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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good morning, everybody. So, everyone I talk to, New Yorkers of all walks of life, wherever I go, everyone has the same exact feeling – we all want to know when can we get back to normal? When can we get out of this? When can we start living our lives again? I think it's amazing how much people have, in the midst of this crisis, figured out all sorts of new ways to keep going, all sorts of new ways to keep connected to their loved ones, their friends, all sorts of new ways to entertain their kids and teach their kids. You know, folks are staying connected and sort of creating a whole social life, even if it's virtual. People are doing amazing things to keep that sense of community, keep that sense of heart and soul of this city alive even through this crisis. And it is a beautiful thing. It's a horrible backdrop, none of us wants to be in this, but what's beautiful is the way New Yorkers have responded. The creativity and the warmth and the kindness and the sense of making something out of nothing – even if we don't have the things we want, still finding a way to keep going and to stay connected and to stay hopeful. So, everyone wants our freedom back. We all want our lives back. We all want to experience the things we love about this city and the question is always when, when, when – how quickly can we get there? I feel that too. I want us to get back to normal as quickly as possible and I'm going to move heaven and earth to get us there. It's my responsibility to as quickly as possible take us through those stages, but I want to remind everyone we got to go through those stages. We've got to get out of this stage of widespread transmission of this disease. We've got to get to a much better place to be able to start getting back to normal. And that means sticking with the things we're doing that are working. And I will always say thank you to all of you for what you have done, the way you've adopted shelter in place and social distancing and made it work, made it come alive in the probably the hardest place in the whole nation to do it. But you've done it and it is moving us forward. But we have to be smart about what we do next. To get back to normal, we have to be really smart and careful about how we go through those stages. We have to make sure we move steadily and carefully and don't create a boomerang effect where we go too fast and then the disease reasserts and then we set back the timeline much longer for when we can get back to normal. So, I feel what you feel. I miss it too. I want to get us there, but I want to make sure we do it safely. In the meantime, I talked yesterday about the four things we're focused on, making sure people are healthy, safe, have food on the table, have a roof over your head. That's the focus now, beating back this disease, doing it smart – smart stages until we can get there.

Now, to get there, here's the thing. Here's the truth, there is no way to get back to normal without a huge amount of testing – testing on a citywide level, something we have never had, we've never seen since the beginning of this crisis. Now, undoubtedly, we need a lot of help from the federal government to get that done. We are not just sitting back waiting because we've been

waiting a long time for that federal help that still hasn't come. We're taking matters into our own hands more and more. We finally found a way to get a large number of test kits on the open market. We finally found a way to produce our own here in New York City, which is very exciting, we're going to see how far we can take that. But we still need help from the federal government if we're really going to have the testing on the scale necessary to get us to the point where there's much, much, many fewer cases of COVID-19 where it becomes a rarity and where we can get back to normal. In the meantime, we're building out testing every day as we're finding a way to get more kits in for testing, we are building out testing every day. And what I announced earlier in the week, I want to give you some important updates on how community-based testing is going to grow over the next few days, going into next week. And this will be something you'll see more and more of, but, again, this is just a beginning compared to where we need to go, which is very widespread testing so that we can really turn the corner.

Now, to really think about what that looks like in the future, imagine that any time we needed to know if someone had this virus, at any given moment there was a test available for that person immediately when they needed it and that we could get a quick response. When someone had the corona virus and we needed to guarantee they were ready to go back to work, that we could have the test we needed exactly when we needed it and a quick response, that we could use that testing to make sure that anyone needed to be quarantined was quarantine right when they needed to be. Imagine that – how different that has been than what we've experienced, but testing everywhere all the time. That's where we have to get. But this additional community-based testing is going to help us a lot, because at least in the meantime we can focus on addressing some of the greatest needs in the city and some of these very painful disparities that have become clearer and clearer in this crisis. Now, to remind you, where did we focus initially? We didn't have enough testing, but the testing we had, what did we do with it? We focused on saving lives, testing for the folks who are most vulnerable, who are literally the patients in the hospitals that the doctors and nurses were most concerned about saving their lives and the test would tell them what they needed to know. That was job-one. Protecting those health care workers was the next thing we had to do to keep the hospitals going, to make sure they could serve us and if they needed to be home, if they needed to be quarantined, that they would be. And, of course, our first responders, keeping them healthy, keeping them safe, knowing who could be on the job, who needed to be home, who needed to be given care. That's how we set up with the limited testing we had. Now, we're focusing on the groups of people in this city who have been hardest hit by this disease and they're very, very pinpointed way. So, we're talking about folks and some of the lowest income communities in this city, people in communities of color that have borne the brunt of this crisis, immigrant communities, but very targeted to the places we've seen the biggest problems and the individuals who are suffering the most – obviously, we've said this for the beginning, folks who are older and have those preexisting conditions – those have been the folks who've been most vulnerable throughout this whole crisis, that's where we want to make sure the testing goes first.

So, last Sunday, I told you we'd be opening up these community testing sites around the city, all run through our public health system, Health + Hospitals, and directly serving those hard hit areas. So, today, the first centers open at Gotham Health in East New York, in Brooklyn, at Gotham Health at Morrisania in the Bronx, and the Vanderbilt Health Center in Staten Island. These will open today. On Monday, at the Sydenham Health Center in Harlem, in Manhattan; at the Queens Hospital Center on Monday as well – Health + Hospitals' Queens Hospital Center in

Queens. Those five locations, some opening today, some opening Monday. Now, what's the way it's going to work? This is specifically again about focusing on people with those preexisting conditions who are 65 or older and live in those particularly hard-hit areas. So, these test sites will be walk-in sites. It will be based on serving people who meet those particular criteria. And we'll get more details out today. The way for people to access that testing is to call 3-1-1, so that people going in, we know exactly who needs the test, who meets those criteria, comes from the community, we can tell them when to come in. There will be initially 2,400 tests per week across those sites, but that's going to ramp up quickly. I want to see that number double quickly. And that will depend, of course, on getting the test kits in that we expect momentarily. But once they're in, that will give us that supply. And the PPEs – and this has always been a bit of a struggle, to say the least. We're looking better for next week, but we have to make sure we have everything we need and, of course, the personnel as well. So, those are the things we need to put together, but I'm feeling more confident today than even a few days ago that those pieces are all going to come together, that's testing capacity up and running for those communities. As I said, some opening today, some opening Monday, and then we're going to ramp that number up as rapidly as possible. We want to reach everyone we can reach to keep people safe, that's the bottom line, and to particularly keep those safe who are most vulnerable.

We're going to accompany that with information and education, because the test is important, to say the least, but people need to know what to do with the results. And I want to remind all New Yorkers, if you test negative today, it does not mean you're out of the woods for good, and you still have to be very, very careful and cautious, particularly if you're one of those folks who is most vulnerable. It does not mean a negative test today is an all clear for the weeks ahead. It's not – got to still be very careful, still take those precautions. Positive test tells us something, of course, very important. And for folks who are vulnerable, that's a very tough moment when they get that positive, but it tells us immediately what we need to do to help them. It also confirms how important is for anyone who tests positive to isolate from the people in their life and in their household to the maximum extent possible. Now, some households can do that more easily than others depending on how your apartment or your home is laid out. There are a lot of people in this city who don't have a hell of a lot of choice because they're in a very, very tight circumstance in their home or their apartment. Some families doubled up, tripled up, particularly for folks who can't socially isolate at home properly, especially if they're symptomatic or even more so if they have a positive test, we want to make sure there's alternatives available. So, I announced yesterday, again, 11,000 hotel rooms coming online immediately to help folks who need to be quarantined. This is all moving quickly. So, anyone who needs that quarantine, who's in a situation where they can't properly socially distance from the people around them – again, they're symptomatic or they have a test positive – if they want to be in one of the hotel rooms, it will be provided to them for free. So, that's available now. We'll be acting on that immediately and it will fit directly with this community-based testing.

Okay, so that's one important piece. We also have to keep our focus always on our health care heroes. And they already are a priority for testing for sure, but we want to keep deepening those efforts. So, we are partnering with a private health care organization, One Medical, and with labor union 1199 SEIU that represents so many health care workers, and, together, we'll be opening five new sites beyond the ones I mentioned previously – five additional test sites, one per borough. Brooklyn and Queens will open now, Staten Island, the Bronx, and Manhattan will

be open on Monday. So, these sites will be up and running quickly. Their testing capacity will be about 3,500 per week. And again, this is one we're going to be really clear about eligibility. The frontline health care workers who are members of 1199 SEIU, will have the opportunity to go there. Essential workers, including employees of adult care facilities and employees who care for people with disabilities, this'll be sites where they can get tested. And these people do such important work, I want to say to everyone who was in those adult care facilities, everyone who's caring for people with disabilities right now, again, you are among the unsung heroes of this crisis. It has not been easy for you. You deserve praise and appreciation and you deserve the opportunity to get the protection you need and the testing you need, and this'll be part of how that happens. And then beyond that, these sites will be open to New York City residents in each borough, 65 years old or older with preexisting conditions. So, sticking to that notion of the focus on folks who are older and have preexisting conditions. So, thank you to 1199 SEIU. Thank you to One Medical for this great effort. We're happy to partner with you and that will expand capacity greatly. Anyone needs to schedule an appointment and fits those criteria, you can call 1-8-8 – I'm sorry, 1-888-ONE-MED1 – it's O-N-E-M-E-D, the number one. Or, go to onemedical.com and use the code NYCCARE30. So, between those two efforts, 10 new community-based testing sites in the places that need it most, scaling up fast. But again, this is a small beginning of where we – an example of where we really need to go, which is truly widespread testing so we can get out of this phase and move forward.

Now talking about getting out of this face, it's important to recognize it's not going to happen overnight. It's going to be a long fight. But if we get it right, we will thank ourselves. If we get it right the first time, months from now, we'll look back and say, thank God, we did that. One chance to get it right – that is what I believe is true for New York City. And this is a conversation I had with the President United States. I said, there's one chance to get the restart right. If you rush it, if you ignore the warning signs, if you minimize the dangers, you're going to end up with a boomerang effect, and that's the last thing we want to see. So, we're going to do this step-by-step, be smart about it. And we understand it's going to take awhile, we understand it won't be pleasant. No one wants to go through this, but we are going to appreciate it because we're going to get it right. We're going to appreciate it when we're down the line a few months and we actually are able to steadily move towards normal and not see that boomerang effect. And so, we've got to be smart about what to prioritize. I told you over and over, safety, health, food on the table, roof over your head – those are our core priorities. When we think about what we're going to allow and not allow, going forward, it fits those priorities exactly. So, one of the things we think about that we love – we love about this city, but doesn't fit those priorities, to be honest with you, is a lot of the special events. We look forward to them all year – the parades, the street fairs, the concerts, the festivals. It's a lot of what makes New York, New York. It's a lot of what we cherish. Literally, you know, we look forward to it 12 months a year until that day comes. We love those events, but what do we know about those events? It inherently means large numbers of people crowded together in a pretty small space. That's New York City, that's who we are, but guess what – that goes against everything that we need to do to fight back the coronavirus. So, we have to be smart. We love those things. We'll miss them when we don't have them, but they will be back. They will be back. And by knowing when it's time to temporarily let them go so we can get to a greater goal, we're going to actually look back and say that was the smart thing to do. So, right now, events in this city that had been permitted by our City government through April, those were already canceled. And we miss those already, but now it is time to be clear that non-

essential City-permitted events for may need to be canceled as well. Not happy to tell you that, but I want to tell you the honest truth. It is the smart thing to do to protect the health and safety of New Yorkers. I don't think many of you watching right now are particularly surprised by this concept, but I think it's important to say it out loud and lock it in so people know what's really going on and so, people can plan, including these people who put together these amazing events. And we really honor them, we appreciate them, they know they do something so special for New York City every single year. They deserve some certainty too. So, things like the Brooklyn Half Marathon, things like Summer Stage in Central Park, things that were going to be happening in May or starting in May, we are making clear we're not issuing any permits for the month of May, We're canceling those events. Now, I want to be clear, these kinds of permits are for special events, community events, cultural events. This does not mean permits necessary for any kind of medical site – those, of course, will continue to be approved; for hygiene stations, those will be continue to be approved; and for anything related to food, one of those four basics we're focused on – farmer's markets, meal preparation, meal delivery, any sites needed for that will, of course, be permitted. And the same goes as I said, medical sites, those field hospitals, all that, of course.

Now, June will be here soon. And again, June is when we start to really feel the summer and even want those, those big, wonderful events more. But we've got a lot we've got to get done to be safe for June. We are far from out of the woods. So, we're talking to the people organize those big June events and a lot of really, really major events in June that we cherish. But we're talking to the people who really have the most important ownership stake in those events, the folks who organize them, put them together, a lot of them, spend the whole year planning them. We're talking to them now. This is important decision to make, whether it really makes sense to have those giant gatherings – and some of them are huge in June – whether it makes sense to have them or not. We'll talk it through the organizers. I'll come back soon with an update for all of you. But this is an area, again, if we have to make particular sacrifices, I think those huge gatherings which run so much risk for the health and safety of New Yorkers, those are things we're going to have set a real high bar on whether we want to continue that in the short term, because job-one is to get out of this crisis and move us forward.

Now, I want to talk about another thing that we need to do to get us out of the worst of this crisis, and it gets back to what New Yorkers have done so well. You have been absolute heroes at social distancing at putting on those face coverings. The shelter in place, stay at home, people have been amazing. You all had to learn how to do it in a few weeks, it goes against everything we're used to, but you've done it. Now, one of the things that I've emphasized is to keep us all moving forward, we got to keep doing that and we need enforcement sometimes to make sure that everyone understands. And NYPD, FDNY, Parks Department, Sheriff's Office, Buildings Department, many, many agencies have participated. They've done a great job. Part of why they've been able to identify and act on any problem – you know, a group of people gathering on a street or in a park; there's an overcrowded subway train; there's a grocery store or a supermarket that has aligned that's not socially distanced – we've seen these problems. Part of why we've seen a fast response by enforcement agencies is that people have been calling 3-1-1, and we need that. We need those calls to 3-1-1 to target where a problem is so we can get enforcement out immediately, solve the problem, save lives, protect lives. Okay. That depends, of course, on the 3-1-1 system functioning well. And, historically, it's functioned very well. It's actually a great part of New York City, something that actually has worked for so many New

Yorkers, to have that place to turn 24/7 and get real answers and guidance. But there are problems that have emerged in the 3-1-1 system and I have been asking my team over the last weeks to do more and more quality control to check, because it seemed quite evident that we were depending on 3-1-1 more and more and we have to make sure it was working for everyone. And I want to just take this opportunity to thank everyone at 3-1-1, those folks who every day answer your questions and follow up on your needs and connect to you the right people. They are doing incredible work. I visited with them a few weeks ago. Thank you to everyone who works at 3-1-1, we need you more than ever. That is the obvious truth. But there are real questions about whether people can get through the right way, get the information they need in this crisis we're in. So, I want to thank one of our journalists on this city who's a veteran journalist – done great work for years, Juliet Papa of 1010 WINS, who raised the question to me yesterday at my press conference. And I want to say, today I'm praising a Juliet, but I want to say to all journalists out there, anytime you raise these concerns, I want to make a point to say thank you. Several journalists raised to me a similar issue – this was related to food – both what Juliet raised and some of our other colleagues raised about food delivery is not happening at Independence Plaza. That issue got addressed quickly, but I'm very appreciative that it was raised. This is, you know, the free press at its best, seeing things that need to be addressed, raising them so they can get fixed. So, Juliet, special thanks to you because you did the smart thing and you tested the 3-1-1 system yourself, and you found it was not providing the service that was needed for someone who was hungry that I said has to be the standard. A New Yorker is hungry, they need food, they call. If they're the kind of person who's vulnerable, who can't get out of the house, a senior can't get out of the house, a disabled person, they need a delivery, we need to make that delivery happen quickly, or we need to help get them connected to a local food pantry or soup kitchen who can get them food quickly. Whatever it takes, we need a system that works and works every time. So, as a result of Juliet's call, some important work was done yesterday. And I want to give a special thank you to Commissioner Jesse Tisch, who is our information technology leader in this administration. She did some great work helping to address these issues along with Deputy Mayor Laura Anglin. Thank you to both of you. So, here's the deal, 3-1-1 calls have grown exponentially during this crisis. Before – so, go back to a February – typically, 3-1-1 got something like 55,000 calls a day. The peak in April was 200,000 calls in a single day. So, to be able to address this level of demand, we're taking some immediate steps literally since yesterday morning. One, more and more we're going to prioritize for 3-1-1 that it'd be about the response to the coronavirus. There are a lot of other things that people turn to 3-1-1 for. We're going to more and more encourage people to go online and get that information, or use the 3-1-1 app. That's where we want to try and get people who have non-COVID-19 concerns more and more. But what we're doing specifically at 3-1-1 for folks who call in – and remember, a lot of folks are going to use the phone, the go-to for a lot of people will be the phone, particularly for seniors. We want – if you need food, you get an immediate response. Not be put on hold for 10 minutes, you get an immediate response. You get immediate clarity about when food will start to arrive.

So, that's going to be the standard, going forward to 3-1-1 – if you're calling about food, you go to the front of the line, you get an immediate response from a human being. We also want to make sure that things are absolutely crucial, like calling in those social distance violations, those must go to 3-1-1, or, if someone can report it online, that's even better, faster. You can go to nyc.gov. And now, you can send a photo directly. If you see a social distancing violation, take a photo, text it to 3-1-1-6-9-2. So again, just take that photo, text it to 3-1-1-6-9-2, or through the

3-1-1 app. All we need is the photo and the specific location. Just put the address down and we're good to go, and enforcement will happen right away. And then to keep 3-1-1 keeping up – to make sure, keep up with this demand, particularly the COVID-related issues, we're going to hire 120 more staff for 3-1-1 immediately. So, again, anyone who's got any concern related to the coronavirus, if you can go online to nyc.gov or use the app, that's ideal. But if you need to call 3-1-1, of course, the priority will be on 3-1-1 for coronavirus calls. The non-COVID, calls, if you do need to call through on one of us, the only way that you can communicate and you have a real concern, even if it's not related to coronavirus, please, whenever possible, try and do that later on the evening or on a weekend when it's a little slower. That would be really helpful if you can do that. So, you're going to see a much stronger a capacity at 3-1-1 immediately, because I am 100 percent clear with all of my colleagues in City government, those four basics, keeping people healthy, keeping them safe, making there's food on people's table, making sure there's a roof over their head. That's what we're doing. That's how we're going to handle this crisis. The food part we cannot miss on. If someone needs a meal, they need a meal, they need it right away. We've got to make sure that happens.

Now, I want to do the part of the report, the update each day that is in many ways the foundation of everything we'll do going forward, which is tracking our progress and what's going to help us on the pathway to getting back to normal. We have a high bar. We have a high bar here because we have to make sure we get it right. So, look at our indicators today – and the first one, again, is the daily number of people admitted to hospitals for suspected COVID-19 cases and that number went down, thankfully. Again, two-day lag in the data, so from April 14th, 386; to April 15th, 329 – that's very good. The daily number of people in ICUs across our public hospitals for suspected COVID-19, that number went down as well from 887 to 874, also moving in the right direction. Now, percentage of people tested positive for COVID-19 – citywide, the number went down from 55 percent to 46 percent. The only indicator that went in the wrong direction, and only by a little bit, was the public health lab testing – went up from 78 percent to 82 percent. Look, this was a good day – definite movement in right direction, not a perfect day yet. We want to have those really clear, positive days, good days, moving in the same direction over the course of 10 days to two weeks to start to then talk about the next steps we can take. But this is progress nonetheless. It all goes back to what all of you are doing and this is clearly a better set of indicators than what we saw over the last couple of days. So, definite progress and thanks to all of you for what you're doing.

Okay, speaking of thanks, want to thank some people who have really stepped up for us. And the, the big story here is what New Yorkers have done for each other, and the heroism of New Yorkers, and the ingenuity of New Yorkers, but we also want to thank everyone who's come forward to help us. And a lot of great examples today, helping our health care workers in particular. I want to thank Delta Airlines and Southwest Airlines that are providing free flights to get doctors and nurses and health care workers here to serve us, that we appreciate that deeply and previously have thanked United and JetBlue – really thank the airlines for stepping up to help make sure we have the health care personnel we need. To Harry's, which specializes in men's grooming, I want to thank them, because we all know so many of our medical personnel barely have had any time to take care of themselves in the middle of this fight. Harry's has donated a \$500,000 worth of razors and lotions to Health + Hospitals health care workers. Thank you, very much appreciate it. Target just gave \$50,000 to our fund for public health – thank you.

Peloton – 90,000 N95 masks – this is fantastic. This is really one of the personal protective equipment that we need the most. So, the N95 masks, particularly appreciate it. Thank you to Peloton. Americares has sent us 300,000 pieces of PPE equipment. That includes masks, gloves, eyewear, very, very much appreciate it. Thank you, Americares. Now focusing on our students, our young people, In Motion Entertainment, donating 6,400 pairs of headphones to students in homeless shelters and temporary housing to help them really do well with remote learning. That's very much appreciate. And now many, many good examples today.

Here's the biggest, and this one's really fantastic, I want to thank the Open Society Foundations. They are working literally all over the world to address COVID-19 and I want to really appreciate the Open Society Foundations. They're so often looking to how to help people where, you know, they're not getting the help they deserve and need and they're oftentimes there even before governments are there and protecting people and uplifting people that others don't, so I'm so appreciative. \$35 million flowing through the City of New York to help people in need. \$20 million for the Immigrant Emergency Relief Fund and that will work through our Mayor's Fund. That is to help immigrants who are bearing the brunt of this crisis in so many ways. And that includes those immigrants who will not be getting any of that federal relief, and we have to be clear, there are neighbors, that are follow New Yorkers, they're part of our communities, but they are not being included in a lot of those important relief programs. I am so thankful for those relief programs to help everyday working people. We need them. But there's a lot of people who are working people that happen to be undocumented, who've been left out. This money will help them to have the basics for their families and keep going through this. And \$15 million for our Fund for Public Schools for online learning, and to help provide support and care for the children of essential workers. That's fantastic. That's going to help us a lot.

A deep and profound thanks to George Soros for his kindness and generosity and everyone at the Open Society Foundations who made this happen and a special thank you to a dear friend of mine, Patrick Gaspard who runs the Open Society Foundations. Patrick used to work right here in this building. We worked here together during the administration of Mayor Dinkins and loves the city he grew up in deeply and has really come through for us. So to my old friend Patrick Gaspard, thank you brother. This is tremendously helpful and it's going to help so many New Yorkers.

So that shows you that a lot of people are stepping up, and that shows you that people see New Yorkers fighting back. They see New Yorkers helping each other. They see the amazing heroic health care workers, first responders. We see the world stirred by what New Yorkers are doing and the fact that folks are coming to the rescue in so many ways is because they see what New Yorkers are doing and they're moved by it. They're inspired by it. They're touched by it. We need our leaders in Washington to feel that same feeling. They're the missing piece here. Look, the federal government has been the elephant in the room in this entire crisis. We needed the testing. It wasn't there. We still need it. It's still not here, but the federal government has a chance to get it right and they could get it right literally today.

So I'm appealing directly to President Trump and to Senate Leader McConnell, here's a chance to do something heroic. Here's a chance to be as good as New Yorkers, and particularly in the case of President Trump, here's a chance to step up for your hometown. Look, all of you like to praise

our health care workers and our first responders, all the leaders in Washington, but President Trump, Leader McConnell, don't just praise our health care workers, don't just praise our first responders, actually help them. There is right now an opportunity, negotiations happening right now in Washington on what's being called Stimulus 3.5. With literally the stroke of a pen, you could ensure that our health care workers, our first responders, all the public servants of the city have the security of knowing that their work can continue. That New York City will be able to provide the basic services necessary to help us out of this crisis and to help us towards recovery. Anyone who wants to see a recovery, anyone who wants to see the economy restart needs to understand that the American economy does not restart without the nation's largest city, without the economic center of this country. This is one of the great economic engines of America right here.

So morally, Mr. President, morally Mr. Leaders, you should want to make sure that that Stimulus 3.5 includes the money to make New York City whole, New York State whole, all cities and states hold that have lost billions upon billions of dollars in revenue and will never get it back and won't be able to fund basic services without it. You should want to do it because it's the right thing to do, but if you need a pragmatic reason, you will not be able to restart your economy, our economy, unless you get this right. This could happen today, literally today. So look, I've asked and I've asked nicely. Mr. President, your hometown needs you. Leader McConnell, your nation needs you. Let's get this right, right now. Everyone knows right now you two could get it done. And Mr. President, I dare say if you were to say out loud, we need to Stimulus 3.5 and we need to make sure that all cities and states are made whole, that are lost revenues replaced by the federal government. If you said it out loud, I guarantee you the Republican Senate would go along, so it's time to say it out loud.

With that everyone, let me turn to a few words in Spanish before we turn to questions from our colleagues in the media.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

Okay, we will now turn to media questions and please let me know the name and the outlet of each journalist.

Moderator: We'll now begin our Q and A. As a reminder, we have Dr. Barbot and Dr. Katz also available answer questions.

Mayor: Speak up a little more.

Moderator: The first question, we'll go to Andrew from NBC.

Question: Hi Mayor, can you hear me?

Mayor: Yes. Andrew, how are you doing?

Question: Good, thanks. I hope you're doing well. A question is about the June events and the discussion you're now having with the organizers. Based on what you said yesterday, which is

that you cannot envision a scenario where the beaches could be open this summer with groups of people. What is the discussion even about with these June organizers? Is there any scenario, for example, where the Pride Parade takes place?

Mayor: It's a great question, Andrew. Look, and again, I'm the first to say – it's important to frame this – none of us knows yet the future of what's going to happen with the coronavirus because Lord knows the coronavirus has thrown us a curve ball more than once and there's still no one on Earth or fully understands this disease. What I said about the beaches was we can't give you a plan to open the beaches because we don't know what's going to happen going forward. I would love it if we had sustained good news and progress and we could drive down those cases to such a small number that then the day could come where we could open the beaches. That would be amazing. But I'm trying to be honest with New Yorkers that I can't see that yet because we don't have the facts to back it up. As you just saw, we did the indicators for today, they were better but they're still not even beginning to be what we need them to be.

So when it comes to the events, again, we're doing them step by step. It's – now we're in the second half of April, there's time to make sense of things. But I think your underlying point is fair. Can I envision as early as June mass gatherings like some of these huge events, they're beautiful events, but they're really mass gatherings. Hundreds of thousands of people, in some cases more than a million. I can't see it. But I want to talk to event organizers. I want my team to talk to them. I want to see what they're feeling. Look, I suspect a lot of them, from what I've heard so far, they don't feel confident that they can do the events properly. They don't feel confident that they could keep them safe.

So I want to hear what they want to do and I suspect some of them are going to say, hey, we're just not – we just don't feel good about it and we would prefer to have certainty, but we want to have that conversation because these again are truly huge important events. We'll do that quickly and we'll have the announcement quickly because we want to give people a clear picture going forward. But I think this is the thinking we're going to have to do from this point on is what kind of decisions do we have to make when to stay ahead of things, but to always focus on this number one truth, we got to get it right. We got one chance. We cannot allow the disease to boomerang back. So I don't see it for June, but we're going to have the conversation carefully and then have an announcement real soon.

Moderator: The next question is, Juliet from 1010 WINS.

Question: Yeah. Hi. Good morning, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Good morning, Juliet.

Question: Yes. And thank you for your very kind words and your response. You know, we're all out here trying to help. I followed up, as you asked, and I have a two-part question. I made the second call this morning to 3-1-1 and this is after WINS received many emails and tweets regarding, you know, various problems with the food distribution system. So I am glad that is being addressed as you said. So the call went much better today. I was directed to a food specialist who could register me, provide an interpreter, and directed me to food pantry locations,

all well done and all I was – I was on hold for like a minute. We did have some emails yesterday involving language barrier, however. A Mexican family in the South Bronx had a language issue trying to get through on 3-1-1 and another pointed out that the Arthur Cunningham School in Brooklyn is listed as a free meal location, but that it's stores were closed and that there was no personnel there April 6th and April 8th. So I guess I'm asking how will you be addressing that? What's online in coordination with what's out there on the street?

Mayor: Juliet, I give you points for persistence. I'm very much appreciative because this is exactly what helps us, honestly. We – I keep telling everyone on my team and they're all working through this crisis, you know, literally every day, 12, 14, 15 hours a day, nonstop since the beginning. So people are doing their damndest. But I keep saying quality control, a thing from the perspective of everyday New Yorkers trying to get access to this. So I again appreciate what you're doing to make sure that things are really what they're supposed to be. And I'm the first to say in a crisis, you know, it's understandable sometimes things are not what they're supposed to be because just there's so much going on, some signals get missed, but that's not acceptable to me. I understand it, but it doesn't make it any better. So the school you mentioned, we're going to follow up on that immediately. That's unacceptable entirely because we need people to go to those free meal locations and have total confidence that the meals will be there when they're supposed to be. If not, I have family who go hungry. That's unacceptable. So we'll follow up on this immediately to understand what happened to that location and fix it.

The translation is supposed to be available instantaneously. So again, that's another issue we'll address. If that isn't, there's something profoundly wrong because that's an – way before the crisis that was supposed to be available for anyone and everyone who asked for it or obviously needs it. We'll fix that immediately. That should be easy to fix. But I'm glad you are only on hold for a minute. I don't even want you to be on hold for a minute, is the truth. I'm going to keep pushing people that sometimes I get it, if just a whole lot of people called in simultaneously, you know, just dumb luck. I get it. Sometimes someone might have to be on hold even for a very, very brief period of time. But my goal is to not even have that and I'll tell you why, Juliet. Because I'm particularly concerned about a senior or someone vulnerable who is feeling worried, who's anxious, who doesn't literally know where their meals are going to be coming from and many of whom are not going to be confident when they're making that call. I wish they would assume that everyone's going to care and be there for them. But a lot of people, you know, understandably feel a little hopeless or feel like they're not being seen and heard. I don't want anyone to ever feel that.

So if someone calls, I want them to know immediately they're getting help. So I'm glad you had a better experience today. I want to make it better than that, even. But we will follow up for sure on these particular missteps and get them fixed. And again, thank you to you and to all your colleagues in the media. I will always endeavor in this crisis to say thank you, when you point out these things to us because I'm telling everyone we need quality control and I know people are trying to do it, but we're going to need even more and you guys are helping us to do that. So anytime you helped me do this work better, I will make sure to thank you.

Moderator: Next is Henry from Bloomberg.

Question: Hello, Mr. Mayor. My question has to do with the focus on low-income neighborhoods for testing. I'm interested, first of all, how soon the test results will come. But mainly, I'm trying to figure out what's the rationale for focusing on a few neighborhoods other than to demonstrate that your administration cares about them. Now I don't see you yourself, said you test negative one day, you can test positive the next day, and we're a city in which, as you know, is a mosaic in which people are traveling around the entire city. So I'm not sure I understand exactly why a resident of the Upper East Side or Upper West Side or Dumbo isn't as important to the city in terms of testing as these neighborhoods.

Mayor: Now, Henry, respectfully, I know it's an honest question. I appreciate that you often ask very thoughtful questions. But this one I'm just going to contest. It's not about whether people are important. Now, everyone's important. Every New Yorker we're here to serve and everything we're doing is for 8.6 million people. This is about sharp, clear disparities that are becoming clearer all the time, that align immediately to things that we know that are facts. We know more and more, not only what general kinds of communities are bearing the brunt, but specific neighborhoods that are bearing the brunt. We know the kind of people, the kinds of individuals who are most vulnerable are folks who are older, have preexisting conditions, and in so many of those neighborhoods, lower incomes, less access to health care for a long time, particularly vulnerable people. That's what we've been seeing with all the data that's coming out. By getting to people quickly, as often as we can with the limited testing we have now, but again, something I expect to grow greatly over time, we're going to be able to protect people.

If someone is infected, we have a greater chance of protecting them if we know that. If they're not, that's good news, but we're going to keep educating people to never get overconfident about it. It is not perfect. Perfect would have been 100 percent widespread testing from day one, but it will help in a targeted fashion. And what we're talking about here, 6,000 tests a week to begin between the two initiatives, that's going to ramp up greatly. If you're one of those 6,000 individuals who's vulnerable and you're getting the testing, it's very important to you and we're going to keep getting it to more and more people over time. So no, it is not a statement of anything but focusing on the people whose lives are in greatest danger. And that's what we'll continue to do

Moderator: Next, we have Anna from the Daily News.

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor. I wanted to see if you had any response to some Council legislation that Corey Johnson is introducing next week that would require the city to close streets to cars. They say up to 75 miles is the goal. I wanted to see if that's something that you would be willing to work with them on and if you could talk about it in context of a lot of the stuff happening in summer that is going to be canceled or potentially canceled like pool hours and beaches. So maybe streets would be an alternative for kids to just get some air.

Mayor: Yeah. Anna, I'm always, always ready to talk with the Council, with Speaker Johnson and the Council about any idea they have. Over these last years there's been a real partnership and a lot of good work together and we've always been able to resolve issues positively.

On this particular issue, the important point for me is safety - health. That's what it comes down to. The safety issue, the health issue. Whatever we do isn't helping us to turn the corner on this crisis. Is it keeping New Yorkers safe? The proposal – I haven't seen the details. I'll look forward to seeing the details, but the proposal I think builds on some of the notions we've seen in other parts of the country. But again, and we talked about Oakland the other day, very, very different realities and plans that would not work here, if adopted the way they were in other places.

So I want to make sure that anything we do with our streets keeps in mind the following, that we do not put any New Yorkers in danger, we do not create a situation where people think they can walk in the middle of the street, but in fact there's still vehicles there. We do not create a situation where emergency vehicles and crucial deliveries can't get through. We do not create a situation where we need to use enforcement personnel we still don't have enough of drawing them off of other things that are crucial. These are my concerns. This – you know, we're going to look at how everything evolves – maybe the situation opens up over time and we have other options. So I'm going to hold a high bar for that. But we look forward to a real conversation with the Council.

Moderator: Next is Marcia from CBS.

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

Mayor: Good, Marcia, how are you?

Question: Good. I actually have a follow-up question about summer. I'm wondering, you know, given the fact that we often have a lot of hot days, heat-waves, hundred degree days in New York City, I wonder if you're working on a plan or you're going to work on a plan to what you will do in terms of, you know, opening up streets, opening up parks, allowing cooling centers to open because people have no – right now there's no pools, there's no beaches. You've canceled a lot of public events. People are going to want to leave their hot apartments. What will they do? Will you need to have the NYPD do special enforcement? And also if somebody were to give you \$12 million to open the pools, like a private donor, would you accept that as a possible solution? Especially in these hot days when you know probably tempers are going to flare, people are want are going to want to go out and get out of their hot apartments. What's the city going to do?

Mayor: Excellent questions. So, okay, thank God it is April 17th. So we have some time to plan, but this is exactly the kind of thing we're going to be going into planning mode on now. Your first question, absolutely crucial. While we're dealing with one crisis, one problem, we can't take our eye off of other problems. So today we're not dealing with heat waves, but we sure did last summer, so we should be ready. You know, when you think about June, July, August, that's when we have to be ready for and I think you're exactly right. If we don't have some of the options we're used to having four providing cooling, what do you do? And I think what will be important in the discussion with our health care leadership is how do you balance the factors. If we're at that point where we still need to practice social distancing, you could in principle have a cooling center, for example where folks could go to get cool but with clear social distancing rules.

Now the pools are hard and this is something we're grappling with. We did not put the pools in the budget at this point because of everything. Because we have taken a huge hit on revenue and we just don't have the money to spend. But also because if there's something that defines people getting together in a small space, it's, you know, lots and lots of – I've been to the pools in summer. Last summer I visited a number of the public pools. I mean it's a huge number of people crammed together, there's locker rooms, there's lines, it's everything you don't want if you're trying to still use a strategy of shelter in place and social distancing. So the pools didn't make sense for a variety of reasons.

It's not just if a donor came along, we would be very grateful for anyone who wanted to help us out, but the pools until we are in a much better situation, health and safety wise with this disease, the pools present immediate challenges. But I think your bigger point is an excellent one. We have to have a plan to prepare for the potential of a hot summer and make sure we can keep people safe in that vein. We will, we will for sure. And we'll publish it when we have it, but it will be a different kind of plan than what we've had in the past.

Moderator: Next, we have Julia from the Post.

Question: Hey Mr. Mayor. Good morning. I'm wondering if you can tell us where do you see the city coming in on the reopening scale for President Trump's plan? You know, he listed June, July, August, September. Where are we at? And then I just wondered if you could respond to former Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe who said that if you close pools, city kids, largely minority kids who don't know how to swim, are going to get relief in the city, rivers and, park ponds and lakes and drown.

Mayor: Yeah. I just fundamentally disagree with him. We've seen already, New Yorkers of all ages adapt to this really, really tough crisis and we have to protect people and we cannot set up a situation where we gather large numbers of people together and then exacerbate the coronavirus crisis again. We're going to make sure that whatever we face up ahead, there's going to be a lot of enforcement out there, a lot to protect people. But no, we do not see, and we've never seen our young people swimming in city rivers in large numbers that just, I don't buy that. I think it's right to say whatever we do, we have to be careful. Yes, we need enforcement. Yes, but no, no, you cannot say, let's do something that's going to exacerbate the coronavirus crisis and put people's health and safety in danger because we fear some other outcome. No, let's do the smart thing and then make the adjustments we need to, to keep people safe. That's to that point.

To the point about where we are on the spectrum, we're obviously different from any other places. Julia. We have to be smart and careful. We have borne the brunt. We've been the epicenter. We're the most densely populated city in the country. We have special challenges here. We're going to be careful. We're going to be smart. So I think, you know, the plans that have been put forward so far are very broad, obviously. It's clear that we're going to take this slowly and carefully and we need our indicators. One of the things we have, which I actually think predated some of what the President's put forward is we put out very clear indicators that we've said have to move in the same direction for 10 days to two weeks to even begin to start trying to relax some of the standards and then to do that to see if it's working. [inaudible] keep watching those indicators. It has to keep working. So no, I think we're going to slow and careful. Other

places may feel that can forge ahead and they better be right if they do that, they better make sure they know what they're doing and they're doing it right and they better be watching their indicators carefully. We're going to make sure we prove that we're getting out of the woods before we take some of those steps.

Moderator: Last question for today goes to Katie from the Wall Street Journal.

Mayor: Hey, Mr. Mayor and everyone on the call. I wanted to ask – it's a two-parter. I'll be quick though. The first is the city's Health + Hospitals announced today that 26 of their employees working in city hospitals died but they haven't released where they were working or who they were. And I'm curious why there is this sort of lack of information being shared, and the second is and it's bouncing off Julia's question, do you really think that you can responsibly say that people won't go in the ocean when it's 95 degrees if there's no lifeguards, they go in unguarded beaches even when there isn't a global pandemic. So do you have a plan to expedite this plan? You will you expedite the release of this plan because you have a lot of worried people about what's going to happen at the city's beaches this summer? Thank you.

Mayor: Yeah. So wait, Katie, on the second part, I'm going to speak to that about the first part again. I'm sorry I was distracted for a moment on, did you have that or do you want to just to repeat it.

Question: Oh, which one do you need me to repeat? I'm sorry.

Mayor: First part of your question.

Question: First. Is Health + Hospitals, 26 employees. It was announced that they died. They won't release where they work or who they were. I want to know why this data isn't being released. And the second is safety.

Mayor: Thank you. Look, again in the middle of a crisis, the first thing has been saving lives and you know, making sure we were doing all we could to protect people. And I remind you as recently as Sunday, April 5th, we expected it to be going into a huge upsurge and that's where all energy was going to make sure the hospital beds, the equipment, the doctors and nurses were ready. In the last days we've had a chance to have a little bit of a relief and do more work on things like giving updates about specific things that happen and where they've happened. And that's important. So yes, I agree with you. We need to keep getting out more and more information. I'll talk to Health + Hospitals and certainly let them know it's important to put out the details. We'll do that.

The question of the beach, that I want to separate the point that was made about the rivers versus the beaches. My point was we have not seen over the years – I've been watching for a long time, we have not seen large numbers of city kids swimming in our rivers in generations. So that was my point. I do not believe that is going to happen. If we saw anything like that, we would create the enforcement to deal with it. I think your point about beaches is a very different point. I understand that there'll be a temptation and we have to guard against it and that's going to be a lot of enforcement. The beaches are there, but they are a finite area. We can put out a lot of enforcement to protect against it. But again, when you think about not doing something that

makes the crisis worse, this is the bottom line. The pools don't, I don't even think I have to lay it out to people. I think people are smart. Lines of people to go into the pool, then they go into the locker room and the pool, which is a small area. Then they go into the pool, which is a small area. You could attempt to do that with social distancing. Good luck to you. I think you'd have a very, very tough experience and we don't have the money for it. The beaches are big open spaces. That's true, but big open spaces historically where a huge number of people gather and we are not in a position to do that yet. I'm now simply making sure the opposite problem doesn't happen, that people go there of their own volition and they're hot and they want to go in the water and it becomes dangerous – we have to guard against that. We will have a plan to guard against that and we will have a plan to deal with heat waves, but we're not going to exacerbate the crisis before us because this is what's killing people right now. This is what's putting people in danger right now and if we don't turn the corner, we'll be in this state for a long time. So I'm not going to, you know, say yes to something that I think will make the situation worse, but we will protect people. If we have to come up with new ways to do it, of course, we will.

Anymore?

Moderator: We have time for one more. Jeff Mays from the New York Times.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor. I wanted to ask you about some of the budget cuts. There's been some concern about how the cuts affect young people specifically lower-income young people and you've already been asked some of these questions about the pools and some of the other programs, but do you have any sort of plan to mitigate that specifically for young people or lower-income young people – the impact of some of these programs not being available that summer?

Mayor: Yeah, Jeff, what we are working on now is, you know, different scenarios. We just could not both because of the financial crisis we're in, but also just because it was so unclear what would be possible this summer. We couldn't move ahead spending a lot of money when we're still at a point where literally no one's supposed to be traveling around who's non-essential. No one's supposed to be gathering. It just didn't make sense. We're going to have ready a variety of options. Department of Education's working on this right now. If we're in a very tough situation like we're in now, what would we do to continue distance learning and to do things to engage young people from home over the summer? If the situation improves, what are our options? That's being planned out right now. But the traditional summer programming was just, it was not possible to approve it in this atmosphere.

Again, I think our path out of this crisis will take time. So we'll do everything we can possibly do online and giving kids options they can use from their home. And then if we see, you know, a real break in the clouds, if we see real sustained progress, actual indicators that are factual, telling us we can start to turn the corner, then we'll do that carefully, slowly. We'll keep watching those indicators. That might open up the possibility of doing some things differently. Even as I said with the beaches, I'm saying right now we're not going to be in a position to open them next month when they would normally open. Let's imagine a scenario where we had absolute proof that we had turned the corner where there's very few cases anymore, there's strong containment. That's a scenario where you could talk again about opening beaches and other activities for

young people. So we'll have different scenarios ready. But the physical ones, the ones where people gathered together in large numbers, those just can't be approved until we see constant progress. We'll have plan A and plan B ready for sure.

Okay. Everyone. Thank you. And just, you know, remembering that we know that what we've been doing is helping us towards that day. We want to get back to normal. Stick to the plan, cause it's working. We're working every day to get that testing we need. Again, we need the federal government to come forward, especially with that stimulus support, that's going to be absolutely crucial to getting back to normal. Think of it this way, New Yorkers, every one of you are doing what you're supposed to do. Our health care workers are doing what they're supposed to do. Our first responders are doing what they're supposed to do. So many people are stepping up. Washington needs to step up, make us whole financially so we can survive so we can provide basic services. Help us, help ourselves with testing, and that's the pathway to getting back to normal. Won't be easy, but we will get there together.

Thank you.

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