our resolute commitment to feed all New Yorkers and to make sure it happens.

I turn to one of our most effective public servants, and, again, she has delivered for New York City as our Sanitation Commissioner throughout all the challenges the City has faced, including the biggest blizzard in the history of New York City on her watch and we came through. And thank you to all our sanitation workers, that was one of their finest hours and right now is one of their finest hours now, keeping the City going, keeping it clean in the midst of this crisis. But her

leadership there was outstanding. She did an amazing job addressing the lead issues and helping to create a plan to keep all of our children safe in a way that's unprecedented and that's having a huge impact— time and again, she's answered the call and now she's doing it again as our foods czar. My pleasure to introduce, Commissioner Kathryn Garcia.

Commissioner Kathryn Garcia, Department of Sanitation: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. It is my pleasure to serve New Yorkers in this capacity we are facing a difficult but important challenge right now, feeding New Yorkers and also maintaining our supply chain in a rapidly changing environment, and I really want to get right to the details. So, as many of you know, we stood up the grab and go meals at the Department of Education. Over 3 million meals have been served at those schools and they are now serving over 250,000 meals daily, I want to really say thank you for the folks at DOE who have stood this up they've been amazing, but this is serving all New Yorkers, students, families, adults. We are also continuing to do senior meal deliveries over 300,000 meals have been delivered and they are now serving— 250,000 meals daily serving seniors, seniors who were eating at department for the aging senior centers. As the Mayor mentioned, we stood up the get food portal and we are giving emergency food delivery to the most vulnerable New Yorkers and this has been a great partnership with TLC and all of the TLC drivers who have made sure that they are showing up to get those deliveries done. And so, it's boosting earnings, but it is also serving an absolutely critical purpose in terms of making sure that there are meals available for these populations. So, we have delivered in the last three weeks over a million meals to the most vulnerable and we will continue serving 100,000 daily and growing and our primary focus is on seniors, NYCHA, the medically fragile and anyone else who is vulnerable.

As the Mayor mentioned, we are building an emergency food reserve I want to make sure that New Yorkers are clear, our supply chain is stable, I know that many of you have seen items on store shelves, not there. The supply chain is adjusting to what we decided to buy that was very, very different than what we had ever bought before and so it is rapidly adjusting to this new reality. So, we are ramping up the food supply to make sure that we can take care of the most vulnerable. So, we have \$50 million invested and we will be purchasing 18 million shelf stable meals, which means that they will last to protect New Yorkers from any temporary disruption. As I mentioned that we are taking steps to secure the food supply it also is really critical that our central grocery store workers are protected coordinating their non PPE to make sure that they had the protective equipment that they needed, making sure that we were issuing social guidelines and making sure that people are following them. And then today talking about the fact that we really will support grocery stores who require their customers to wear a face. So again, I think that this is another group of unsung heroes I will echo what the mayor said, they have been doing amazing work. We are also focused on the fact that we need to prevent store closures, one of the challenges that this industry is having, as are all of us, is that people have been sick or people have been afraid. And so, we are connecting these grocery stores with our small business services to give them wraparound service and connect those who are newly unemployed with opportunities in this sector.

So, as the Mayor also mentioned, we want to make sure we are supporting our first line of defense, which is the 800 plus food pantries and soup kitchens who have converted to take away. So, we have put \$25 million in and this is \$25 million that is meant to be more flexible than

funding for these establishments has been in the past, this means that they can use it for staffing, they can use it for equipment or they can use it for food. This was a partnership that we did with the City Council. I want to thank the Speaker for the work that he did advocating for this. But, there also are large other parts of the puzzle that we are putting together – the DonateNYC app [inaudible] and large in-kind donations to pantries and now we are seeing about 20,000 pounds move through that portal daily. We have moved city staff to support our pantries who are short on volunteers; many were supported by volunteers who were older and obviously they should isolate and stay at home and we continue to recruit volunteers through city service.

In the next phase of our emergency delivery program, we're going to concentrate on registering entire buildings, senior affordable housing buildings, senior NYCHA buildings, and other nonprofit buildings because we know that that is where the most vulnerable will be. And also making sure that we are using a case work style with other social services to directly enroll New Yorkers because it will give us an opportunity not only to make sure they're getting food, but making sure that we are addressing any other needs that they might have. So for those of you who might know, about 90% of all of New York City's food comes-in by truck. We want to make sure we are supporting the long haul truck drivers across the country who come here and are delivering our food and we have stood- up to rest areas; one in Staten Island and one in Hunt's Point to make sure that they can get the rest they need after their long haul drive.

We need to be partners though, so federal food aid will be critical going forward. Having the amount of benefits that SNAP provides, which was formally the food stamp program, to make sure that we're maximizing that benefit and getting that funding into people's hands. There also are two additional programs that are available; one is called P-SNAP – Pandemic SNAP – and our State application is before the federal government, we look forward to having that approved, which will also put funding into families' hands. And then, D-SNAP, which is disaster food relief, which would require a federal declaration of disaster, but we know that our congressional delegation has been advocating for that. So, we think that those will be key pieces of the puzzle as we move forward into the summer and the fall.

We have a lot of work to do, but as the Mayor said, we will not let any New Yorkers go hungry. We will not compound the tragedy of the pandemic with the tragedy of hunger.

Thank you.

Mayor: Thank you very, very much, Commissioner. And thank you for all you're doing on your team. This is the plan – just want everyone to see it. They'll be available online today at nyc.gov, but this plan summarizes the ways we're going to make sure everyone gets the food they need.

Now, this brings us to the bigger picture again, which is if we're going to make sure that we work our way back to something normal, it's going to take a lot of work, but we can do it. New Yorkers have proven what an impact you can make and if we want to get people back to work, if we want to restart people's livelihoods, if we want people to have more and more money so they can afford food again, we have to get this part right, we have to get the social distancing right, we have to get the shelter in place right, we have to keep doing what we're doing. In fact, double down on it, tighten it up every way we can to keep ensuring that we get out of this current phase.

Right now, again, we're in this widespread transmission of the coronavirus. None of us wants to stay in this reality; we got to work our way to the next reality – low-level transmission. And what we've said is back to these three key indicators, when we can get the three indicators I'll talk about now to all go down in unison, all in the right direction together for 10 days to 14 days – that's when we'll be able to talk about some other changes we can make, hopefully a little bit of loosening the restrictions. But, if we can't get them to go down together, it will tell us a lot. It'll tell us that we have to stay tough and also make sure in some cases that are things we do even better. So, let's keep talking every day about these numbers and what they mean and we'll again always post them publicly so all New Yorkers can follow along together.

So, today, we have a mixed bag. The first day things were moving in the right direction; the second day, not so much. Today, we have a mixed bag and again don't get discouraged because it's going to not be a perfect, clean line the way forward. There'll be good days and bad days, but we got get to the point where we string together a bunch of good days so we can get to the next phase. Here's what we have today; first indicator daily number of people admitted to hospitals for suspected COVID-19 cases – and again, this is a two-day lag in the data – so on April 12th that number was 326 on April 13th, it went to 370. Unfortunately, that number went up. On the second indicator, daily number of people in ICUs across our public hospitals for suspected COVID-19 cases – again, unfortunately this number has gone up from 850 to 868. On the third category, the numbers have gone in the good direction. When it comes to testing positive for COVID-19 – the percentage of people that tested positive – this went down – April 12th, 60 percent; April 13th, 53 percent. So, that's a good sign. The public health lab, the specific tests they do on some of the folks with the toughest conditions, April 12th, 84 percent; went down April 13th to 76 percent. That's going in the right direction. So, mixed bag today, this'll be a day-by-day fight. But the fact that we can show you every day that there continue to be signs of progress - these indicators and others - is a testament to what all of you have done and it's just a reminder; keep doing it. Don't let up on the gas. Hang tough with these standards, with these restrictions, with these approaches, because they're working.

Now, I talked about how New Yorkers, we're all helping ourselves and New Yorkers doing amazing things to create what we need to protect ourselves and I thank everyone who's a part of those efforts. But I also want to always note when we get help from outside and a lot of people care deeply about New York City and are stepping up. I mentioned Apple, I talked to the CEO, Tim Cook again and they've been amazing getting us the iPads we needed for distance learning for our kids, but Tim said they wanted to go farther and they wanted to help New York City directly with PPEs. And so, not only did he say he'd get us what we needed, but he got it to us in 24 hours, which is deeply appreciated; 100,000 N95 masks, 127,000 face shields, that's one of the items we needed the most this week - those face shields. So great effort by everyone at Apple, thank you, Tim Cook, we really, really appreciate this donation to New York City. And I want to thank my predecessor, Michael Bloomberg. We're really appreciative that Bloomberg Philanthropies made a \$6 million donation to World Central Kitchen, specifically to provide meals for our extraordinary healthcare workers in our public hospitals who have gone through so much who have borne the brunt; great donation to help make sure that our heroes have the food they need and it also shows, you know, real appreciation and support for them at the same time. So thanks Mike, that that really helps a lot.

I'll wrap up and then of course a few words in Spanish before we take questions from the media. But, when you look at this plan, here's the bottom line – you look at this plan - one, I want all New Yorkers to recognize that Kathryn and her team and all the folks who are doing this work at all the agencies, they are resolute. They are not giving up and they've created a plan to feed people on a huge scale that few cities have ever attempted in history. This is something really powerful and I commend them all, but it comes down to that basic promise; we are going to feed every New Yorker. We're not going to let anyone fall through the cracks. We have to do it; it's the right thing to do and we will do it. Quick few words in Spanish to summarize –

[Mayor de Blasio Speaks in Spanish]

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

Moderator: And just a quick reminder to folks, we have Dr. Barbot and Commissioner Garcia in the Blue Room and Dr. Daskalakis on the phone. And first-up is Mark from CNN, Mark.

Question: Hey everybody, how you doing today?

Mayor: Hey Mark.

Question: So, I had a couple of questions about the, the data from the weekly report. I was hoping you could clear up or just add some more context to a couple of these numbers. The first was the almost 60 percent of the probable deaths that happened in the hospital in the ER. And the other one was any type of the distinction between the home fatalities and the ones that, that were classified under [inaudible]?

Mayor: Thank you. And look, I'll turn to our health experts. Just say this is, you know, you look at these numbers and again, a reminder, it's human beings, it's families, and it's tragic. And we thought it was very important to portray this larger reality as more and more information was coming in. And I just want everyone to remember, it's, it's another one of those sobering moments, understanding the sheer totality of what's been thrown at us and what we're fighting our way through. But, let me turn to Dr. Barbot and Dr. Daskalakis to answer your specific questions.

Commissioner Oxiris Barbot, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: So I want to begin by echoing the Mayor's sentiments in terms of really the sheer magnitude of the loss that we're experiencing as a city and the importance that there is in ensuring that we make sure every New Yorker is counted who has been taken by this vicious virus. And so, what you'll see in the data that we have on our website is that the number of individuals who have died because of probable COVID really is in many ways reflective of what we have been directing New Yorkers to do. The vast majority have been diagnosed in hospitals and emergency departments. But we do see a significant number of individuals who are dying outside of hospitals and emergency departments. And so, the way in which these deaths are categorized is by grouping where the location has been determined either by the Office of the Medical Examiner or the funeral director

or whoever the person was that registered the death. And so, that's how we have categorized them.

Mayor: Demetre, anything to add or did we cover it? Okay. Guess we covered it.

Deputy Commissioner Demetre Daskalakis, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene:
[Inaudible] covered it.

Mayor: Okay. Thank you.

Moderator: Next is Juliet from 1010 wins. Juliet. Juliet, can you –

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor, good to talk to you.

Mayor: Good morning, Juliet.

Question: Hi. So, this is my question. There are clusters and encampments of homeless on the streets. Is this considered a public health issue and should they be removed for health reasons?

Mayor: First of all, Juliet, we do not allow encampments in New York City. I want to be very blunt about this and make sure no one misunderstands. For several decades, somehow encampments of homeless people were tolerated, meaning literally homeless people created like little villages, sometimes it was on railroad tracks or, you know, deep in parks or industrial areas and set up, you know, places with, you know, almost permanent structures and tents. And one thing or another. What I said several years ago – and I brought in the NYPD, Department of Homeless Services, Sanitation Department and we said, we're just not going to allow that anymore. It's inhumane. It's not fair to homeless people. It's not fair to everyday New Yorkers. It's not fair to the quality of life in the city, it's not healthy, it's not right. And I said, we will not tolerate any encampments. And since then I've asked all of our commissioners on a regular basis, including our police commissioners over the years to guarantee that they did not see any encampments reasserting.

So, sometimes you have a few homeless people gather. And we address that for sure. And sometimes people try and put up, you know, cardboard boxes or things. We address that right away. But when you say the word encampment, it means to me where people have tried to create something kind of ongoing or permanent. That is literally not tolerated, will not be tolerated. If you know of a location, if any New Yorker knows a location, call 3-1-1 and we will send out the NYPD, Homeless Services, Sanitation immediately to take it down. If you're talking about, Juliet, a smaller number of homeless folks who have gathered temporarily, we don't want any gathering, obviously. We want people to observe social distancing. If anyone tries to even begin to stay in the same place on the street, that's not acceptable. It's not healthy or safe. So, we would send out our Homeless Outreach Teams, send out NYPD to address that.

So that would be true even before the coronavirus, but it's even more true if it means anybody gathering in close proximity. That's not healthy or safe. So, please, anyone who sees something like that or any homeless person on the street in need call 3-1-1. We are getting homeless people

in, off the street in record numbers and keeping them in. And our outreach workers are doing really amazing work. They're out there through this crisis. And actually thank God they found that very few people on the street, of those several thousand – very, very sad reality of several thousand New Yorkers who are street homeless, permanently homeless – we have not seen much incidents of the coronavirus among them, thank God. But we are trying to get people to come in, in this crisis more than ever to say it's not safe to be on the streets, come in where we can get you health care and protect you. So, that work continues constantly, but we want those reports to 3-1-1 so we can act on them quickly.

Moderator: Gloria from NY1 is up next. Gloria.

Question: I wanted –

Moderator: Gloria –

Question: Yes. Can you hear me?

Mayor: Yep.

Question: Okay. I wanted to ask a question again about the numbers that were released yesterday. There's an additional number in the data set that the City released, it's a little over 8,000, and it says that it's the number of people that the City at this time can neither confirm where a victim of COVID or a suspected COVID death. I wonder if any – if either you or any of the other health officials can clarify what that number means, and is the City taking any look at how many people have died that could have been saved but weren't simply because the hospital system has been so overwhelmed for days. So, I'm talking about maybe a person who had a stroke at home and help didn't get there fast enough and they did not have COVID or any of the other conditions that might have put them at risk, and simply because of the delay and the overwhelmed system, passed away as a result. Is the city doing any kind of tracking for that?

Mayor: Okay. Let me give you a couple of responses and then turn to Oxiris and Demetre to add. First, we are trying to get out data constantly and more and clear, and more accurate data, and data that portrays the whole truth. I want the whole truth out. Whatever the facts, wherever the facts take us, I want the whole truth out now. Gloria, that's inherently always second to saving lives right now. And as the indicators we just talked about made clear, we still have a lot of work to do to protect people and save lives right now. So I'm never going to say to our health leadership, hey, you know, focus on the data of what happened before more than focus on how we can save lives right now and what we need to do to stay ahead of this virus and beat it back. That's always going to be the first priority. But I do believe there's more information to get out and will constantly get out.

Absolutely, I believe there are more people who died because of COVID-19 in one way or another because of something that happened to them related to COVID-19. And I think it's important that we just recognize there will be more that comes out and we should assume that not with anything but pain and sorrow, but we should assume that And when that information can be verified, it should be put out. I want to caution though about part of your question because

I don't think it necessarily portrays the whole truth. Job-one in this whole crisis was to hold and protect and preserve the hospital system so that we would never have the situation you describe where someone needed care and couldn't get it. That's why we fought so hard to get more ventilators and the PPEs and keep the personnel, and when we lost personnel, get new personnel in. I've asked this of Dr. Mitch Katz, the head of our public hospitals, they've borne the brunt. I keep ensuring that anyone who needed care and was in a real danger got the care they needed. We never had a day where we ran out of ventilators. We never had a day where there wasn't the personnel we needed, even if they were stretched real thin and fighting very hard. So, the thing I warned us about constantly, the people of this city and warned the nation honestly about, was the day when someone came in, needed a ventilator, there was no ventilator or someone came in, they needed a doctor or nurse, there was no doctor or nurse. We did not, thank God, experience that and we're still fighting to make sure we never experience that.

But the point you're raising about EMS, obviously we know our EMTs, our paramedics have gone through such a tough time these last few weeks and they had to prioritize in really tough ways – and thank God we got reinforcements in from around the country, 500 EMTs and paramedics came in before, another hundred are coming – but what EMS tried to do was immediately prioritize the cases where people were in danger, not the ones where people were just asking for information or were, you know, scared and needed to talk to someone. They tried to move those calls off. They tried to focus on people who were in direct danger the most and get the response to them as quickly as possible. And from everything I saw the cases that were really life and death, the EMS, as usual, not only prioritized them but did an extraordinary job saving lives.

I think there's a different issue about cardiac arrest, for example, with a relationship to COVID and what was happening to people's bodies who were dealing with extraordinary physical stress and health challenges. And the doctors can talk about that, but we will certainly keep analyzing exactly what happened with EMS. You know, Gloria, those numbers, thank God, are coming down in terms of the number of calls they are getting, it is reducing and a lot of calls have been moved off that were just people seeking medical advice and support, not needing a paramedic or an EMT to show up. But I want to emphasize how much EMS constantly prioritized the folks whose lives are in immediate danger and rushed help to them. To Dr. Barbot and Dr. Daskalakis, if you could speak to issues like where cardiac arrest may have been in some form or fashion related to the coronavirus that would be helpful to put this in perspective.

Commissioner Barbot: And I want to just build on what you've laid out to really start off by saying that each of these deaths is a tragedy and we all feel it as New Yorkers. And what we have been putting in place as a part of this response is really to maximize the number of people that we save. And the unfortunate reality is that there have been people who have died either directly because of COVID or indirectly because of COVID. And we've talked a little bit about that in the past, but I think seeing it in black and white, so to speak, with regards to what the numbers show, gives us, really, a moment of pause and reflection on what we, as a city, are going. And, you know, I just want to start off by saying that in the Health Department we have started a moment of silence to really acknowledge the New Yorkers that have died because of COVID and to remind ourselves of the mission that we have.

And so, to answer your question more directly, Gloria, I think that the importance of this number in terms of deaths not known to be confirmed or probable COVID is important to take it within the context of the same number of deaths during that period – or excuse me, let me start again. The number of deaths during that same time period in the previous year. And what we find is that there are roughly 3,000 deaths above what would have been anticipated. And I think only time will tell about what that number really means. We're still learning. As we have been saying about the – I was going to use a fancy word – the pathophysiology of the virus, meaning how the virus truly affects the body. And, you know, one of the things that we still have to learn more about is how does this virus affect the heart?

And are there potentially cases where, you know, someone registered a death as a heart attack because the person hadn't yet developed symptoms of COVID-19 and truly should have been categorized as a COVID probable. I don't know that we will ever be able to answer that question fully, but I think it's something that still needs to be looked into further. The other thing that, you know, the Mayor sort of alluded to, which I just want to build on, is that part of what we have learned from previous disasters, be it 9/11, be it Superstorm Sandy, is that the load of stress, prolonged stress on a body has consequences. And so I think that we will then also need to take into consideration how this then plays out with individuals who may or may not have chronic underlying illnesses. So, I think you'll understand that there are still a lot of underlying questions that will need to have more in depth analysis. But that will likely not be fully revealed until all is said and done.

Mayor: Demetre, do you have anything to add?

Deputy Commissioner Daskalakis: No, Sir. I think Dr. Barbot covered it. I think the important idea, again, these are humans, I think all of us will take that moment of pause to remember that these are lives, but then I think it's important that not only are we showing the visible deaths, but also the ones that would be invisible even at this point in the pandemic. So, as we learn more about the virus, we will understand the impact but really critical to make sure that we're counting all of our New Yorkers.

Mayor: Yeah. And the last thing I would say, and this also reflects on our public hospital system, the emphasis always was that if anyone was showing signs of something that was an immediate danger, of course they were going to be admitted. And what public hospitals did, and I think they did it very well, was they made sure if someone had lesser symptoms, they made sure to guide them and support them. But anyone who they saw signs of danger, they brought in. And even when the going was toughest at places like Elmhurst Hospital, Lincoln Hospital, Bellevue, they would bring in anybody who was in danger and kept fighting. And that I think has been consistent throughout this crisis.

Moderator: Julia from the Post is up next. Julia.

Question: Hey Mr. Mayor, how are you?

Mayor: Hey Julia, how are you doing?

Question: Good. I have just a two-part question on testing maybe one for the doctors and one for you. The first part is we saw with the data you released yesterday that of the probable deaths 60 percent of them died in a hospital or ER room. And I'm just wondering what that says about, you know, our lack of testing given that the city had prioritized testing for people in hospitals and yet that big percentage of people still weren't getting tested in hospitals. And then just lastly on your announcement yesterday on the 50,000 homegrown coronavirus tests, James Patchett said that you're just in active conversations, but no one's actually signed on yet. So, was that announcement premature?

Mayor: No, it is a wartime environment. We are absolutely certain – we wouldn't have made the announcement if we weren't certain we could make that happen. We're talking to enough players who have shown enough willingness to do it and we're just assembling the final group that will actually proceed together. But we talked about this in detail. A lot of capacity has been brought to bear. This is going to happen. Remember we were in a similar situation in terms of the face shields, in terms of the surgical gowns just a few days before I went to the factory that produces the first one that was producing the face shields and the Brooklyn Navy Yard. It was just an idea and they had to blitz to bring everyone together to make it work. The same with the surgical gowns, which involved actually a pretty elaborate production process.

It went from idea to execution in a number of days. Because of 3D printing, we know that things are possible now that would have taken, you know, immense effort and time in the past can now be programmed into a 3D printer and acted on very, very quickly. And there's a lot of 3D printing capacity in New York City. There's actually something that the Economic Development Corporation has been working on for years now, is expanding that piece of our economy. So there's a lot of 3D printing capacity in New York City. So, we said beginning of May and we mean beginning of May. On the previous question, I'll turn to the doctors.

Commissioner Barbot: One thing to clarify – that 60 percent refers to the totality of those who were probable COVID related deaths. But when you look at it from the perspective of individuals overall who died in hospitals, you'll see that the vast majority were confirmed. So I want to just clarify that interpretation of the statistics and again, of the people who died in the hospital related to either confirmed or probable COVID, the vast majority had tests done. That being said, you know, I think how did tease apart what happened with the probables is something that will take us a fair amount of time to tease out if we're ever really able to do that because what we won't have is the breakdown of, you know, severity of underlying chronic illness, etcetera, etcetera. So, there's a lot of variables there that are, I think, to be determined. But the important thing here to note is to not misinterpret the way in which the table is laid out and to really focus on the fact that the vast majority of folks who died in hospitals did have tests.

Mayor: Go ahead.

Moderator: Marcia from CBS – oh, sorry.

Deputy Commissioner Daskalakis: Sorry. Just one thing to add if that's okay.

Mayor: Yes, please.

Deputy Commissioner Daskalakis: Mr. Mayor, so I would also add that the table also shows really what trends were and availability were of testing throughout the entire pandemic. And I think we'll all remember that early on in the pandemic because of various issues with testing kits that we received from the CDC, capacity lagged a bit behind. And so, another possible explanation for more probable cases that weren't diagnosed is also the limits to testing that we had early on. Which had at this point at least for inpatients, have been resolved. So, our volume of testing on the inpatient side is now great as does the capacity. So, it really represents also a snapshot of what happened with our ability to test.

Mayor: Thank you very much Demetre.

Moderator: Next up is Marcia from CBS New York. Marcia?

Question: Good morning Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Hey Marcia. How you doing?

Question: I'm good. I have a two-part question having to do with your food announcement today. The first is this, since you've asked that all people going into supermarkets wear masks, will you be asking the NYPD to enforce it? And my second question is, given the fact that you've pointed out that the best way for people not to need the food is to have jobs, what steps are you taking to help create jobs so that people won't need the food that you're offering?

Mayor: Yes. Excellent questions. Marcia on the first one. So, face coverings, I want to keep using this phrase appropriately. You know, the PPEs, the personal protective equipment, the highest grade of those like the N95s. I mean, obviously those are meant for health care workers dealing on the front line with COVID-19 and others who have, you know, real vulnerabilities. So, you know, when we talk about masks, we're thinking about things like N95s and surgical masks. When we talk about face coverings, we're talking about things like bandanas, scarves or the kind of masks you can buy, you know, in any hardware store for example. So those face coverings I want to see anyone who goes into a supermarket or a grocery store wear one of those. By the way, huge, huge percentage of New Yorkers are doing it already based on the guidance we gave them previously. But I want to see people, if you go into a place as important and as sensitive as a grocery store or supermarket, just put on a face covering. Protect the workers there who are doing such important work, protect each other. Now, what I'm saying is every store just put up the sign saying you're required to wear a face covering. One of my colleagues at City Hall made the point, for all our lives, you go into a diner or something like that, you see a sign, you know, no shirt, no shoes, no service. It's the same exact concept. Put up a sign that says, unless you're wearing a face covering, you can't come in. Then the store has every right to enforce that rule for its own premises. People don't, aren't willing should be told, hey, you have a face covering? Can you get a face covering? Or if they have one that can offer them, great. You can shop if you have a face covering. If you don't have a face covering, you have to go back out until you get one. If there's any problem with that, of course the NYPD will help. And all the store owner has to do is call 3-1-1 to get that help. Or if they have a connection to their local precinct or they're a neighborhood coordinating officer under neighborhood policing, they can reach out

to them directly. But we have to be clear, this is another one of the things we have to do to protect each other. And anytime the NYPD or any of our agencies are needed to help enforce, there'll be there. And NYPD is as we know, is starting to get back more and more of its officers coming off of convalescence from COVID-19. So, their strength is gathering, we can do more and more enforcement.

But that segues perfectly into the other part of your question about restarting the economy. I want to restart the economy desperately. I want to make sure that people get back to their jobs and get back to livelihood. But the best way to do it is to be careful. So, Marcia, in this case, I'm going to call myself a conservative. You know, I want to make sure we do this right. The worst possible scenario would be to take the foot off the gas, think we're out of the woods, let people come back too quickly and have the disease boomerang back on us. And that has happened in some parts of the world. Then we're going to have to step back all over again and deal with more and more people getting sick and more, more people dying and more and more restrictions. And the economy won't be able to start. If you want to restart the economy, get it right, actually make sure that we've contained this thing. So that's going to take being slow and purposeful, not too slow, but you know, cautious until we get it right. That will take some time, not weeks, but months to really get to the next phases. But that way when we actually start to restart in earnest, full scale, we'll be able to hold it and keep it and people's livelihoods will come back and stay back. That's what I want to achieve.

Moderator: Alex from Chalkbeat is up next. Alex?

Question: Hey Mr. Mayor, how are you?

Mayor: Hey, Alex how are you doing?

Question: Good. I'm going to keep in the tradition of two-part questions. This one is on school spending. The first part is in your proposed budget you had suggested cuts to Single Shepherd and College Access For All. And I'm wondering if that means that those programs are on pause right now? Or whether there will be personnel cuts to those programs? And my second question is you're also proposing about a hundred million dollar cut in Fair Student Funding. And I'm just wondering if you have any sense of how those cuts will be distributed? Obviously, some schools receive more than 100 percent of their Fair Student Funding. Others receive far less than that. So I'm just wondering if you have a sense of how those cuts would be distributed?

Mayor: Yeah. And we'll get you more details when we go over the executive budget. But to your second question, yeah. The idea is to say, look, everyone is having to sacrifice now. Everyone's having to give something to get us through this crisis. So, the schools that have done very well on funding, I mean, every dollar that's been worthy. Every dollar we put into education is a good thing. And some schools have gotten more than others. And I don't begrudge a school that is doing great work at educating kids and has some more resources to do it. I want to see maximum equality obviously. And we keep raising that floor as you know, on Fair Student Funding. And we look to the day where every school is at 100 percent. But for schools that have had more than a 100 percent in a time of sacrifice, we're going to ask them to help and sacrifice and cut back some so that we can, you know, get this together.

On the Single Shepherd and the College Access, which are both really good elements of Equity and Excellence. They both have been areas where we fought inequality. We helped kids get support where they didn't have before. We helped families to navigate through a lot of challenges and particularly to help kids get to college who often didn't have a lot of exposure and support to what it would mean to get to college. And it's really been very, very productive. But those are on pause because of the kinds of choices we have to make. Now we got to stay on the basics. Right now, the whole message you'll hear in the budget presentation is sticking to the basics, protecting people's health and safety, making sure there's food, you know, food on their table, a roof over their head. And with education it will be about the basics, making sure we can be safe, healthy in our restart of school, making sure we're providing the most important elements of education to our kids. We're going to have a lot of mental health challenges as the Chancellor has indicated that we're going to have to address and we are going to have to provide the resources to address. So initiatives like Single Shepherd, College Access, they will be paused. But the personnel will certainly be needed for other important work. So we'll just, and we'll keep, you know, as we go along, evaluating what we can do and keep updating our budget accordingly.

Moderator: Melissa from NBC New York is up next. Melissa?

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor. Good to see you.

Mayor: Hey Melissa. How are you doing?

Question: Okay, thank you. My question was about the fact that the deaths classified by the Health Department as non-COVID were up by 3,000 for that same time period. And it was largely asked by Gloria and answered, but what do you say to people, Mr. Mayor, who are concerned about an undercount? And who wonder why that comparative spike of 3,000 cases, it's not a small number, was not specifically pointed out in yesterday's announcement? And do you think it's likely that the number of deaths caused either directly or indirectly by COVID could be closer to 13,000?

Mayor: Yeah, I think the, to your question again, understanding Melissa, this is about human beings and you know, we want to be respectful of the families, not say more than we are pretty sure about. Remember in the case of those, a very, very sad reality of the probable deaths that in many, many cases, health care providers suspected it was COVID-19, but there was not the time or the reality, you know, the condition to get a test done before the person passed away. Some people passed away very quickly, for example. It's very, very sad. But you know, there was already some indication it might be COVID-19. In the case of other deaths of people we've lost. I again, I believe that that gap you're talking about is made up overwhelmingly of folks who, if it wasn't that they had COVID-19, you know, that had manifested, it still was some part of the equation. It affected the fact that there were so many deaths. It seems to me like that's the obvious truth. As there's time to make sense of the details and put more out, the Health Department will certainly do that, but there's also some of the information that may not be reachable anymore because things happened weeks ago and we've been in crisis. But I think the bottom-line answer is clearly so many people have passed away. It was bigger than we even fully understood or could document. And I think it'll be bigger still. We have to be honest about that.

We have to be open about that because it tells us just how big a crisis we're in. But much more importantly, we have to move forward. We have to keep saving lives and constantly figure out what more we can do and where we can get the help we need to keep doing that because we're going to be at this for a long time. So that's how I see it. Anything you want to add Doctor?

Commissioner Barbot: No, sir.

Moderator: Henry from Bloomberg is up next. Henry?

Question: Hello, Mr. Mayor. How are you doing?

Mayor: Hey Henry, how are you doing?

Question: I'm okay. How are you dealing with the loss of baseball? It's not my question.

Mayor: I think a lot of us, I know you're – I'll wait for your full question, but I have to comment. A lot of us are like pulling our hair out over the loss of baseball. It's a very, very strange, I associate spring with baseball. So, it feels really, really strange. But I'm also in the camp that we have to do our recovery careful, you know, really careful way. And so as much as I want to see a baseball game deeply, I don't want to see a baseball game until everybody's safe. That's the way I think about it. But go ahead. What's your question?

Question: Well, I just, I also want to just tell you that as much as we give you a lot of tough questions and give you a hard time and criticize you, I think most New Yorkers appreciate the hard work you're doing and understand how difficult this is.

Mayor: Thank you.

Question: The IBO today came out with a report that said almost \$10 billion in revenue will be lost through Fiscal Year 2021 and they're forecasting as many as 475,000 jobs lost, including a gigantic number just in this quarter. Your budget modification included something like \$1.3 billion in cuts. The IBO, the CBC and others say that that's way too low. How are you going to fill this gap?

Mayor: Okay, Henry. First of all, thank you for what you said. I appreciate it personally, but I also want to say thank you on behalf of my whole team because I hope New Yorkers have a some sense and I hope when it's all over, they'll be able to look back and understand that you know, so many people at City Hall, at Emergency Management and all our agencies, certainly the Health Department, H + H, they have just been working nonstop since day one of this crisis. And everyone understood that we were saying goodbye to anything that was normal and just working every single day, nonstop to try and save lives. And they, you know, the team has done a really, really outstanding job. So, I appreciate what you said and I receive it as appreciation for this whole team.

The IBO report I think is pointing in the right direction for sure. We'll talk more in the budget presentation, but the bottom line is, you know, and I said it earlier, absolutely we're talking about

a revenue loss, 100 percent in the category between \$5 billion and \$10 billion. And again, I'll provide more detailed information very shortly. But even when we try and peg that number now, we're going to lose much more after that. Remember the revenue losses are deepening. Remember that we have taken a big hit from the State government. We got a \$800 million cut from the State government and their budget. This is going to get tougher. And I also agree with them, you know, I've been saying about a half million people I think are unemployed or will be. So I agree with the IBO. We're very similar in our count.

But to the question of how much we're cutting and when. Job one is to protect people. Henry. I got to come back to the basics here. This budget will be about keeping people healthy, protecting their health, protecting their safety. Making sure there's a roof over their head and making sure people have food. That's how we're going to go about this. And whatever it takes, we are going to constantly focus on those goals. It was tough to make the cuts that we've already announced. As we need to make cuts we will do all we can. But there's a lot of things we just can't cut. So we have to keep fighting for the support we deserve from Washington. We have to keep fighting for a stimulus bill that will actually address the needs of the places that have been hardest hit. I mean, the billions and billions of dollars of revenue we've lost, that isn't the fault of everyday New Yorkers. And New Yorkers deserve the support of our federal government in the time of crisis. Henry you and I remember the famous headline, you know, back during the fiscal crisis, Ford to the City, drop dead. Well, you know, it's Donald Trump's time to decide what kind of headline he wants. The stimulus bill is being discussed right now. And we all know the Senate could act very quickly and we need to see the President's leadership. I criticized them in the past when I thought he was letting his hometown down. There's been some progress in recent weeks in terms of getting us things like ventilators and PPEs. And I've been thankful when we get those things. Well now it's another one of those litmus test moments. Is the President of the United States going to step up and tell the republican Senate that they have to pass a stimulus that will make New York City whole, that will make New York State whole. That will make all the other cities and states that have lost vast amounts of revenue whole. It's up to him now to provide some leadership. So again, is he going to be there for his hometown or not? But he's going to be there for everyone else or not? So we cannot, there's no way to balance this budget with cuts alone. It's impossible. Unless, we're talking about not providing basic services to New Yorkers. And if we're not providing basic services, then you can kiss your recovery goodbye. If this city – this is one of the most important cities on Earth. We are the economic leader of the United States of America. We are the financial capital. We're one of the economic engines of this nation. If we can't provide basic services to our people, if this city can't function, there will not be a recovery for everyone else. So we need that stimulus and we need it quickly so that we can remain whole and we can actually help lead the recovery. And that's what I'm going to fight for in Washington for sure. But the President has to lead.

Moderator: Brigid from WNYC is up next. Brigid?

Question: Good morning Mr. Mayor. And I wanted to follow up on your food announcement with questions to you and Commissioner Garcia. I'm wondering particularly around the home deliveries, can you talk about any of the challenges you've faced up to this point? And is the City able to check in with clients or just is it about relying on the information delivery vendors

provide? And then what should people do, particularly seniors, if they don't feel like they're getting what they need?

Mayor: Very good question. I'll start and pass to the Commissioner. So this is being attempted on a scale that we'd never seen here in this city before. We have to make it work. Calling 3-1-1 is the way for people who want to sign up, who can't get out and get their own food, they should call 3-1-1. We're trying to not make it a bureaucratic process. We're trying not to make it complicated. We're trying to make it fast. Someone needs food, we have to get to them fast and then we have to keep bringing it to them until the crisis is over and they have a way to get food that's secure. So, you know, we expect the numbers to grow. We're ready for the numbers to grow. But if anyone signs up and then doesn't get it, they also have to call right back to 3-1-1 right away so we can make sure that every case is being followed up on. Commissioner Garcia is very rigorous, and this is something we've talked about. We cannot have – you know, of all the things in the world that cannot miss, this can't miss. So, anyone who needs to sign up, call 3-1-1, will follow through. Anyone who's not getting it, call 3-1-1, we need to see that addressed instantly by all the agencies working with the Commissioner. And I have faith that she will make that happen. Commissioner.

Commissioner Garcia: Thank you Mr. Mayor. And particularly, we know our seniors are the most vulnerable and I want to stress that if today you need food that you should call 3-1-1 or go to nyc.gov/getfood. As we move forward, we will continue to strengthen all of our systems to support that delivery mechanism both through the Department of the Aging and through the Getfood portal and make that more seamless for everyone involved and ensure that we are getting the senior centers back in the mix between the seniors that they know so well and the food that they know needs to get delivered. And so we have been standing things up very quickly. But I see that we are going to be able to make those matches and have that information available to us to ensure that all of the deliveries are getting made. And if they're not getting made that we have a backstop to get them done.

Mayor: Yeah. And Bridget, I want to also note, I mean again, amidst all these challenges, the fact that we have 11,000 TLC-licensed drivers signed up to do whatever shifts we need – so, this is really, really important – not only giving them and their families a break by giving them some additional income, but that's an army. If the Commissioner needs more drivers, she can get them anytime she needs. So, we can just add shifts, add drivers. So if demand increases, we're going to be ready. Commissioner knows that she's been given a green light to make sure that the food is purchased to keep all these initiatives going. The food pantries and the soup kitchens, as we discussed, everything the Department for the Aging is doing, everything DOE is doing, all that is being constantly funded. That's all part of that \$170 million plan and everything for the home deliveries. The answer is yes, whenever the Commissioner needs something. And then additionally to have that huge reserve – 18 million meal reserve – unprecedented in the history of this city, so that she'll always know there's something there no matter what else happens in the world. So this is aggressive. But in terms of your question about making sure people get it when they need it, you know, anyone who has a problem they call 3-1-1, it's as simple as the team at Emergency Management just finding another driver and getting them to where the food is and gain that delivery made.

Moderator: [Inaudible] –

Commissioner Garcia: [Inaudible] scale we started a little bit over three weeks ago. We had distribution sites in each of the boroughs. We now have three in the Bronx and we are adding two in Manhattan. So, we are making sure that we can expand our capacity to move the meals to the people.

Moderator: Yoav have from The City is up next. Yoav –

Question: Mr. Mayor. I'm wondering about the city's assessment of its needs. The 15,000 ventilators, the 45,000 personnel, and the upwards of 85,000 beds. Have you revised those projections at all in the face of the most recent data? And one of the reasons I ask is there was a report today of medical workers coming to the city on contract who are being told kind of abruptly their services are no longer needed. And the other related issue is you mentioned last week the possibility of EDC working with local companies to build the ventilators locally. But we haven't heard anything further on that. Is that still – I guess what's the status of that? Are you still looking to do that and is there still a need?

Mayor: Yeah, great question. Yoav, look, your question kind of gets to the heart of the matter of where we stand in this crisis and really bluntly, how this crisis just doesn't go in a straight line. And this is one of the toughest things for all of us to accept, but it's the truth. We talked about the three phases last week. We're still obviously in widespread transmission. I mean, look at the data today, our three indicators. Clearly we're still in the throes of this crisis and I said many, many times, April was going to be tough, you know, be ready for May to be tough too. We just have to keep understanding that even if we see some improvement, even we see some positive signs, we're far from out of the woods. You know what we're talking about, just with our three indicators over the last three days that we've been talking about them, haven't been stable. So, no one should think, you know, that we've got this perfect trend in the right direction. We don't, we just don't, which means to your bigger question about all these different elements of our response, the answer is everything is being kept ready for the danger that we could see a resurgence. We do not know where this disease is going. It is the great unknown, Yoav, this is what we've seen all over the world. There were places that thought they had it under control and then suddenly it was coming back. There were places that prematurely started to relax restrictions. It started coming back. We don't know – this is a disease that's brand new, did not exist in human beings six months ago, to the best of our understanding of the medical history and we don't know what pattern it will follow.

We'd still don't fully know. Is it truly seasonal? Can you get it again if you've had it? There's so many open questions we don't have final answers to. So, we got to be ready for resurgence. We got to be ready for an uptick. So, to break the pieces apart that you talked about, first of all, any health care worker, we need them. So, anyone who's turning away health care workers, I've not heard that at all. I've been on daily calls about personnel. There's unquestionably a need for personnel. The personnel we need the most are those who can go to the front line, to emergency departments and ICUs. But we need other types of personnel as well. So, if you would please share with our team here at City Hall, if you've heard that kind of report, we need to track that down and address that. Because I have literally not in any meeting, any place heard of a health

care worker being turned away. We still need health care workers for – and remember not just for front line, but we're trying to expand testing. You need health care workers to do testing. And the big question has been, would there be enough if there was such a demand in the hospitals, you know, both the traditional hospitals and the alternative hospitals. So no, no, no, no. We need to health care workers. If they're available and somehow not being used, we got to fix that immediately.

The ventilators – EDC has been progressing with that effort. It's a tough one because creating a ventilator is a very, very complicated enterprise. What I've said to them is keep pressing, keep pursuing it because, again, today things have been better. We don't know where the future's going. We want to make sure that God forbid we were in a tough situation going forward, we had as much of our own supply as possible. So that effort is ongoing and as it progresses, we're going to have more to say on it.

On the beds, the personnel, the PPEs – here's the bottom line. We've seen improvement on beds for sure, and we have slowed down some of the schedule for opening new facilities, but we have a strong reserve structure because we know we may need those facilities, God forbid if there's a resurgence of the disease, but also we know we could turn them into quarantine and isolation locations as part of that movement into low level transmission and the strategies we would need for that. In terms of personnel, as I said that big number we were going for, right now we don't need all of that as scheduled because we saw some slowing. And remember our fear had been after April 5th – Sunday, April 5th – there was going to a huge intense upsurge. We didn't see that, thank God, but we still have to be ready for up surges. So, we don't need all those personnel right here this minute. But we need a plan that we could activate as many as that if things got bad.

In terms of the ventilators, the supplies holding, the last I checked, we were between 4,500 and 5,000 people intubated and we had more ventilators than that and we had some buffer. That's holding. But remember, even though the number of people who needed a ventilator each day, the increase was less than we expected, thank God, there still is an increase each day citywide. So that does not mean we're out of the woods on that issue. And the same with the PPEs. There've been some we've been able to get more of, some we've had big problems with like face shields and surgical gowns. We're going to solve some of that with our own production. But when you talk about PPEs, I can tell you, you know, we are making it through this week. We're looking a little better for next week than I thought a few days ago, but we're still not 100 percent secure for next week. That's how tight it remains. So, we're going to be at this for a while trying to perfect these supplies, really get them to be ample, really make sure we have enough for any scenario. And we have to watch carefully to make sure this thing doesn't reassert and until we're sure we're out of those woods, all of that fallback capacity is going to be kept available because we might need it.

Moderator: Last two, Erin from Politico. Erin –

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor. I want to ask another question about the probable deaths. So, these 60 percent that took place in hospitals, that's over 2,000 people, can you clarify if you know, are these people who died while they were waiting for care before they got, you know, in the

emergency room, before they were able to get care? Or are we talking about people who are admitted to the hospital but still are not actually getting a test because of the lack of testing?

Mayor: I'm going to start with just a very simple point again reconstructing in the midst of a crisis is always kind of hard. But remember, I have had these conversations with Dr. Katz about what Elmhurst experienced and other places. We had people who came in – and this is not unheard of, obviously, sadly with emergency rooms, but it happened in really substantial numbers in this case. People came in, you know, right on the verge of death – people came in and you know, were lost in minutes or hours after coming in. There's all sorts of – that's just one of many realities to recognize. It was this – such an intense upsurge over those weeks and everyone's situation was different. So, just to give you some perspective, but I'll let the doctors go into detail.

Commissioner Barbot: So, to build on what the Mayor just mentioned, I think one of the things that we need to keep in mind is that these data represent a quantitative picture of a snapshot in time. They don't really give us the qualitative texture of the stories behind them. And so I think that with time we will be able to tease apart the type of question that you're asking. So, for right now, all that, you know, we can say is that these were individuals who were seen in the hospital or the emergency room and died because of probable COVID-19.

Moderator: Last call is Anna from the Daily News. Anna –

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor. I was wondering, you know, given that so many people are losing their jobs and therefore might be losing health care, is there any plan to allow for online marriage licenses? Because you know, when people get married, they can share health insurance. And you know, I've actually got a couple of questions from New Yorkers about this. Is that something that you might consider? I know that, you know, you'd have to create some sort of system for that, but it might increase access to health care.

Mayor: That's a real interesting question, Anna. The – one, I would certainly consider it. Now, I don't know enough about how you do it in this atmosphere and do all the things you need to do to properly ensure that a marriage certificate is done the right way. But I think it's something we should look at, for sure. I want to emphasize though that people do not have to only think – I mean obviously there's lots of ways to get health care if they need it and we don't want people to feel like, oh my God, unless I'm married, I can't get on someone's plan, I have no options. The whole idea when we did the plan a year-and-a-half ago to guarantee health care for New Yorkers is anyone who is eligible for insurance if they can't find on the exchange a plan that works for them, what we're doing with the city's public option, with MetroPlus, is to make sure that plans are very, very affordable and very easy to use and easy to sign up for. So, that's something that people can tap into now. For folks who are not eligible for insurance, there's – for a lot of people, we've expanded NYC Care. So that's building out. And that means even if you're an undocumented person, you can get a health care card, you can get a primary care doctor assigned to through the Health + Hospitals hospitals and clinics.

Clearly in this atmosphere crisis it's a different reality. But that underlying point that anyone who needs health care, we will provide it. If they cannot pay, we'll provide it. If they can get – if they

need health care and we can get it and we can get them on an insurance plan as they come in for health care, we'll do that. H + H is now doing all the time. Someone comes in the door, they need help, they're giving them help and then they're saying, hey, I noticed you don't have insurance, let's sign you up right now. So, we'll keep getting more and more insurance to everyone who does qualify. Anyone who doesn't qualify for insurance still is going to get health care no matter what. So, I just want to give people that reassurance and anyone who's not sure, you can call 3-1-1 right now. Anyone who needs health insurance and is eligible, could call 3-1-1 and we are continuing to sign people up for health insurance through this crisis. They could be getting it right now, even if they're not getting married. Anyone who doesn't qualify, could be getting help right now, health care they need right now, again, even if they're not married.

But I think your question's a good one. If we could allow people to get married through some creative online approach, maybe verified by, you know, people calling behind it and talking it through with a couple, maybe there's a way to do that. If we can find a way, I certainly would like to see that. I don't want to see people's lives disrupted any more than they need to be. So, we'll look at that and come back with an answer in the next few days and I appreciate that question.

Everybody, I'll just finish with this. You know, in these extraordinarily challenging times I just keep emphasizing how New Yorkers are rising to the occasion. Everyday New Yorkers, of course, social distancing, shelter in place, finding a way to make it happen, but also look at what's happened in just the last 48 hours. Here are a bunch of New York City companies, research labs, universities led by our City government and our Economic Development Corporation coming together to create test kits here in New York City. You know, doing something that a lot of people thought was impossible, but doing it with that kind of that creativity, that entrepreneurship, that energy that New York City is famous for. People just making it happen.

And then the same with our food plan that we're talking about today. This plan, it wasn't, you know, something that was easy and just obvious to do. People had to work hard in our team, working with all our partners at the community level to say, what do you do in a crisis of this magnitude? How do you create something new? And think about the ingenuity of saying, well, wait a minute, let's take all those TLC drivers, let's take all those for-hire drivers that are out of work, they're going to become the new heroes, getting food to a senior citizen or disabled person who has nowhere else to turn.

I mean, that's a beautiful ingenuity, putting these different pieces together to make sure New Yorkers are safe. Again, we've never had a food reserve in our history. We're now going to have, you know, \$50 million spent to get us 18 million meals there in the reserve no matter what happens to our city to protect our people. These are the kinds of things that are being created. So it's a very tough, painful moment, but there's also a lot of heroism, a lot of creativity, a lot of fight back. And I want to just thank everyone who is a part of all of these efforts and every one of you for everything that you're doing to get us through this. And we will get through this.

Thank you very much, everyone.

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