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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO DELIVERS REMARKS AT CITI FIELD  
VACCINATION SITE**

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Everybody, it is a joy to be here at Citi Field. I am wearing a much more comfortable a cap than last Friday, and it's a beautiful color scheme. It fits much better, okay? But, once again, I get to say something that makes me feel really happy for the people in New York City – it is opening day at Citi Field.

[Applause]

It will soon be opening day for baseball, but today it's opening day for the people of this city, the people of Queens to get vaccinated. This site will be for the people of Queens. It'll be for folks who take care of us and protect us and serve us as taxi drivers. It'll be the place for folks who work in food service – working people, essential workers who have given their all to us during this crisis, and we know we need to be there for them. We need to support them, and make sure they get vaccinated. But this site is the beginning of something, very big. The Mets are doing something crucial today for the people at Queens, because I can tell you something simple. The people of Queens love the Mets. They love Citi Field. This is a place they want to be. When vaccinations are here, people will come here. If you build it, they will come, and we need to show people. The vaccination is what will make everyone safe, is what will make our families safe, our community safe. There's no better place in Queens to do that than here at Citi Field.

Now, this is just the beginning. It's just a beginning. Our focus this year is a recovery for all of us. We need to bring back New York City strong in 2021. Vaccination is the key to our recovery. So, we start here at Citi Field, but we're going to build up. Starts as a few days a week, then it's going to seven days a week, to 24/7. By next week, we'll be able to do 4,000 doses a week at this site. But if we have enough vaccine supply, we will be doing 5,000 doses a day here at Citi Field – 5,000 doses a day, 35,000 doses a week. We'll be able to protect tens of thousands of people each week, here at Citi Field. I want to tell you, as I was walking around talking to some of the people who've been vaccinated, the relief they felt, the hope they felt, finally getting vaccinated. They were so appreciative to all the good people here, doing this important work, and I want to thank our colleagues from Health + Hospitals, Dr. Katz, Dr. Long, all of your team, Annabel Palma, the Chief Equity Officer. Thank you for what you're doing here at Citi Field. You're making a huge difference for everyone. Health + Hospitals have been heroes throughout this crisis and are doing so much good here. I want to thank the elected officials who are here. You're going to hear from the Congressman in a moment, but I want to thank, as well, the Queens Borough President, Donovan Richards, State Senator Jessica Ramos, Council Member Francisco Moya. All of them have been wonderful in supporting this effort and they're going to help to get more and more people, including from the communities very nearby. Jessica represents some of

the hardest hit communities in all the Queens, that are very nearby to Citi Field, and we want to see those folks, who bore the brunt of the coronavirus, come here to get vaccinated.

We are also joined by two of the most distinguished dignitaries in all of New York City. It is an honor to be here with Mr. and Mrs. Met. Thank you.

[Applause]

Talk about celebrities, and I have a special honor of introducing someone who is doing so much with his efforts to help Queens. When we first talked about helping the people of Queens, he said, yes, I'm ready, and he's providing help to small businesses that need it. When we talked about vaccination, he said, yes, I'm ready, the Mets are ready to be a part of it. He's always there for the people at Queens, and that is refreshing. There's a lot of people that own sports teams, but not every one of them helps the community they're in. So, I like to see a team owner who cares about the people of Queens. That's the way it should be. My pleasure to introduce Steve Cohen.

[Applause]

[...]

**Mayor:** Did you just coin that phrase, now? That was really good. That was very good. Yeah, I'm really impressed. You're an innovator. The Congressman had to leave, but I want you to hear from the Borough President to talk about what this means to the people at Queens to have this amazing site just for the people of Queens, so we can reach deep into communities and make sure everyone is safe. Borough President of Queens Donovan Richards.

[Applause]

[...]

**Mayor:** Thank you. A couple of words in Spanish, and then we'll take a few questions.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, let's take a few questions. Yes?

**Question:** Yes, can you tell us the exact number of doses that are being administered daily here, and if [inaudible] the state is going to be getting from the Biden administration will trickle down to New York City?

**Mayor:** Yes. Right now, I'm going to check with Mitch and Ted – 250 today. That's going to go up until next week, it'll be 4,000 a week. What we want to get to is 5,000 a day, 35,000 a week. If we get more supply, that's what we'll be able to hit with this facility on a 24/7 basis. Yes?

**Question:** Yeah, I'd like to ask you when people can really get an appointment because we have been talking to a lot of people here. They are feeling frustrated and even disrespected because they have been trying to get an appointment, and there are not any appointments available?

**Mayor:** Because we don't have enough supply to get the number of appointments we want to. I want Annabel Palma to come forward if she's – or is she maybe over there. She's over here, good, and say – you can say in both English and Spanish. But just, right now, this is a beginning. Over the next week, so it can be more and more, people need to keep signing up. Whether it's this site or any other site. There will be more vaccine each week, and we're also going to have people out here to help sign people up. But you can't just come here and get walk in. You have to have an appointment in advance. We don't want lines of people. That's not safe, but if people come here that will be navigators to help them sign up for a future appointment.

[Chief Equity Officer Annabel Palma speaks in Spanish]

**Mayor:** Okay. Hold on, hold on for everyone who shows up here, we're going to sign them up for an appointment, but people cannot – again, really important for folks to understand, this is true for Yankee Stadium too. You can't show up and walk in and get an appointment. You can get a future appointment and we'll have people starting right now and Annabel Palma will lead the effort with a group of people over here right now, in English, Spanish, whatever language they speak, to sign them up for an appointment, but we've got to get more supply from the federal government and the state government. This is the key point. New York City deserves more supply. We could be doing half a million people a week, if we had to supply. A few more. Yes?

**Question:** Mayor how much of a say do you have in how much [inaudible] expand eligibility, and do you think it was wise to expand eligibility on Monday, this coming Monday, to so many more people, including myself now, I have asthma, I can get it, when there are people here 70 years could have been struggling to get to an appointment. Do you think it was increase eligibility now?

**Mayor:** There has to be really clear verification proof that someone has a serious condition. I have asthma too, but it's not serious asthma. There's no way in the world I should be given priority, but someone who has very serious asthma is in danger right now. Someone who has heart disease is in danger right now. It's absolutely right to say, there are people who need it desperately, but we have to get proof to make sure those are the folks who really deserve it. Just a few more. Yes?

**Question:** [Inaudible]

**Mayor:** No, not at all.

**Question:** Thank you, Mayor. First off, congratulations.

**Mayor:** Thank you.

**Question:** Second, talk about – the announcement was a month ago, and now we have the opening as opposed to say, Yankee Stadium [inaudible]. What does it say the [inaudible] of state supported mega-site have been operating –

**Mayor:** It says we've got to change the approach. The City of New York, 8.5 million people, we would be the 12th largest state in the nation by population. We've got to stop this game of not

knowing how much supply we're going to have. We need a direct allotment of supply that we can depend on. Mayors all over the country saying this too. We're not getting the supply on a reliable basis. We knew we wanted this to be a supersite. We knew it would be the right thing to do to get people in Queens who have been hit so hard by this crisis. We couldn't do it because we don't control our own supply. We need to control our own supply. We need a supply we can depend on.

**Question:** So, I was speaking to a lot of people today, and obviously they were saying that they believe they could just come today [inaudible] you're saying they couldn't, and they also showed me paperwork, believing they had an appointment when it wasn't technically –

**Mayor:** Right, and we've got – this is always a challenge, and we want to try and educate people. I'm asking everyone in the media to help us. There's no such thing as walk-up and get a vaccination anywhere because we do not want long lines. We do not want people congregating together. It's really important that people make appointments. We've been saying this now for weeks and weeks. So, I understand people's deep desire to get an appointment. The best way to do it is go online or call that phone number. But if people do show up, we'll have a way to sign them up for the next available future opportunity. Okay, everyone. Thank you very much.

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