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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
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CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good morning, everybody. Well, yesterday morning it was a beautiful day and I had another great example of New York City coming back: Medal Day for the FDNY back and what a powerful experience, the fact that we have heroes who every day go out there and protect all of us and do some absolute extraordinary things, and that's what Medal Day is all about. Expressing the stories of our firefighters, our EMTs, our paramedics, who do things almost unimaginable in terms of the courage it takes, and the lives that are saved, and it wasn't possible to celebrate Medal Day for 2019 in 2020 because of the pandemic. So, we finally have caught up and honored the heroes of 2019. We're looking forward to honoring the heroes of 2020 soon, but it was another example of the city coming back, and also just another example of what makes New York City great. Everyone at the FDNY are the finest in their profession, and we are blessed to have them as part of the life of this city. So, it was great to join with them to honor them all.

Now, let's talk about vaccine update. We're all waiting to hear more, of course, the federal government's analysis of the Johnson & Johnson situation. It's clearly slowed us down a little bit, but not much. We are going to keep moving forward. We're just going to roll right past this. We've got other supply that's actually increased for Moderna and Pfizer. That's great. So, it doesn't change our game plan, doesn't change our approach, and as always, we adapt to whatever's thrown at us and we overcome it. That is the New York City way, and we've shown it time and time again in this crisis. So, we're going to continue and go into the grassroots, opening new sites, reaching more and more communities that need close locations, nearby locations, where they can access this vaccine. The more sites we open, the more going on grassroots and more impact it's having. So, it's wonderful to say, now that 99 percent of New Yorkers live within one mile of a vaccine site, 99 percent, and we're not done yet. We'll be adding more sites, pop-up sites of all kinds, houses of worship, public housing sites, community centers, non-profits you name it. We're going to keep going the more supply, the better, and we still are not getting our fair share of supply when they'll keep fighting for it, but we're making progress. Here's the number to date – it's a great number – since the very beginning of this process: 5,409,174 vaccinations. So, New York City keeps moving forward.

Now, we had to, throughout this entire crisis, learn and adapt change, find new approaches and the strength and the resiliency of New Yorkers came through, the talent of New Yorkers, the ability to constantly create, even under the most adverse circumstances, and we learned so much, and what we learned is now going to be crucial to our recovery and our future. When I talk about recovery for all of us, it means taking the lessons we learned from COVID and applying them

and acting on them. It means fighting disparity and doing things very differently. It also means learning lessons from the things we had to do that now tell us ways we can move forward. We know that our future – so much of our future will be about health care. We know New York City has some of the most extraordinary health care talent, some of the greatest institutions anywhere in the world, and we know that we are destined to become something greater, the public health capital of the world. That's what we should aspire to be, and we could be that we can be the place that helps to teach the whole rest of the world, how to give public health to the people, reach the people at the grassroots, how to prevent disease, how to stop the next pandemic, or how to respond if, God forbid, we ever faced one again. We need to build out our life sciences industry, which has been something that has been on the verge now for several years, but this is going to be the moment – billions of dollars, private dollars and public dollars, will be flowing into life sciences in the next few years. New York City has to be well-positioned to capture that, and we're going to make a series of actions and investments to achieve that. We have a future in health care, in life sciences, that adds so much to our city and will add so many jobs as well, and one of the examples from this crisis that taught us so much was the Pandemic Response Lab. That was absolutely crucial in our response to COVID and the strategy that came out of that for a Pandemic Response Institute, something that permanent, that would help solidify our position as a leader in the world in fighting disease.

Today, we announced the next step in expanding the Institute, taking this idea, putting it into action, we'll be taking applications for the long-term growth of the Institute, building it out, making it a crucial part of our health infrastructure. This will involve a \$20 million investment, and this is the gateway to our future. As someone who has been absolutely crucial building out this vision, and he speaks about it with great knowledge and great passion, and you hear from him every single day, my senior advisor, Dr. Jay Varma.

Senior Advisor Dr. Jay Varma: Great. thank you very much, Mr. Mayor, and I just want to express my thanks for your enthusiasm for the life sciences. As somebody who spent his life professional life working on preventing illness and promoting health. It's really amazing to be in a place where we're kind of embracing this new era of biology and tying it into the recovery for all of us. You know, the COVID-19 pandemic changed the way we all see the world for government and society. One of the most enduring lessons is that public needs to be considered an investment and not a cost. It's an investment in our physical safety, an investment in our economic prosperity, and an investment in justice, ensuring that health and opportunity are available for all of us, and that is why the Mayor's announcement today about the Pandemic Response Institute is really so important to the city, to the country, and indeed the world. New York City had to fight its way back from one of the worst COVID epidemics in the world, and one of the ways it did that was through a partnership between government, universities, and the private sector to create the Pandemic Response Lab, and that lab has been the key that unlocked the Test and Trace Corps, to prevent thousands of New Yorkers from getting infected, and the key that unlocked the safe reopening of our public school system. And in January, the City, co-hosted a meeting with the Rockefeller Foundation that included some of the leading health and community experts from here in New York City, and some of the world's foremost experts in public health, and the resounding message from that meeting was that the City should invest in a new entity that brings in all of society approach to pandemic, preparedness and response.

We need to think of preparedness as something that we do every day, aligning private industry, academia, community groups, and government, to ensure that we're always prepared to prevent and respond to the next threat to our health. Specifically, the Pandemic Response Institute will focus on advancing research, training, and innovation in how we detect, investigate and manage outbreaks, and crucially, the Institute will center its preparedness work on racial equity and the needs of impacted community and all its efforts. Specifically, it's going to work on ensuring that all New Yorkers received the information that they need to make decisions, particularly during emergencies, enabling all New Yorkers to access the health solutions that they need and helping all New Yorkers and sectors build their capacities to prepare and respond to future public health crises.

You know, a recovery for all of us, as the Mayor has said, aspires to make New York City the public health capital of the world. By investing in this new Institute, the city can really bring together the best from government, our universities, our biotech, and technology sectors and our civic organizations, and together they can spur economic development, build a stronger workforce, and truly ensure that New York City can beat back any health threats it faces in the future. Thank you.

Mayor: Thank you very much, and again, Jay Varma, thank you for being one of the sparkplugs of this whole idea, and everyone – listen, for a long time, this City, for generations just kept growing, and then we saw that we had to have more of a vision of where we would go, and one thing I appreciate about the work done by the Bloomberg administration is they focused on the growth of our technology community, and that really was fantastic. It's now about 350,000 jobs in the tech ecosystem in this city, and it's been growing as you've heard recently, major announcements from tech firms that have to have more of a presence in New York. Well, that took a lot of government support to make sure that that happened. We are doing the same thing now for life sciences and for this even the larger concept of being the public health capital of the world, and when we say public health capital of the world, it means leaning into life sciences, but it also means leaning into public health, taking what we learned with the Test and Trace Corps and making it a public health quarter, reach deep into the grassroots, creating strategies for educating the public on health care, addressing the long-term impact of COVID as we're doing, for example, with our Centers of Excellence.

Look, there is a shifting happening here. There is a moment of change, obviously, because of this pandemic, we can't ignore it. We have to embrace it and get into a futuristic mindset, and here's an opportunity for New York City to add a whole new portfolio to everything that's great about this place, and that's what we intend to do.

Alright. Now, everyone when we talk about recovery for all of us, a recovery for all of us means protecting people in every way. It certainly means protecting some of the most vulnerable people, and we learned in this crisis, that includes our public housing residents who really bore the brunt of so much of the COVID crisis. It means recognizing the threats around us, not just the ones that come once a century like a pandemic, but the threats that we face all the time because of climate change, it means taking a big view of what it's going to take to protect the city, protect our people, build our future, and we have to constantly be looking to the future, and when you think about the future, and the existential threat of climate change, that means focusing on

resiliency, constantly investing in resiliency. Once, I was at a town hall meeting, and I think it was in Queens, someone said to me, you know, how much are we going to spend on resiliency? When is this all going to be over? And I said, look, the work of resiliency is not going to be over. It's something we'll be doing for decades and decades, and we'll constantly be investing and we need our federal government to invest, and thank God the Biden administration is presenting an infrastructure vision that is transcendent, that will allow us to really get ahead of the challenges of climate change. But right now we have a lot of work to do, and we have exciting news this week on a major development, major construction kicking off for the East Side Coastal Resiliency Project. Absolutely crucial – we're seeing work at Stuyvesant Cove Park began this week. We've got to remember what we went through. Superstorm Sandy, that was a while ago, and it may have faded for some people's memories a bit, but I don't forget, and I think a lot of people don't forget the devastation it wrought all over the city. We don't forget the heroism of the doctors and nurses and staff at Bellevue Hospital, at NYU Hospital, saving patient's lives as their hospitals were overcome by the flooding and the storm. We don't forget the hundreds of thousands of residents in Manhattan, and certainly in all the other boroughs who had their electricity out, who couldn't get food and water, the flooding, the way it knocked out so much of what was part of our lives, and it gave us a warning that worst might be coming if we don't get ahead of it. I remember the uncertainty of that time and the fear that so many people had, and it was a sobering moment and we can't forget it.

So, the East Side Resiliency Project, it's one of the biggest in the nation that will protect so many people in one of the most densely populated areas of the nation, and we have learned through experience that we have to get ahead of this challenge and invest now. I want you to get a sense of this project – it's extraordinary it will protect again, tens of thousands of residents, including many, many public housing residents. It will protect the lives of people against whatever mother nature throws at us, and it's something we're doing for the long term, and we have a video to show you. It gives you a sense of just how important this initiative is.

[...]

Mayor: Well, yes, indeed, we do think big. And that means, as you look at that video, you see the sheer sweep of this project protect a huge part of our city, and do it for the long-term for generations to come. A lot of work has gone into this, and it's been crucial to hear the voices of the community. There've been a lot of concerns, making sure we'd get this right the first time, make sure this is a lasting positive impact for the community. It's going to take a lot of work. It's going to come with challenges, but we need this project and we need it done right. And so, we've been working closely with the folks who represent the communities of the East Side, who have been hearing the voices of people bringing back the needs, working with us to perfect the plan. I want you to hear from two of them. First, someone who, from the very beginning, was a community organizer grew up in the neighborhood, understands the challenges, particularly understands the challenges and the threats that public housing residents face and their needs. And she's brought that to this process, my pleasure to introduce Council Member Carlina Rivera.

[...]

Mayor: Thank you much, Council Member. I really appreciate all you've said and how much time and energy you've put into this to make sure we get it right. And I appreciate your childhood memories, I'm really glad you used an example from the Mets and not the Yankees for where you're getting your home run [inaudible] there. That's – that makes me feel good about you. So, thank you. Thank you very much for all you have done to help us move forward and protect the residents of your community. And I want everyone to hear from another member of City Council, and he saw firsthand – he's also a community resident – he saw firsthand just the shock of Hurricane Sandy, what it did to the community, the fear it left, the uncertainty it left, and has worked so hard with us to figure out a solution that will work for the long-term and protect the residents of the East Side. My pleasure to introduce Council Member Keith Powers.

[...]

Mayor: Thank you so much, Council Member. And, listen, you just really – as I was listening to you talk about, it was bringing back to me the memories of all those buildings without electricity and all that people were going through. You know, I really appreciate what you said, for, sort of, putting us there in the moment and reminding us why it's so important, but it also is a reminder that at that moment we had so many questions about what would happen to the City, going forward, and what it would mean. And it was another one of those times when New Yorkers just overcame and did not let anything hold us back. In the years after Superstorm Sandy, the city came roaring back and reach some of its highest heights. So, I think it's another reminder of what we now need to do with this pandemic, and apply the same approach, and overcome. But thank you for your support and thank you for the hard work you've put into this project. Thank you.

All right, everybody, let's do today's indicators. And, today, we have some – again, some good, good signs here. We are far from out of the woods, but I do like to see good news. And it's – it's been a good number of days now. We've seen it. Number one, daily number of people admitted to New York City hospitals for suspected COVID-19 – today's report, 164 patients. That is a really good number, well below our threshold. Confirmed positivity, 64.12 percent. Hospitalization rate, also some real progress there, 2.86 per 100,000. So, we're starting to move down towards that threshold as well. Number two, new reported cases on a seven-day average – today's report, 2,407 cases. Number three, percentage of people testing positive citywide for COVID-19 – again, getting close to a threshold here as well – seven-day rolling average, number is 5.26 percent. So, something good is happening. You know what I'm going to say next – keep your guard up, keep vigilant, keep doing the good work that you're doing as New Yorkers, wearing the mask, practicing the distancing, being smart, being careful and getting vaccinated. It's really fantastic that so many people going out there, anyone who's not yet got vaccinated time to sign up.

Okay. A few words in Spanish, and I want to go back to the topic of how we overcome the pandemic and build a future where this city helps lead the world in health care.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, let's turn to our colleagues in the media. 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 Senior Advisor Dr. Jay Varma; Dr. Dave Chokshi, Commissioner of DOHMH; Commissioner of the Department of Design and Construction, Jamie Torres Springer; the Parks Commissioner Mitchell Silver; the Director of the Mayor's Office of Resiliency Jaimey Bavishi; and the Executive Vice President and Chief of Staff of the Economic Development Corporation James Katz. First question today goes to James Ford from PIX11.

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

Mayor: How are you today, James?

Question: Great. Thank you very much. Hope you're well.

Mayor: Yes, indeed.

Question: Glad to hear it. Let's begin with this, the Governor raised the curfew on restaurants and bars starting next week, as I'm sure you know, from 11:00 PM to midnight. Meanwhile, a variety of restaurant or bar owners are saying that no curfew should be in place. Despite this change, I'm wondering if you could comment about the curfew as it stands as a midnight curfew and what effect a curfew has on New York nightlife and the economy, and how you feel on this issue?

Mayor: I'm immediately reminded of one of those sayings. I used to hear a lot when I was a kid – slow but steady wins the race. I think when it comes to fighting COVID, we have to be really smart about how we relax restrictions. We still are dealing with a huge challenge with the variants. We, obviously, are really concerned about making sure we have enough supply of vaccine. There's real questions still, as much as I'm very, very happy with what we've seen these last days and I'm hopeful. Take it step-by-step. So, I would be careful about going too far in any one jump. When we see an adjustment like this, let's see how it goes for a little bit. Let's see what happens out there. Let's make sure that we're making decisions based on the data and the science. And data and science means, you need to give a little time to see how things work. To the other piece of your question, James – look, our restaurants, our nightlife industry, absolutely crucial to the future of the city. We look forward to bringing them back really fully over time – the keyword, over time. Let's first beat COVID and continue step by step to bring back these industries. I think you're going to see a lot of progress by the summer, I really do. And then, we look forward to the day when we can open up more and more. And I think we're going to get there, but let's get it right the first time would be my argument. Go ahead, James.

Question: Also, you mentioned that the City has gotten an increase in Moderna and Pfizer doses and intends to continue to open new vaccination sites. The additional doses, is this anything beyond what you all have reported in the last day or two? Is this brand new, additional doses? And can you provide more information about additional vaccination sites, some specifics on that?

Mayor: Yeah. I'll turn to Dr. Choksi. I'll say, James, we constantly have been adding sites, some permanent, some pop-up, but they've all been working. It's been amazing how much it's helping to increase a demand and particularly in communities that bore the brunt of COVID and where we've seen hesitancy. The real grassroots sites are helping us to overcome the hesitancy. So, we're going to keep using that strategy. And we've been, with each of our morning press conferences, announcing a number of sites and putting them out. We'll constantly update you. Again, vaccine supply is kind of a week-by-week thing. But we have seen, at times, including recently, some increases in Moderna and Pfizer, and that's helpful, particularly with the J & J vaccine on hold right now. Dr. Chokshi, you want to speak to that?

Commissioner Dave Chokshi, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: Yes, sir. Thank you very much. And you're exactly right – you know, this week we had about 210,000 first doses of Pfizer and Moderna delivered to New York City. And over the next two weeks we expect that weekly number to increase slightly on the order of 10,000 to 20,000 additional first doses per week. This is important for the reasons the Mayor has mentioned, with respect to ensuring that we can meet a demand for vaccination and keep up the remarkable pace of vaccination that we have had. And the other part of it is just to emphasize that we continued to expand access. We now have over 600 sites that are open to the public listed on nyc.gov/vaccinefinder. And that means, 99 percent of all New Yorkers live within one mile of one of those sites.

Mayor: Thank you.

Moderator: Next is Katie Honan from the Wall Street Journal.

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

Mayor: I'm doing well, Katie. How have you been?

Question: I've been great. My question – I guess, it's sort of a part-two to James' question, and it's about the idea of vaccine supply. I know that a lot of people who are spending their lives making appointments for people – have noticed there's more and more appointments available, and this is great, but it also could signal that perhaps there is a leveling off or a ceiling reached in terms of New Yorkers seeking to get vaccinated. I know the City does a lot of outreach, they're doing all this stuff to make sure that people are getting vaccinated, but maybe you and the health commissioner, especially, can talk about that next phase, and if that actually is alarming to the City, if there are fewer appointments being made, or perhaps there's just so many of these appointments that even though we haven't reached the numbers of vaccinated people we'd like.

Mayor: I appreciate the question. No, I am – I feel great about the fact there's lots of appointments available and are easier for people. I mean, for God sakes, we spent weeks and weeks where there was such intense demand and people had to wait quite a while in many cases, and no one liked that. I am so much happier with a situation where people can get an appointment quickly. And it's unquestionably going to help us address some of the hesitancy issues or something that maybe isn't quite hesitancy, Katie, but it's just folks who are pretty much convinced, but, you know, is it going to be easy? Is it going to be hard to do? Is it nearby? Is it not nearby? You know, the more you make it easy, and simple, and close the more people who

will get engaged. So, no – I would say if we're in a situation for the months ahead, and particularly thinking up until June, when we want to get to that 5 million New Yorkers vaccinated – if it's, you can go online and get an appointment anytime, that's the ideal, that's fantastic. Definitely seeing a decline in hesitancy, but we've got a lot more outreach work to do. And that's what we're deepening right now, because we think there's a whole other wave of people we can now get to, especially as it becomes easier to get an appointment. Dr. Chokshi?

Commissioner Chokshi: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. And thanks, Katie, for this important question. I agree with the Mayor in the description that it's a good thing that now, you know, appointments that were being snapped up literally within seconds of them being posted, there's now a longer window – you know, not too long – hours, or, in some cases, you know, a day or two, before they get filled. And that's very important actually to ensure that we are reaching the people that we want to reach them with respect to vaccination and not just the people who are most technologically savvy in actually accessing the appointment. To that end, I would also emphasize that we're making appointments available through a number of different means beyond the websites. So, for example, 877-VAX-4NYC is the phone number that people can call. We have appointments that are set aside and being booked through that phone number. And we do continue to see, you know, healthy demand from that channel, as well as many others as well. And the last part of what I want to say is, just to emphasize that, as a city, we do not consider demand a static phenomenon. It's something that we have taken great care to influence along three dimensions, which I think of as access, outreach, and confidence. With respect to access, as you've heard us say, our focus is on meeting patients where they are, expanding the number of sites, expanding our mobile options, and really getting out into communities to offer vaccination. That's paired with the outreach plank, which is all of the work that we do to engage with faith leaders, community-based organizations, and all of the boots-on-the-ground outreach, including the hundreds of canvassers who are out helping book appointments each day. I'm very grateful to our Test and Trace colleagues for that piece of it. And the final one is confidence. This is about putting out science-based information, answering the questions that New Yorkers have about vaccination, and then, very importantly, encouraging everyone who has already been vaccinated to share their stories with a neighbor, with someone who is in your church, or your synagogue, or your temple, congregation, so that we can create a virtuous cycle of vaccination. Thank you.

Mayor: Go ahead, Katie.

Question: Thank you so much. And my next question is on coastal resiliency, I guess, since everyone's on the call. I know, obviously, the East Side Coastal Resiliency Project – obviously, there's some people who are against it, but it is a big project for Manhattan, particularly East Side of Manhattan. There've been criticisms from South Brooklyn – or, Southern Brooklyn Council Members who say, you know, what about Coney Island and other projects in Gerritsen Beach? So, if you could just lay out a little bit of some of what the City is preparing or is in talks to do? I know despite, you know, they've received lots of money, the City, but there haven't been that many completed projects. I know you'll get mad about that, but it's sort of true when you look at the Rockaway Boardwalk, and a lot of other things that are still getting finished. But if you could lay out some of the plans, particularly for the more ocean – the closest to the ocean coastal neighborhoods and what resiliency projects that are there.

Mayor: It's an important question. I'm going to turn to Jainey Bavishi in a moment, who runs our Office of Resiliency. But let me say something, and Jainey, you'll pick up from this. First, I think, Jainey, would be really great to give people just sort of a quick summary of the major projects that are either completed or underway. Obviously, you know, we've got to realize the sheer magnitude of some of these things – the Rockaways Boardwalk, 5.5 miles that was created as a resiliency barrier on top of the work that we've been doing with the Army Corps. of Engineers in the Rockaways. That's just one piece. There's obviously crucial elements in Staten Island. There's pieces that we put together that are temporary measures, as you saw in Lower Manhattan, you've seen in Red Hook. There's a variety of elements and they're constantly moving, because this is – we're talking not billions, but ultimately tens of billions of dollars will be spent to achieve resiliency. I do think it's important to recognize the level of threat and also where the most people are. And that's why the East Side Resiliency Effort is so crucial – 110,000 people affected by that. So, Jainey, just give a quick rundown of the ones that have been completed and the major ones underway, or about to begin, so that people get a sense of where we stand right now.

Director Jainey Bavishi, Mayor's Office of Resiliency: Thank you, sir. I completely agree with you, we're responding to these projects on different timescales, working to implement short-term measures wherever possible, working to advance these longer-term, more complex projects. And, you know, it's important to remember that these coastal resiliency projects are really a new class of infrastructure for the city. Community engagement is absolutely critical to getting them right. So, you know, all of that takes time and we're working to advance them as quickly as possible. As the Mayor said, we've completed projects in the Rockaways and Seagate. We also broke ground on the Rockaway Atlantic Shorefront resiliency project on the anniversary of Sandy, last fall. We were very excited to be able to announce that. We're also advancing projects and expect groundbreakings in Staten Island – on the South Shore of Staten Island, coastal storm risk management project with the Army Corps. later this year, as well as the Brooklyn Bridge to Montgomery coastal resiliency project there this year. We have a number of [inaudible] shoreline projects, also breaking ground this year. Those are in the outer boroughs and will protect communities from the impacts of sea level rise. It's also important to remember that the coastal protection projects are just one component of our resiliency strategy. We're implementing a multi-layered approach and responding to the multiple threats of climate change. Coastal storms and sea level rise being some important threats and a serious threat that we're responding to, but also extreme heat and intense precipitation. So, we're taking an all-of-the-above approach in terms of responding and implementing these projects with a great deal of urgency.

Mayor: Thank you so much, Jainey. And I think it would be great for our communications team and Jainey to put out a comprehensive list today, since we're talking about this topic, of everything that's been completed and everything that has been begun, and everything that's going to be begun soon, because it's really all over the city. And we definitely have more to do. As I said, this is going to be work we'll all be doing for a long time. But we're trying to move each and every one of these things as quickly as possible. Okay, go ahead.

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

Question: Yes. Good morning, Mr. Mayor. The Chief Leader is reporting this week, informed by statistics that we got from the FDNY that, as of April 8th, less than 50 percent of EMTs and firefighters are vaccinated with their first round. This has to be informed by the fact that thousands of them have already had a bout with COVID, and the way that people navigate this has to be based on personal advice they're receiving from their internist. But can you talk about the challenge here, because after what happened with J & J, folks, in particularly health care are – you know, the CDC has been kind of like in terms of guidance like an Etch-a-Sketch. Can you understand their hesitancy, and can you address it in terms of how that squares with the public messaging about the need for everyone to be vaccinated?

Mayor: Yeah. I'll start and I'll turn to Dr. Varma. I think – let me just speak about the Fire Department, and then I want Dr. Varma to sort of speak to the hesitancy question, particularly based on news that people are seeing now. I think it's really important, Bob, to recognize that now it's been, you know, a couple of months that we've been doing vaccinations for all of our employees in the Fire Department. So, it's been available to a lot of people, obviously. And I think it's natural that some people, you know, are the first wave – they want to get vaccinated right away. Some people are very wait-and-see, or don't feel it's particularly necessary. We've seen that a lot of health care folks, they just don't think it's necessary. Maybe they've had it already or they just think it's not something that is going to be a challenge for them. So, we've got to respect this as an individual choice. Our job is to just make it easy for people, make it available, answer questions, answer concerns. But I do think the same you'll see with Fire Department, with health care, you just see more and more people over time, because the more people in their lives that get it and it helps, and the more that people want to sort of go back to normal life, I think organically it will move more and more. Jay?

Senior Advisor Varma: Great. Thank you very much for the question. And this is really one of the biggest challenges that we face in all immunization programs. And I think it's just important to keep it in context, it's not unique to COVID. Similar to the question that Katie asked earlier about increasing appointments available. We know that they're always going to be two extremes. They're going to be people who are kind of enthusiasts, early adopters, who are going to get vaccinated as soon as you can, you know, count me and my family members among that group. You have another group which are people who are more likely to refuse and resist. But in the middle, you have a big, big spectrum of people. And we know from all of our vaccine campaigns, regardless of whether it's the HPV vaccine or the measles vaccine, that you need to meet people where they are, you need to show them empathy, listen to their concerns, understand their concerns, and then try to address that with facts. And what we know, particularly based on the experience over the past few days with the J&J vaccine, is that we have one of the most incredible safety systems in the world for assessing risks and benefits associated with vaccines.

You know, for those of you who listened to the presentations yesterday, like I did, what you saw is incredibly dedicated people who are working all the time to make sure that our vaccines are safe. And I realize it's alarming people see, there's an event that occurs that therefore the vaccine isn't safe. But what I hear and what we really want to hope people do here is that no, it means we're watching for everything. And even the slightest signal, even if it's an incredibly rare risk, like we're seeing here events that occur no more than one in probably 150,000 to 200,000 within a select group, and probably more than one in a million for everybody who got these vaccines,

we're watching for those things. And it is challenging for people to understand risk in their everyday lives. And we do want to do everything we can.

So, our hope is, as the Mayor has just said, that as people see others get vaccinated and as they realize, you know, how safe these are and we give them the facts and information that they need, that they're going to choose to make this. I think the only last point I want to make really quickly is just the one about prior infection. The reason that we really want people to get vaccinated, even if they had an infection in the past, is that we know from the studies that are being done right now, vaccine provides you additional protection, in other words, it boosts your immune response, and it provides additional protection against new variants. So, if you've been infected in the past with an old or a classic strain of COVID, you may not be as well protected against these newer strains, but we've seen from the early data from Pfizer and Moderna, that these do provide that additional protection. So, there is added value to getting vaccinated.

Mayor: Thank you very much. Go ahead, Bob.

Question: [Inaudible] about them, but I have been vaccinated. So, I'm with the program. Just to follow up, I do want to commend – your administration has been accessible through this and particularly Dr. Katz, very accessible in difficult circumstances. But I had been getting a hard time with getting the data on the level of vaccination compliance within H+H. Back when Governor Cuomo was in his interest, [inaudible] to make a big deal of it, he was beating the drum on this. But I've had access to Dr. Katz for the last few days. I haven't gotten anywhere, trying to get that update about where we are, because we really can't figure out where we're going, if we don't know where we are in terms of this data. So, if someone could intervene from your office to get it, I appreciate it.

Mayor: It shall be done, Bob. We'll get them on the phone with you. And I think we've made some progress, but I think that it's the same thing we're seeing in a lot of the health care world, there are still a lot of folks who just are saying, I don't need it or not now. And, you know, that's fine on one level. So long as there are still literally millions of people who need this vaccine and people keep coming forward constantly, that's what we're seeing, I don't mind that some people need a little more time or need a little more information or need to see other people in their life who had a positive experience. We're going to get there. I do think what you're going to see is more and more progress and it becomes more and more of the common thing to do. But yeah, one of the things we reported from the beginning was ironically, in the health care sector, we saw a pretty high percentage of people was like, I just don't need it or I'm going to wait until later. And I think time will really be the key factor there. Go ahead.

Moderator: The next is Dana from the New York Times.

Question: Mr. Mayor, my question is about the rise of super PACs in the mayor's race. I know you've criticized the role of outside money in politics, but you've also said it makes no sense for politicians to sort of unilaterally disarm and, you know – you have yourself use nonprofit fundraising to your advantage. So, I'm curious what makes super PACs particularly pernicious in your view?

Mayor: Look, Dana, I think the big point here is we need a reset in this whole country on campaign finance. We need a constitutional amendment to overcome the Citizens United decision by the Supreme Court, and we need to reset the whole equation to get money out of politics across the board. I'm very proud of the fact that in this city a few years ago, you know, we moved a referendum to fundamentally change an already great campaign finance system, but literally create the reality that someone could run for mayor even, and never talk to a moneyed interests, never talked to a big donor, and put together grassroots donations and get matching funds and have the same amount of money to run for mayor as any other candidate. And we've really seen that's working and it's working also down to the local level, the council level and all. So, that's the way forward. To your question, look, I think it is – what's particularly pernicious is vast amounts of money and a very powerful interest trying to get more power for themselves. And that's what we got to watch out for in this mayoral election. If, you know, really big money starts to flow that could alter the course of the election for certain powerful interests. That's what I think people should be very mindful of. So, any candidate who is benefiting, you know, it's going to be very clear where the money's coming from, I think, and what the purpose is. And I think the public's going to need to weigh that. Go ahead, Dana.

Question: Do you think the matching funds program should have some sort of like provision that, you know, you can't get matching funds, can't get public funding if there's also a super PAC, you know, raising for a particular candidate?

Mayor: The problem with that, Dana, immediately as I hear it is, you know, there's no guarantee it's something that's coordinated with a candidate or they want, or they agree with. I wouldn't penalize someone because of what other people do per se. I think one very good thing about the matching funds system is when someone breaks out of it and goes, you know, self funds or raises beyond limits that, you know, it gives everyone else the advantage. That's a good clause, but I don't know if I'd say – I think it sounds like a kind of blunt instrument to deny people matching funds for other reasons, because we want people to be in the matching fund system. We want a reality, Dana, where the only thing people should do is participate in our campaign finance system, raise the grassroots donations, get the matching funds. That's the world we need to move toward. So, I would hate to create, sort of, a perverse disincentive. If something like that were attempted, it would have to be drawn very, very carefully. Go ahead.

Moderator: The next is Henry from Bloomberg.

Question: Mr. Mayor, how are you doing? Can you hear me?

Mayor: I can hear you loud and clear, Henry. I'm doing well. How about you?

Question: Doing pretty well, thank you. I've got a question on the East Coast Resiliency plan. Are you concerned – I know some people are concerned, climate change experts and engineers, people from Holland who have dealt with this for hundreds of years, who have looked at this plan – that this plan may not be enough? So, after spending the billion-dollars-plus, sea levels rise even more than anticipated, or even the some anticipate now, and then we may still be facing risk to our infrastructure and our lives from sea levels that rise even higher than this project is planned for. Do you share that or how much of a risk do you think that is?

Mayor: It's a very, very big question. Very good question, Henry. I'm going to say something up front then I turn to our new Commissioner for the Department of Design and Construction, and congratulations to him. I'll call on him in a moment, Jamie Torres Springer, and also you just heard from Jainey Bavishi, our Resiliency Director, I'll call on her as well. Very quick, Henry, the first and most important thing to do is to address climate change aggressively as a nation, as a world, obviously, but it has to be led by the United States. Joe Biden, getting us back in the Paris Agreement, the incredible efforts led by New York's own Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez with the Green New Deal, this is the way to make it possible to protect coastal New York City and coastal America. So, it's a go at climate change with everything we've got and fight it back that's job one. And I do believe there's an opportunity to do that very effectively. I think you're right to say, okay, then when it comes to resiliency, how rigorous is our model, how cautious are we being? And I think we do need to plan for very tough projections and that's what we've tried to do. I don't think we can plan for, you know, what it might be hundreds of years from now in the great unknown. I think we have to plan for what we can see over the next few generations, but really put our best energies into fighting climate change. And that means the things we've been trying to do, you know, divesting from fossil fuels, ending fossil fuel connections going forward, building retrofits, strict laws on that, moving to electric vehicles, all the things that we've been trying to do here have to be done on a huge scale to get ahead of the problem to go at the root cause. Okay, with that, in terms of the actual question of how we plan this, the models we looked at from around the world, the kind of level of rigor that was brought to this – first, Commissioner Jamie Torres Springer –

Commissioner Jamie Torres Springer, Department of Design and Construction: Thank you, Mayor. And I would answer that the project, we're very proud, has been designed to a very aggressive standard of protection, well beyond what the federal government prescribes as the standard of protection. I'll just say it technically. We have designed it to address the 100-year flood in the year 2100 in the worst case scenario for that flood, what's called the 90th percentile projection. So, it is a very aggressive standard, raising the elevation of the park and the neighborhood behind it in order to protect from that scenario, which is, of course, far in the future. And the reason that we select a scenario like that through our modeling is, of course, as you mentioned, Mayor, we have to balance the level that we get to with the need for access. And so, because you have to get to the park, we have to make sure it's accessible for people to be able to get to it. That was the compromise, the balancing that we achieved. But I also want to note that we have built in two feet of additional adaptability, so we can raise the elevation an additional two feet based on the structural work that we're doing. So, we're very confident about protecting the community far into the future with this project.

Mayor: Thank you very much, Jamie. And now, Jainey.

Director Bavishi: I think Jamie articulated it very well. The only thing I would add is that, you know, we're following the guidance of the scientists. We work very closely with the New York City Panel on Climate Change and independent panel of scientists. The Mayor actually just appointed our fourth New York City Panel on Climate Change last year. And climate scientists would say that beyond the end of the century, it is very hard to provide certainty around climate projections that we can plan around. And so, we want to make sure that we're taking the

scientific guidance and advice into account and the end of the century, the productions that we have for the end of the century, and really, it's the best information we have to plan our current resiliency portfolio around.

Mayor: Thank you. Go ahead, Henry.

Question: Thanks for that. I guess my other question goes back to the problems we're having with the J&J vaccine, and I'm trying to get numbers on how many places have been shut down. What is the extent of the disruption? You seem to be playing it down. saying, we'll make it up with Moderna and Pfizer, but there are places where you can't go in with refrigerated product. And I'm just wondering how much of a significant problem that poses in bringing the vaccine to people who needed that one-shot vaccine.

Mayor: Yeah, I'll start and turn to Dave, Henry, the reason that I think we're taking this in some stride is, first of all, we fully expect we're going to get more answers in the next few days. So, we see this as a temporary reality. Second, you will remember that we had real ups and downs with the J&J supply. So, you know, we had an initial shipment then we had a few weeks when it was really low, then it came up for a while. Then the problem happened in Baltimore. So, I think in truth, we have never gotten used to having a big J&J supply. So, the absence of it does not feel that different yet. Where it's most problematic is with the homebound vaccinations. It really was particularly well-suited to that effort. And without that we're left with a much more cumbersome approach. Hopefully we can overcome that when we get the new guidance from the CDC. So, I don't think it's had a huge numerical impact, nor do I expect it will in the long run. Go ahead, Dave.

Commissioner Chokshi: Thank you very much, sir. I'll just add three points to what you've said. First, is to clarify to Henry that the other vaccines are able to be refrigerated as well but only for shorter periods of time, than the J&J vaccine, but that does allow us to store them in places where you only have a refrigerator and not a freezer or one of the special freezers that's required for ultra-cold storage. The second point is that we have sought to minimize the disruption as the Mayor has said. We've very quickly shifted our sites that were offering a solely J&J vaccine to Moderna for the most part or Pfizer in some cases. And so, that's how we've been able to ensure that we're honoring the vast majority of appointments that were already scheduled for this week. And I'll also underlying the point the Mayor said, which is that this does coincide with a period where we had relatively low Johnson & Johnson supply. And certainly, compared to the supply that we have for the other vaccines. Now, the third point to make is that, this is not to minimize that that the pause on the Johnson & Johnson vaccine does have an effect. And it's why I do urge, you know, my federal counterparts to ensure that they are proceeding with all expedience possible because each day matters, particularly for some of the most vulnerable populations that we're serving, people who are physically vulnerable, such as the homebound population, people who are socially vulnerable such as people experiencing homelessness, as well as people who are medically vulnerable, such as those who were able to vaccinate upon discharge from the hospital with one shot. So, the J&J vaccine is one that we hope will be back in commission very soon for those reasons as well.

Mayor: Thank you.

Moderator: The next is Yehudit from Boro Park 24 News.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor, how are you?

Mayor: I'm doing well, Yehudit. And they got the whole name of the publication right this time.

Question: Yeah, thank God. Thank you. So, the week before last New York City saw 13 horrific hate crimes. And houses – as has been the case with many hate crimes that have been directed at Asians, many hate crimes directed at Jews are perpetrated by people who are mentally unstable and are recently released from prison, as was the case two Wednesdays ago in Battery Park, Darryl Jones, who had recently been released from prison, perpetrated a horrible knife attack against a young Jewish family, including a one-year-old baby in a stroller. In addition, the attorney of hate crime suspect Grafton Thomas, who attacked several Jews with an 18-inch machete last Hanukkah in a home in Monsey is so – his attorney said that he is so severely mentally ill, that he's unfit to stand trial. So, considering your comments two weeks ago, that you questioned the way the State's parole system, as you said, “dumps parolees in New York City with no plan, no housing, no job, no mental health support. I'm wondering if you've reconsidered your previous statements that increased anti-hate education in public schools is what would have prevented this slate of horrific hate crimes in New York City? And I'm wondering whether you now take the position that the parole system, or maybe perhaps other factors could prevent hate crimes that perhaps education could not really affect?

Mayor: Well, as always Yehudit, you ask an important and thoughtful question and an informed question. But I'm going to just say to you, I don't think it's one thing or the other, I really don't. And I don't think I've ever portrayed it as just one thing. I want to be clear with you about that. I think it's – in fighting hate there's clearly a role for education. Where did a lot of the hate come from? Obviously, the forces of hate were unleashed in recent years, in a way we had not seen previously. That came from rhetoric, that came from a bad public discourse. The way you answer that is with messages of respect and embrace. Every time when we've seen communities under attack, when leaders come out to support the community, when other communities step forward, it does have an effect. What we do to educate our children does have an effect. And then there's another piece of this you're right, that can correlate to people who have, unfortunately, and it's a very small number of folks with a mental health challenge who end up committing an act of violence. But the parole situation is an example of this. If you had someone who has been a violent criminal in particular, who is out of prison often after a long time, and they're given no support whatsoever, it is by definition – like that's the definition of insanity, right? You're asking for a problem to happen. And the State of New York has not owned this problem. And we are talking right now to folks in the Legislature about this, because it is clear the State government, the executive branch just doesn't take this problem seriously, and doesn't take responsibility. How can you take every year, hundreds of people and just dump them on the streets with no support whatsoever? In the city, we provide support and preparation for when people leave incarceration in our correction system. We provide training and education. We provide a transitional job. The State doesn't do that. And that's a danger to all of us, and it really is time for that to be addressed. Go ahead. Yehudit.

Question: And then last week you also mentioned the – some additional undercover and decoy officers and other resources that the City's using to prevent Asian-American hate crime. I'm wondering if you can explain a little bit more about how these undercover and decoy officers work, whether they are working at all? And also whether they will be used to prevent hate crimes against other groups, such as Jews, who for years, the NYPD's statistics consistently say often have 50 percent of the city's total attacks perpetrated against Jews?

Mayor: Unquestionably, it works. We had, in fact, just a week or two ago someone who very violently approached an Asian person and threatened violence towards them, not knowing that person was an NYPD undercover officer, and they were arrested on the spot. So unquestionably, the approach works. Yes, we will apply it, whether it's in the Asian communities, the Jewish community, the Muslim community, any community under attack we'll apply the same approach whenever needed. But our real goal here is to stop hate crimes at the root and create a different environment, help teach our young people the right way, show solidarity with all communities and respect for all communities. And address some of these other issues like the parole problem. I think we can do a lot with policing, but I think we need to go at the root causes of this too.

Moderator: We'll have time for two more for today. The next is Amanda from Politico.

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

Mayor: Good, Amanda. How you been?

Question: I'm doing well, thank you. I wanted to go back to my colleague's earlier comments around vaccines. And I wanted to follow up with something Dr. Varma said, which is the City wants to meet people where they are. And so I wanted to know with the City having vaccinated about three million people, you know, partially or fully out of an eight million population, at what point does the City say, we're going to just do walk-in sites. And say, you know what? Like people should be able to just go in, get the vaccine and maybe meet people where they are once you get through all of the vaccine eager New Yorkers who have gotten their shots?

Mayor: So, it's a great question, Amanda. I want to give both Dr. Varma and Dr. Chokshi a shot at that. Wait, that was a pun. A shot of that. Got that Jay? Wasn't that good?

[Laughter]

So, what I'd say, Amanda is, you know, right now we have a really good situation where appointments are booked constantly. People show up, they get their shots, we avoid long lines, it's organized. I think this is something I would stick with as a general rule. And the – what we've been doing more and more lately is creating the walk-in for the oldest New Yorkers who are really still the people that need it the most. I think it's a really fair question. Is there a sort of transitional moment where you go to walk-in across the board? I would say from my – I'm not the doctor here, but from my gut, this is a little early for us to be thinking about that. But I think the day could well come and that would be a step forward when it's the right time. Dr. Varma and Dr. Chokshi?

Senior Advisor Varma: Yeah. So, just Amanda briefly, and then I think the Commissioner will have a little bit more detail because he handles much more of the operational aspects of this. From a strategy perspective – absolutely. What we – the turning points for when we can start seeing us come out of this are going to be not only just the number of people vaccinated, but really very importantly, the fact that anybody could get vaccinated who's eligible at any time, without any friction at all. What we want it to be is that you can simply walk into your neighborhood pharmacy or your nearest doctor's office, or a City operated site and get vaccinated. And those are really going to be the critical turning points for when we can say that, you know, we're into a next phase of reopening. So, that absolutely is the aspiration. You know, echoing what the Mayor has said, we're definitely not there yet, because even though there are more appointments available, it doesn't mean that, you know, this system is completely frictionless yet. You know, again, it needs to get to a point where there are really so many abundant appointments that we could say it doesn't really matter. We can handle them at any site. So, let me turn to the Commissioner.

Mayor: Dr. Chokshi?

Commissioner Chokshi: Thank you very much. And yes, this is certainly an important question. And one that we have been thinking about. I'll start by saying that we have expanded our walk-in options. We started at just a handful of sites and then last week expanded to 26 City-run sites that offer walk-in appointments to anyone who is 75 or older. And that includes a companion who can accompany them to the appointment. We do want to continue getting the word out about that so that we can get more and more of our seniors vaccinated and protected. We shared information yesterday that showed the very tangible effects of vaccination for older adults thus far. But we can't mistake that progress for victory. And we have to ensure that as many of our seniors get vaccinated as possible. With respect to expanding further – yes, we'll have to do this in a methodical way over time. One of the ways that we've been able to maximize throughput at our sites has been by ensuring that people have appointments, they know when to show up so we can manage smaller lines, maintain distance, and get people through the vaccination process as efficiently as possible. So, we have to balance that with any strategy where we increase walk-ins. But I do think that you'll start to see more and more of that in the coming weeks.

Mayor: Thank you. Go ahead, Amanda.

Question: Great. Thank you all. So, I have another question kind of about different groups of people. So, obviously the study has been focused on racial equity, which is clearly a big issue and making sure that we're able to get it done. I've personally noticed anecdotally, that there are a lot of like young white people who are, maybe are more libertarian. They really don't want the government telling them [inaudible]. And I've convinced friends to get it just because I want to watch the world-class Knicks at Madison Square Garden. They need a vaccine for that. So, I wanted to ask, is the City aware of any trendlines with maybe people who have resources, who are more hesitant to get vaccinated? And do you see that, sort of cohort as you know, a big challenge or a new hurdle in terms of making sure we're getting as many people vaccinated as possible and minimizing risk?

Mayor: What I heard in this question is that you believe the Knicks have what it takes this year. And I admire that. To your question, I'm only going to offer one point as the non-doctor, then Dr. Varma, Dr. Choksi. I do think that there is a larger phenomenon with younger folks, historically, when you're talking about vaccine, when you're talking about health insurance, have a little bit more of a sense of invincibility. And you know, that various challenges out there or something they can just handle or overcome, or it's not going to affect them, whatever it is. I think some of that is out there. So, that I think is probably one of the factors affecting the equation. But in terms of whether we see specific evidence around that demographic, Dr. Varma, Dr. Chokshi, go ahead.

Senior Advisor Varma: Yeah. So, Amanda. No, thank you very much for the question. I think it's very challenging for us to know about specific pockets right now. Because as the Commissioner has noted there are still gaps in the high priority groups. So, we haven't necessarily been looking at, at specific lower risk groups to see where their hesitancy or reluctance might come from. But we certainly know this, again from, not just from COVID, but from all vaccine experiences. And a lot of it gets to what the Mayor has talked about. That sense of invincibility, that sense that I don't necessarily need another layer of protection in my life. And we have to recognize that this is not a problem that gets solved a week by week. You know, we're still very early in our vaccine campaign, although it seems like it's been forever because COVID seems like it's lasting forever. Sometimes this process takes not just weeks or months, it takes years. And so, I think actually the point you raised is really one of the most critical ones, which is that component of peer pressure. You know, that sense that, well, if you want to come to my party, I want you to be vaccinated in the future. Or if you want to – we all want to go to a sports event together, we should be vaccinated. That's going to have a big influence. We're also seeing now that there are several universities around the country that are going to be mandating vaccines. That's not something that we're advocating for, but it's not something we're necessarily opposed to either. I think you are increasingly going to see vaccine verification systems. That whether it's large sporting events or some other place put in, and I think all of those together will also have an added benefit. But of course, building on the basic principles that we've already talked about, which is empathy, listening to people, understanding their concerns, and also addressing them with facts. There are going to be other forms that are eventually going to push people to get, to want to get vaccinated.

Mayor: Dr. Chokshi?

Commissioner Chokshi: Thank you, sir. Briefly, I would just add that our vaccine equity efforts remain laser-focused on age, race, and place. Ensuring that our older adults are getting vaccinated, that we're looking to specific race and ethnicity data, particularly Black and Latino New Yorkers who continue to need to get vaccinated at higher rates than what we're seeing right now. And then with respect to place, making sure we're looking both at boroughs, ZIP codes, and then neighborhoods to understand where we need to continue focusing all of our efforts. So, we still have work to do along those dimensions, but this is a fundamental pillar of how we gauge our own success with the vaccination campaign. The last thing is just to echo what Dr. Varma said about peer pressure. The way that I think about it is each of us who have been vaccinated thus far, we have to share our stories. We have to ensure that those spread more quickly than the virus spreads itself. And that's how we're going to turn the tide on this pandemic.

Mayor: Thank you very much. Go ahead.

Moderator: Last question for today. It goes to Abu from Bangla Patrika.

Question: Hello. How are you?

Mayor: Good, Abu. How have you been?

Question: Good, thank you so much. My question is you know, since Johnsons have the controversy and the problem, so the people who have been vaccinated by Johnson & Johnson, they are concerned whether this vaccine is working or not? Or what they have to do for the future protection?

Mayor: Wait, you're saying they're concerned if they had it already, are you saying?

Question: Yes.

Mayor: Okay. Dr. Varma?

Senior Advisor Varma: Yeah. Great. Thank you for the question. So, the current guidance is the following. So first of all, if you got the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, you don't need to be worried about your protection. The effectiveness of the vaccine against preventing infection and particularly severe illness and death remains what we thought to be, very, very high. In terms of concerns about your own safety. The current recommendation is that if you got the vaccine more than three weeks ago, you're very far out of the window where we would be concerned about this very rare and unusual side effect. If you got the vaccine within the past three weeks, we want you to keep in mind that there are some very severe symptoms. That if you develop these symptoms that you should immediately contact your doctor or seek out an emergency department. Those symptoms are a severe headache. They are the sudden difficulty in breathing, a sudden swelling in your leg that's unusual and different, and sudden and very severe abdominal pain. So, those are the types of symptoms that people would need to look out for. But I really do want to emphasize this is an extremely rare event. And so, we do want you to pay attention to your health but you shouldn't be unnecessarily fearful that you might develop an effect.

Mayor: Thank you very much. Go ahead, Abu.

Question: Okay. The second question is, is there any new incubator medication you are using for the COVID patients?

Mayor: You're saying to treat patients?

Question: Yes. Right.

Mayor: All right. I'll give that one to Dr. Varma again.

Senior Advisor Varma: No, thank you very much for the question. There is nothing new in the past sort of several weeks. There is a tremendous amount of research that is going on right now. We are now seeing new studies looking at not just treating people with the illness, but people who've been exposed and ways to prevent them from getting there. So, I am quite confident that within the next year, we are going to see better approaches to treating this disease. But I would emphasize also that we have already gotten quite a lot better. You know, the physicians themselves have gotten much more skilled at understanding what works and what doesn't work. And we've seen very good clinical trials, both done here in the United States and overseas, to show us most importantly things that don't work. Because one of the things we learn in medicine is that we need to focus on doing no harm. And I know there's a lot of rumors that spread through communities about if I take this anti-parasitic medication or this anti-malarial drug, maybe that'll work. I really do want to emphasize to people that our physicians here in New York City have gotten very skilled. And if you're trying to take something and they recommend not to take it, please do listen to them because it is important that you take what is known to work and not just something that you hope might work.

Mayor: That is very powerful advice. And thank you. Voice of wisdom, Dr. Jay Varma. Thank you. Hey, as we conclude today, look, I think this is a perfect point to summarize everything on that. We've learned a lot in this crisis. And one of the things that really shows the character of a person or a place is, do you learn? Do you learn from your experiences? Do you grow? We've been doing that. So, this city keeps learning from this very, very big challenge we've been through. But it's what's going to give us a lot of strength going forward, a lot of knowledge, a lot of ability. That's why we can become the public health capital of the world. That's why we're going to do the things to keep ourselves safe for the future. And again, even out of this painful experience, I end up with even more hope for the future of New York City. Thank you, everybody.

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