

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good morning, everyone. Well, it was a beautiful weekend in New York City this weekend – and so much going on, and so many signs of the City coming back – a lot of energy, a lot of activity. Really, you could feel what's happening, that COVID is going down, COVID rates going down, vaccine rates going up, people doing more and more things out and about in this city. And one of the great things this weekend was the celebration of the 90th birthday of the Empire State Building. This was really something special. The Empire State Building, which means so much to all of us, one of the eternal symbols of New York City in our lifetimes, and a symbol of hope, a symbol of the possibilities and the greatness that come with life in New York City – 90 years old and going strong. I went and toured amazing new observation decks and exhibits that are at the – excuse me, that at the Empire State Building now, and it's really, really worth the visit. I want to say to everyone, if you haven't been in a while, it's so important to see it again. And if you have anyone coming to visit, bring them along. And there's nothing more amazing than looking out over that extraordinary vista of New York City. So, happy 90th birthday, Empire State Building.

Now, we're in the month of May. Time is flying – we are in the month of May. And May is Asian-American Pacific Islander Heritage Month. And throughout this month, it is a chance to celebrate and appreciate the impact that the Asian-American community has on New York City – vast, positive, crucial impact in this city, part of what makes New York City great. Now, we need to celebrate. We need to support. We need to, in every way possible, show solidarity with the Asian-American community. A lot of us were out in Flushing, Queens yesterday, gathering for a rally. A simple message – stop Asian, hate. A simple message – we all are in this together. We, as New Yorkers, believe in a city for everyone. That's what we do here. That's who we are. And we all need to stand in solidarity with our Asian brothers and sisters. Now, look, it is about creating a sense of appreciation and welcome at all times. It's also about being really clear that if someone commits an act of violence or bias against Asian-American New Yorkers, they will suffer the consequences. And that's what we do every day, make sure that no offense goes without the right follow-through and the right consequences. But throughout this month, let's remember to uplift, to support, to celebrate our Asian-American community.

Okay, now let's turn to what we do every single day. We talk about our vaccination effort, the biggest in the history of New York City. Where we stand, a great number today. As of today, from the very beginning of this effort, 6,630,935 doses given – extraordinary. And there is no better time – there literally has not been ever a better time to get vaccinated than now. It is the easiest it's ever been. The walk-ins at so many of the City-sponsored sites make it really easy. A lot more, great sites being set up all the time. A lot of wonderful opportunities to go and get vaccinated in your community. If you want to know where to go, go to nyc.gov/vaccinefinder or call 877-VAX-4NYC. Now, look, I know ever since I talked about the July 1st reopening, there's

been tremendous positive feedback, a lot of energy, a lot of hope. You can do something to make sure that we reopened strong, go out and get vaccinated. It has literally never been easier.

All right, now, today's an important day. Today is one of those turning-point moments, another example of New York City coming back strong as the rest of our City workforce has been working remotely starts to come back to the offices. Now, of course, I want to start by saying a profound thanks to the 80 percent of the City workforce that has been working throughout this crisis, bravely, strongly with tremendous compassion and effectiveness to protect all of us, serve all of us, no matter what. Now, it's time for the folks who work in the offices to come back – about 80,000 city workers coming back to the offices. City Hall is abuzz today. It's a great feeling. I have been at City Hall throughout the pandemic, as have many of my colleagues. But for the first time in, you know, a year-plus, we really have the spirit and the energy of this place back. And it's a great feeling and it's going to help us do so much more. This is why we are doing this, so we can serve New Yorkers better, because when we're all together we get more done for the people.

So, we see the comeback and full swing in so many ways, here's another example of it. And the way it works is always to focus on the health and wellbeing of the people who do the work. Now, we put together a guide for all of the City agencies. It's available online. Anyone who wants to know more about the myriad of health and safety measures are being taken. You could look at this extraordinary guide – nyc.gov/returntooffice, available for you to see all the work that's gone into this, the screenings that are being done constantly, obviously the massive vaccination effort, the social distancing rules, the barriers that have been set up, the cleanings, the mask wearing, you, name it. We learned from our schools how to do things right and we're doing the same approach in our offices. And we are confident it's going to work. And also, so many City workers got vaccinated. We want to keep encouraging all City workers, if you haven't gotten vaccinated yet, this is the perfect time to do it. But it's exciting to have our whole workforce coming back so we can serve all of you so much better.

Okay. Now, talk about exciting – today's indicators. This is my kind of report and it's been such a good pattern lately. Remember, we've got to keep earning it. We got to keep doing what we have to do to make sure this stays this way. I think you'll like this report. Number one, daily number of people admitted to New York City hospitals for suspected COVID-19 – look at that graph. Today's report, 95 patients – keeps going down. We want to keep pushing it down well, well, well below the threshold. Confirmed positivity of 40 percent, even. And hospitalization rate, we were just at the edge a few days ago, we are now well below the threshold – 1.76 per 100,000. That's great news. Okay. New reported cases – number two, new reported cases on a seven-day average – also, look at that, keeps going down. Today's report, 1,202 cases. And number three, percentage of the people testing positive citywide for COVID-19. Today's report, on a seven-day rolling average, 2.78 – a great number. This is my all-time favorite graph, just want to see that go lower, lower, lower all the time. So, get vaccinated. Be smart. This is the time.

All right. A few words in Spanish about the return of our City workforce and our city's comeback.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

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

Moderator: We'll now begin our Q and A. As a reminder, we're joined today by Dr. Chokshi and by Dr. Katz. First question today goes to Andrew Siff from WNBC.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor, and to everyone on the call. My first question has to do with the reaction from DC 37 to the reopening today. Henry Garrido, saying that this has been haphazard, that there's inconsistency across the agencies. Some agencies are bringing everyone back every day, others once a week, it doesn't make sense, and makes clear everyone is guessing. What is your response to Henry's concern here? And how do you address that?

Mayor: I have a lot of respect for Henry and obviously a lot of respect for the men and women of DC 37. And we've been in constant contact with him and with the union. And each agency has been going through its own careful work with its workforce. There is a single unified approach, Andrew, right here. It is consistent there's differences in each office, that's true because some offices have more space, some offices have less space. But no, I'm quite satisfied. It's been a careful consultative approach. And it's working. Go ahead, Andrew.

Question: Second question has to do with the resumption of 24/7 service in the subways, whenever that may be. The question is what happens to the homeless population? As you know, in addition to the deep cleaning on the subways, this has been a way to get homeless folks who have slept on, particularly the E train and others off the service and out into other locations, whether it's shelters or onto the streets. Do you have a plan ready on day one to deal with the change in the homeless pattern as soon as subways go back to 24/7?

Mayor: Yeah. Andrew. It's a great question. I just want to affirm to you, we have been doing this work. Our incredible outreach workers have been doing this work for years. And you know, when we appeal to the MTA, to approach this differently, last year, we were really looking at the end of lines, the terminuses for certain subway lines. We want a different approach there. It turned into a bigger discussion about having the hours with the shutdown. I think it has been very positive and productive in many ways. But we all knew eventually of course, it would go back to a 24 hour service. We still want to approach those terminus stations in a smart manner, careful coordination between MTA, NYPD, Department of Homeless Services. And we have definitely found – the outreach effort is working. Constantly offering shelter is working, a huge number of folks have come in out of the subways into shelter and stayed in shelter. It really comes down to a lot of outreach at the right places at the right times, and we'll certainly be ready for that.

Moderator: The next is James Ford from PIX 11.

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

Mayor: Hey, James. How you doing today?

Question: I always appreciate you asking and I'm actually doing pretty well. Thank you. I appreciate that. Just going back to your comments earlier today, you said that the 80,000 employees have been doing great work during the pandemic. But you also said that they can work more effectively in-person. You've also said in past presentations that the same precautions

used effectively at schools are being used at City offices to keep workers safe. But at many schools, teachers and other professionals are getting personal health accommodations. Why not have more personal health accommodations for the 80,000 other City employees? And are they working more effectively in-person or could they work just as effectively at home?

Mayor: There's no question in my mind, people get a lot more done in-person. There's a lot more teamwork. There's a lot more creativity. From a managerial point of view, you can do a much better job coordinating people, making sure you get results. We need this, this is part of our recovery. We need it, obviously anyone with a particular need can and does talk to their supervisor and we work with that. But look again, let's remember that 80 percent of our public workforce has been at their post doing this work throughout. And doing incredible work for us. And this is a chance to now take it to the next level, get a lot more done for the people at a point where we have to really spur a strong recovery for this city. Go ahead, James.

Question: Thank you for that. Also, Pfizer saying that they may get FDA approval for their vaccine for people ages 12 to 15, possibly as early as today. And they are saying at the latest before the week is over. What impact could that have on our city and specifically on the education system for New York?

Mayor: My message is, it's all good. That is going to help a lot. I mean, just to every additional person, whether they're a young person or an adult who gets vaccinated the more, the better. So, that's really good news. We're ready to keep, you know, making sure that anyone who needs to get vaccinated can. Because we have finally, after so many months we have supply. We have so many locations. We have the vaccinators, we have the strongest outreach effort we've ever had. So, that's really good news. And as soon as we get the go ahead, we'll make the adjustments and we'll get going.

Moderator: Next, making her return to the Blue Room is Julia Marsh from the Post.

Mayor: Welcome back, Julia. How you feeling?

Question: I'm having a hard day, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Oh, Julia –

Question: It was tough leaving my daughter this morning.

Mayor: Your city is here for you. We will send support immediately, Julia.

Question: Thank you. I appreciate that. It's great to be back. I'm glad to hear from everyone. I am fully vaccinated, which is very exciting. And I'll get onto my questions. So, we had a Bronx judge order a synagogue vandal held on bail despite the fact that the move went against the State's new bail law. Judge Louis Nock in the Bronx, cited an 11-day hate crime spree to justify his ruling. It was later overturned by a different judge, but I'm wondering if you agree with his sentiment and the prosecutor's concern that hate crimes are not included in the revision of bail reform last year?

Mayor: Julia, I really respect judges using their discretion when they see a situation, obviously within the law, of course, within the law. But when they see a situation where they think there's a particular threat or challenge, and they make that decision within the law, I respect that. We're going to keep working together within the law to protect people always. And we're especially showing that with hate crimes, there's going to be aggressive follow up. I really want to remind people, someone commits a hate crime we're going to find them. That is, that is the reality of today's NYPD, we're going to find them. And they will experience the consequences of what they've done. Go ahead, Julia.

Question: But do you think bail reform should be further revised to include the ability to give bail for hate crimes?

Mayor: Yeah. Julia, look, I think this is an area that we definitely should look at it again because hate crimes are such a profound challenge. But the important thing for us to do right now is to work within the law as intensely and effectively as possible to protect people.

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

Question: Yes, Mr. Mayor thanks for having this call today as always. I, one of the things that Henry pointed out though, was that his indication is that the vaccination rate is a quote – for starters we are only aware of 34 percent of our workforce being vaccinated. And that tracks with reporting the Chief has done that shows that the Fire Department is at 50 percent for firefighters, below that for EMTs, the Department of Education is at 50 percent as is New York City Health + Hospitals. So, can you explain what's going on here, in terms of it doesn't seem to be fitting with the broader narrative you have that vaccines are paving the path for us to come back so early?

Mayor: I disagree, Bob respectfully. We got over 180,000 City workers who have been vaccinated at least one dose. Obviously, everyone who gets one, almost every single person goes and gets the second. I think we're on a pretty strong pace there. The bottom line is just look at what's happening with COVID. Obviously, the impact of this extraordinary number of vaccinations, because we know even a single vaccination out of two makes an impact. It's driving back COVID, the city is getting safer and safer literally every day, you see the reports. On top of that extraordinary precautions are being taken. And I want to turn to Dr. Chokshi because he's really been the leader in this, in so many ways, structuring all the pieces that we need to keep people safe. And I often talk about the schools and Dr. Chokshi's wife happens to be an assistant principal in our public schools. He worked intensely to figure out that layering upon layering of approaches. And that entire approach is being used also in our offices to keep people safe. So, Dr. Chokshi – I think if you could talk about the combination of the health and safety measures, the reduction in the amount of COVID. And then on top of that vaccination, which we didn't have, obviously when we first opened the schools. How all that comes together to keep our City workplaces safe. Go ahead, Dr. Chokshi.

Commissioner Dave Chokshi, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: Thank you so much, sir. And you, you covered the framework of it. So, I'll just get into some of the details. The linchpin to keeping any setting safe whether it's schools or workplaces or health care settings has been that layered approach, that the Mayor has alluded to. That's using you know, the interventions that we know have worked, for example, masking and distancing, ensuring that we have adequate ventilation, making sure that people are washing their hands and have access to

hand sanitizer to keep their hands clean. And then frequent testing as something that we were able to layer on over the last several months. And now we have perhaps the most important part of our arsenal with respect to health and safety, which is vaccination. This provides protection both for the individual who's vaccinated, of course, but growingly, as we see more and more people getting vaccinated across New York City that gives us more chances to break the chains of transmission of the virus as well. And that is certainly you know, part of the explanation for why we were seeing cases dropping, as well as hospitalizations and indicator of severe illness dropping as well. So, we have to bring to bear that layered approach in everything that we're doing, stay committed to it. But then make sure that people have ready access and encouragement to get vaccinated as quickly as possible.

Mayor: Thank you. Go ahead, Bob.

Question: Yeah. So, in terms of I guess one of the things that – our reality is that the City of New York has, I don't know how many, but I'd like your office to find out if you could, how many workers, City employees, civil servants actually work on premises that belong to private landlords? And I was wondering what level of due diligence have you had in terms of checking with granularity, considering that close to 400 civil servants have died during the pandemic – what levels of certification have you done about all of those HVAC and ventilation systems in those private buildings, have some very connected people that, you know, get rents from the City?

Mayor: Bob, look, first of all, we would just, I want to affirm, we care about the people who do this work, and that's why we've been encouraging vaccination and making it easy. We're going to have vaccination at work sites. There's so many things going on to protect people. And we all feel those we've lost, we all feel their loss and it motivates us to keep moving the city forward and protecting people. And whether it is in a private building or one of the ones we own, we'll get you the facts. Obviously, a lot of our workers are in buildings that are City owned. But any place where it's a private building, we're working, we have been working for months with that building to ensure that the pieces are in place. And all the layers we just talked about. I mean, again, we know if you've got masks on, if you've got a cleaning going on, if you've got distancing, on top of the extraordinary level of vaccination that now exists, people are going to be a hell of a lot safer. And that's what we're going to keep doing. And we'll keep checking, of course the supervisors know they have to keep checking. And if there's any concerns we want to hear about, we want to fix it and address it. But I'm confident starting right here at City Hall, that we are going to be able to keep people really safe.

Moderator: The next is Stacy from FOX 5.

Question: Thank you. Can you guys hear me?

Mayor: Yeah. Stacy, how you doing?

Question: Hi. Good. Good morning. Just following up on the questions about the City employees and the vaccines and knowing some of these percentages, right? One of the unions says is 34 percent, teachers 50 percent. You know, these City workers have had the opportunity to get vaccinated. So, we have to assume that many in the percentage that have not gotten the vaccines do not want to. So, I'm wondering, you know, and Dr. Chokshi said encouragement, we

know there's ease of access now. What more can you do, can the City do? Have you thought about incentivizing for employees who don't want to get vaccinated to try to bring the numbers up because it seems like we're not, you know, getting to that mass level that we really need for herd immunity?

Mayor: Yeah, important question Stacey. Look, first of all, are we thinking about incentivizing? Absolutely, across the board – city employees, but also people in general. Different forms of incentives – we're going to be saying more on that in the coming days, but I definitely think we've gotten to a point where more incentives are helpful, and also just the fact that it is the easiest it's ever been. Remember just a few short weeks ago, it was not easy. Now with, finally, the ability to do walk-ins and easier approaches, I think a lot of people were just waiting until it got convenient, are now going to come forward, and there were some people waiting to see evidence that things went smoothly and they have, I think you'll just see more and more people as a result. You know, the herd immunity, I think what we find is sort of, from my point of view as a doctor, functional immunity, is what I'm looking for. I'm looking for a situation where enough people are vaccinated to keep the numbers down in terms of COVID, help us come back fully.

What we're seeing in recent days really exemplifies that. The COVID rates are plummeting, thank God. Vaccinations are at a real strong level. We're working hard to get to that 5 million by the end of June. But I like where we are in the scheme of things and we definitely want to continue to make it easier to continue to make it fun, make it something people want to do. Go ahead, Stacey.

Question: Going to actually hand it over to my colleague, Arthur Chi'en for question number two.

Question: Thanks, Mayor. Good morning. I wanted to ask you – the City has taken a lot of steps to try to address the anti-Asian violence that we're seeing on the streets, and yet over the weekend, we had at least three more cases, even though three teenagers were arrested in Queens for assaulting another teen while making racial slurs, they've not been charged with a bias crime. Is what the City doing enough, given that we're seeing these attacks continuing, or do we need to do more in particular, if you have anything to say about how bias crimes are or are not charged?

Mayor: Yeah. Arthur, we always have to do more. I know. I mean, I really mean that – we have to do more in every sense. We need all New Yorkers involved. We need people reporting everything they see. Really important to recognize we're encouraging constantly reporting because that's the key to being able to address this problem, and anyone who has anything they want to tell us can go to nyc.gov/StopAsianHate or call the NYPD tipline, 805-77-TIPS. Really, really important to encourage maximum reporting. The NYPD is being aggressive about this, the Asian Hate Crimes Unit, which is made up of Asian American police officers of all different backgrounds who speak a wide variety of languages. That's a crucial piece of this. I think it is about showing consequences, consistently, and I'm telling you, I guarantee you, if anyone commits a hate crime, they will be found, they will be charged. They will be prosecuted. That is part of how we change this, but it's also about all New Yorkers joining together and supporting the Asian American community.

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

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

Mayor: I'm doing well. How are you today?

Question: Good, great. It's such great, exciting and happy news that everything's opening up more and more, and in that spirit, last week, I took the subway every day between Brooklyn and Manhattan and Queens at different hours of the day for fun and research, and while I only saw one thing that might be caused first concern, I also didn't see one uniformed transit police officer, and I was just wondering where exactly are the 500 police officers that the NYPD surge into the subway stations, and I was wondering if they could possibly be more visible in uniform, both to deter crime and reassure riders, and then also I was wondering, as I did, if someone were to spot somebody who's kind of ranting and raving and looking a little bit mentally ill, what does the process look like for how a social worker would interfere and take care of that person's mental health needs?

Mayor: Well, look, we want people to report a situation. Obviously, if someone looks like they're in direct danger, we want folks to call 9-1-1, but for a typical situation, if there's a homeless person in need of some broader assistance, call 3-1-1, we want that reported. We can dispatch outreach workers immediately, and we know it works. It's not perfect because dealing with folks with a mental health challenge can take a lot of time and a lot of nuance, but we do know the outreach workers have had incredible impact. They really have helped to get more and more people off the streets, out of the subways, into shelter, keep them in shelter. The NYPD presence remains strong. Again, overall crime in the subway has gone down. We are going to keep making adjustments. I agree with you, whenever people see an officer it's reassuring, of course, we're going to keep the presence strong and we'll keep making adjustments as we go along. But I think the NYPD is doing a great job, getting out there, and making the impact we need. Go ahead, Yehudit.

Question: And then also, last week the New York Post reported that the Department of Transportation is demanding that – I don't know if you say JoCo, J-O-C-O – the new bike share service is halting operations because it's not authorized because Citi Bike has exclusive rights in the city. So, one thing that I think you beautifully envisioned for the future of the city is that it's a city in which New Yorkers choose to bike, walk, and take public transportation more. So, I was just wondering what is more competition for bike sharing services and other forms of micro mobility be better to create that exciting vision?

Mayor: Yeah, look, in principal, of course, but there are still rules, and we've saw this with for-hire vehicles, here and around the country where they tried to just set up shop without any effort to you know, aligned to the health and safety rules in New York City and the laws. I mean, we don't accept that. Obviously, if someone tries to just come in and make a profit and evade the law, that's not going to work. So, there's a real simple way to do things. If any new service wants to come into New York City, go and talk to the people who regulate that industry for the city government and figure out the right way to do it. You know, we just – again, we've seen – I've talked to mayors around the country and they all express the same frustration because remember you heard it, these, these are not folks doing this for charity, they're doing it for profit, and they're trying to do something for profit without doing what every other industry does, which is following the law. So, we welcome more options so long as people follow the law.

Moderator: We have time for two more for today. The next is Katie Honan from the Wall Street Journal.

Question: Hey good morning, Mayor de Blasio. How are you?

Mayor: Good, Katie. How you been?

Question: I've been doing great. My first question, I, you know, everyone was asking about the return to offices and I know in the past, when there have been stories critical of you for how much time you are not spending at City Hall, and, and when you were running for president in particular, I know a lot of times you said, "well, you know, I have a phone I can work from anywhere." This was a quote you gave to the New York Times, and before COVID, you said that there were actually fewer interruptions for you working out of Gracie Mansion as opposed to working out of City Hall that it's a place filled with a lot of interruptions and distractions. So, was there a shift in your thinking in remote work for yourself and then other people, I don't know if you kind of had an evolution in terms of the most ideal working situation for City employees because you yourself had a different view of it?

Mayor: Katie, I appreciate the question, but I think there's some apples and oranges here. As the person who has to make decisions all day long by definition, I'm moving around the city, I'm working out of different places. I have different kinds of meetings that need different kinds of approaches. We're not talking about the same thing as what we're dealing with here. What I have absolutely found in the context of this crisis is we have lost something without having people in person, and we need to bring people back together. It allows for so much more creativity, so much more teamwork. We had, you know, City Hall for years and years and years, it was so easy for people to connect and communicate, and then that got disrupted by COVID. It's so much better now that more and more people are coming back. So that's, you know, we learned from this experience, it's really crucial to have people in the same place where they can connect with each other. Go ahead, Katie.

Question: And this one's that I'd asked it a few weeks ago, but all the lovebirds around the city keep asking me, when will the City's Marriage Bureau be open for in-person weddings so they can get on with their lives and get married?

Mayor: Yeah, I'm really glad you asked again, and I must admit, I told people to follow up and get me an answer and I did not get the answer I requested. So, Katie, you have helpfully helped the city government to remember, we need a clear answer and we need it quickly. Obviously, look, we want to get everything back by July 1st, but when it comes to the lovebirds, we'd like to help them even sooner. So, let me get you a quick update on that in the course of today.

Moderator: Last question for today goes to Steve Burns from WCBS 880.

Question: Hey, good morning, Mr. Mayor. We're coming to you from City Hall Park with a lot of construction, so, I hope you can hear me alright?

Mayor: Yeah, you're good, Steve, how you doing?

Question: I'm alright. Appreciate you taking the time. First question regards the – I want to get your health experts input on this a little bit, New York Times article this morning that discussed we may never reach herd immunity entirely. We'll be dealing with COVID for several years to come. The goal essentially is just to manage it. I wanted to see what kind of implications that new route might have for New York City and its multiyear recovery we could be looking at.

Mayor: Hey, Steve, I'll turn to Dr. Chokshi and Dr. Katz, but I'm just going to say to you, I think for a long time, we've all understood that COVID will become – if all continues at this pace, will become like the flu or other diseases that we're used to seasonally and we'll have to deal with it, but we can deal with it, and that, thank God, the thing that works. There's one game plan here get vaccinated, and that's the best way forward, even if COVID is going to be around for years in the future, we know what to do about it. So, I just wanted the preface as the non-doctor. Now, you can hear from the doctors, starting with Dr. Chokshi.

Commissioner Chokshi: Thank you, sir, and yes, thanks for this important question. You know, the article that you were referring to specifically it has to do with a herd immunity, and it is true that particularly the new variants of the corona virus have changed the equation when it comes to herd immunity, making it, you know, significantly less likely that we will achieve the formal epidemiological definition of herd immunity. But I want to make sure that this is a very important point. We shouldn't let that terminology distract us from the big picture here, which is that higher levels of population immunity or what some people term, community immunity will still have major benefits, and in fact, we're seeing that in New York City even today, in terms of reducing infections and particularly with respect to decreasing severe disease that causes hospitalizations and deaths.

So, as the Mayor said, our overall approach will remain to focus on vaccinating as many New Yorkers as possible. The key to a joyful July and a safe summer is vaccination, and that's where we're going to keep our square aim for the near term and for the longer term.

Mayor: Thank you, Dr. Katz, you want to add?

President Katz: Yeah, so, I would just like to add sir, that if we don't have herd immunity, it really increases our individual responsibility to get vaccinated. What herd immunity really means is that so many people are vaccinated that those people who are not vaccinated get a kind of free ride. They're protected by the fact that everybody else is vaccinated and can't spread the disease. So, if we're not at herd immunity, that means that it's everybody's responsibility to get vaccinated. They cannot depend on other people to protect them. They need to protect themselves by getting vaccinated. Thank you, sir.

Mayor: Very well said very much appreciated, Doctor. Go ahead, Steve.

Question: Thank you very much, and on a similar note, we have a lot of restrictions getting relaxed this week, as it relates to indoor dining, bar seating comes back today. Capacity goes up to 75 percent on Friday. Curfew is getting lifted over the coming month. Are we at the right stage in time for that kind of handful of restrictions, several restrictions coming up basically at once, are we at the right time for that, given that I know you have expressed caution over indoor dining over the past several months?

Mayor: Steve, thank you for the question, and the bottom line is we're going to keep watching. We make our decisions based on the data and the science right now, the data is telling us we're in good shape and we can keep proceeding. The vaccination numbers tell us something very positive. I mean, right now we've got 3.6 million people have at least one dose of that would get us assuming the vast, vast majority of going to follow through and get that second dose that puts us almost 73 percent of the way to our goal for the end of June. Things are clearly moving in the right direction. We definitely appreciate that gives people opportunity to come back with their livelihoods and with their lives and the things they love to do, but we're going to watch constantly, and if the data tells us something else, we can make adjustments.

But look, I think this wraps it all together and I appreciate very much what Dr. Chokshi and Dr. Katz had to say, if you like reopening, get vaccinated. If you want more freedom, get vaccinated. If you want life to go more back to normal, get vaccinated. It's really a simple, straightforward thing everyone can do to help move this along, and we've set a clear goal and I'm absolutely confident on July 1st, full reopening. I love what Dave just said, a joyful July. Everyone can be a part of ensuring we have a joyful July. It just takes a few minutes. Go get vaccinated. Thank you, everybody.

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