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**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO SIGNS NEW LAW LOWERING NEW YORK CITY'S
DEFAULT SPEED LIMIT TO 25 MPH**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good morning, everyone. We are here today to make good on a commitment to save lives in this city. We'll sign legislation to lower the default citywide speed limit to 25 miles per hour. Starting November 7 – this November 7, 2014 – the speed limit throughout New York City will be 25 miles per hour unless otherwise noticed by a sign. Unless there is a sign specifically saying otherwise, from November 7 on, 25 miles per hour will be the speed limit in New York City.

It's a key component of our Vision Zero plan to end traffic-related death and injuries. Now we've talked a lot about Vision Zero over the last ten months. It is a centerpiece of the work of this administration. It is a crucial part of our efforts to keep the people of this city safe. And we strongly believe that death and injury from vehicle crashes is not only unacceptable, it is avoidable – that is the core notion of Vision Zero and that's what we're proceeding to act upon.

There are a number of people I'd like to mention, but the person I'd like to most mention today is Teresa Pedroza, who is the grandmother of Deshane Santana. The reason we're here at this site is that Deshane was – in January 2012 – crossing Delancey Street – was going about her business crossing this busy street. She was struck while walking home from school and we lost her that day – 12-year-old girl with a bright future, lost because we didn't, at that time, have the kind of restrictions in place we needed.

You know, I just crossed Delancey Street and a couple of young ladies from the neighborhood were crossing at the same time, and they said to me, look how quickly you have to cross the street just to get across safely – because it's such a long street and the lights only give you so much time. We have to do a lot of work to fix conditions like this all over the city – and that is the core concept of Vision Zero – to systematically address each and every one of these challenges. And we believe that the more we do that, the more that young ladies like Dejanay – and people of all ages – will be saved. We believe it can be done. But it begins with reducing speeding, because in so many of these situations where we've lost people, speeding was the core cause.

Before I go on, I'd like to mention some of the people who are here today in support of this initiative. I want to thank them all. I want to thank the chair of the Taxi and Limousine Commission, Meera Joshi, for the fantastic work she's doing on safety. I want to thank elected officials who have been supporting our efforts. You know, this has been an effort that required a lot of help in Albany as well as here at the city level, so I want to thank State Senators Brad Hoylman, Martin Dilan, and Daniel Squadron. I want to thank our colleagues from the City Council – Vanessa Gibson, Margaret Chin, whose district we have the honor of being in; Andy King, and Ydanis Rodriguez for all of their support.

And the numbers are striking – last year in New York City, 291 traffic fatalities – 291. That's almost as many people lost to traffic fatalities as were lost to murder last year in New York City. Approximately 4,000 people injured last year in traffic incidents. Being struck by a vehicle is the second leading cause of injury-related death

for seniors and is the leading cause for children under 14. So it's unconscionable to let this status quo continue. We knew we had to act. We are acting more intensely with each passing month to address this problem.

There are families with us today – and they've been with us every step along the way. I talk about them every time because they suffered an unimaginable loss. They continue to feel pain, but they have turned that pain into action. Their willingness to tell their stories, to go all over this city and state to educate lawmakers, to create urgency, is part of why we are standing here today. And their efforts have paid off for so many New Yorkers who will be saved. We'll never know the names of the ones who were saved because of the changes that these families helped to achieve, but it is an extraordinary tribute to their loved ones who were lost that they have helped to save other people's lives.

Already this year, we've seen evidence where the Department of Transportation has already made major engineering changes – we've seen this over the last few years. Where they've made these changes, fatalities are down substantially. And as of last Thursday, citywide pedestrian fatalities were down over 20 percent from the same point last year – overall fatalities – traffic-related fatalities – down nearly 7 percent from the same point last year. Vision Zero has just begun, but look at that progress – pedestrian fatalities down over 20 percent from just a year ago, with just the measures that have been instituted so far – and many more to come. Of course, it's not enough until every measure is put in place, but as I said before, data shows time and time again – speed is the core culprit. And when we get drivers down to 25 miles an hour or below, we greatly increase the chance of anyone surviving a crash. When drivers are driving below 25 miles an hour, it gives them much more time to avoid crashes, gives drivers and pedestrians more time to see each other, greatly intensifies the opportunity to save lives.

And here is a fact that is quite striking – pedestrians struck by cars traveling 25 miles per hour are half as likely to die as those struck at 30 miles per hour. So it's very important that we understand – this change in just 5 miles per hour makes a fundamental difference in people's lives. Now, lowering the speed limit – again – central to the Vision Zero plan, but not the only component by any stretch of the imagination. We're committed to reengineer and redesign 50 intersections and corridors over the course of this year and each year. We're stepping up enforcement against dangerous moving violations like speeding and failure to yield to pedestrians. There are new slow zones and speed bumps. There is a huge public outreach campaign – you'll hear from some of my colleagues about how that's being done, and even – as Chief Chan just pointed out to me – even how NYPD vehicles are part of spreading that message, and this legislation to increase penalties for dangerous drivers. So all of these different pieces will come together to build the Vision Zero plan.

But in the end, Vision Zero is not just about the technical changes we make or the legal changes we make – it's about changing behavior. It's about changing the way we think and how we act towards each other. People get behind the wheel, they take other people's lives into their own hands. We want to help everyone who drives to understand their responsibilities. We want all bicyclists, all pedestrians to understand their responsibilities as well.

We all have our lives in each other's hands. Vision Zero is about helping people understand we can do something about this challenge.

We've shown, in terms of fighting crime, we've made New York City the safest big city in the world. We're going to deepen that work when it comes to traffic as well. We're going to make it the safest big city in the world in terms of traffic too, because that's what we need to do to protect our people.

Just a few words in Spanish.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, I'd like to introduce someone who's really been one of the great architects of the creation of the Vision Zero plan here in New York City. She has done extraordinary work. Her agency is at the frontline of helping to be safer every day. Our commissioner of transportation, Polly Trottenberg.

[Applause]

Commissioner Polly Trottenberg, Department of Transportation: Good morning. Thank you so much, Mayor de Blasio, for your leadership and commitment to Vision Zero. It is so important to be DOT and our sister agencies as we implement the new citywide 25 mile an hour speed limit. I also want to thank Speaker Silver and the leadership in Albany, Speaker Mark-Viverito, Chairman Rodriguez, Councilmember Greenfield and all the council members, and the families and advocates who are with us here today.

50 years ago, on October 1st 1964, the 30 mile an hour default speed limit took effect throughout New York state. Earlier in the year, the New York state legislature had actually raised the statewide speed limit from 25 to 30, over the objections of the man who was my predecessor 50 years ago, Traffic Commissioner Henry Barnes. So, for 50 years here in New York we have endured excessive speeding on our dense, residential streets. With this history in mind, it is so nice to be here today having a chance to right this historical wrong and lower the speed limit back to 25 miles an hour.

And as the Mayor said this is an important moment we're taking today, to remind everyone – this will go into effect on November 7. To get the word out, DOT is running a public awareness campaign, 25 days to 25 miles an hour, in the five boroughs. We will be installing new gateway signs at the entrances to the city and off of major highways and bridges. We will also be installing or replacing 3,000 signs at limited access highway exits, material flow zones, and other corridors where there are high crash rates.

Next, we're also going to have a citywide 25 miles per hour public awareness day on Thursday, when DOT and the NYPD will work together to distribute literature to thousands of motorists. In addition, as you're driving around the city, hopefully you're already hearing about the new speed limit on the radio, on variable message boards, and we're partnering with some important groups, like Triple A, Transportation Alternatives, Geico, and Edison Parking, to help get the word out. We're also going to work with the NYPD as we put signs around the city to make sure we're putting them in places where they can be most effective for enforcement.

And lastly, we're in the midst of a social media campaign. Each day we're highlighting a different New Yorker and how this law change will affect them. Today, actually we're highlighting our Council Chairman Ydanis Rodriguez, who's been such a great leader in supporting this legislation, both up in Albany, and here at the City Council.

Finally, just as the mayor said, I too want thank the families and advocates. Their passion and the commitment that they have brought to getting us to this day, where we been able to lower the speed limit, has been just inspiring for all of us. I want to thank them and the mayor, for their leadership.

Mayor: Thank you, Polly.

[Applause]

You know, even before I named Bill Bratton police commissioner, he was speaking out on the fact that the NYPD needed to focus on traffic fatalities and make that central to the fight for public safety. He has brought tremendous energy and vigor to that effort as he named someone to lead these efforts who has really been a forceful leader. Chief Tom Chan has taken the Vision Zero concept and made it real throughout the NYPD. He has been all over this city, spreading the word about the different approach we have to take, but also making sure that the enforcement is there. And I know New Yorkers have seen and appreciate the fact that things that

used to be ignored now are acted upon in a very energetic manner. And we have Chief Chan to thank for that. I would like to bring forward Chief Chan.

[Applause]

Chief Thomas Chan, NYPD: Good morning. I'll like to thank Mayor de Blasio, council speaker, Council Members Rodriguez and Gibson, and the many legislators and elected officials for their support – Commissioner Trottenberg, Commissioner Joshi, and their respective staff – who have been invaluable, and I'd like to thank them as well. The 25 mile an hour speed limit will save lives. We thank the members of Families for Safe Streets for their dedication and their commitment.

As the safest big city in the nation and the world, it's time to extend the safety to our city roadways. Speed is a leading factor in traffic fatalities across our city. Adhering to the speed limit will decrease the probability and the severity of injuries and damages to your vehicle. The New York City Police Department will endeavor to work on education and outreach with our partners in the Department of Transportation and the TLC. Working with our partners and our vision coordinators in each of the 77 precincts, we will utilize the police officers, the community affairs, auxiliary officers to engage the motoring public and to distribute fliers to our motoring public. The commands will reach out to both precinct community councils, civic organizations to get the message out.

Through our public information office, social media outlets, the Department of Vehicle website, we will promote the message of the 25 mile speed limit. The Community Affairs Bureau will send out an email blast to its 51,000 contacts. Our school safety division – alone and working with the Department of Education – will generate take home messages to all our students. Portable variable message signs will be deployed along with the Department of Transportation throughout the city to get the message out to our motorists.

Behind us is the Vision Zero van. That vehicle has audio and vehicle BMF capability and they'll also get the message out to our motorists at the – that there is a 25 mile an hour speed limit. Currently, the New York City Police Department has 2,600 vehicles with BMF capability and that speed limit will be added to their signage, also. Our enforcement – we will be working very closely with the Department of Transportation, with their speed cameras. Our officers will be out there, and they are prepared on November 7th to do the enforcement. We will be looking at the motorists. we will not be targeting that individual going at 20- –one mile over the speed limit – 26 miles, 27, but we definitely will be out there and certainly that – we hope that we don't have to issue the summonses, but again, the officers, the NYPD will be prepared to enforce the new speed limit. Thank you.

[Applause]

Mayor: Thank you very much. You know, a few weeks after we started the Vision Zero effort, one of my colleagues from the city government was in a cab on the Upper West Side, and the cab got pulled over by a police officer. And she said that she was very struck by the fact that the officer took the time to explain to the cab driver not only what he had done wrong – he had failed to yield to pedestrians – but why it was important to the safety of the city. And that police officer played a role educating that cab driver about why we had to think a different way. So, I want to commend Chief Chan, because again, it's enforcement and education, and under his leadership, NYPD is playing a crucial role in both.

Now, in terms of the speed limit – again, as so many of you know, this is something where we needed help from Albany, and lives were on the line. Had we not been able to achieve this victory this year in Albany, we would have gone another year without one of the tools we needed. Luckily, when we turned to Albany – when we said, we have to keep our people safe, we need this change in the speed limit – we had Speaker Shelly Silver on our side. He represents the district that we're in here. He understands the needs of people on the ground. He was quick to take up this challenge and make it happen. I've worked with Speaker Silver for a long time, and I can

tell you that we've been able to achieve great things – whether it's Vision Zero, whether it's pre-k, whether it's afterschool – time and time again, the city of New York has turned to Speaker Silver, and he has delivered for us, and helped make this a better city. And I am eternally grateful for his support, and for helping us to achieve this new speed limit – New York State Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver.

[...]

[Commotion]

[Mayor de Blasio signs legislation]

Mayor: Okay, we're going to take questions from the media first on this topic, then we'll take questions on other topics. Anyone who wants to stay is welcome to. Again, we're going to start with this topic. Sally.

Question: [inaudible]

Mayor: The penalties for going over the speed limit – let's get that from Chief Chan and Polly Trottenberg. Want to come forward? Polly, you want to start?

Commissioner Trottenberg: And I think we need Chief Chan too. If you're – if you're caught with automated enforcement, like a speed camera, it's 50 dollars, and I think the chief can speak if it's an officer.

Chief Chan: Our officers will be monitoring the speed limit out there, but the actual fines will be adjudicated when they get to traffic court in reference to the speed summonses.

Question: [inaudible]

Mayor: Louder, louder.

Question: [inaudible]

Chief Chan: Again, this is going to be [inaudible] discretion – in other words, the speed limit at 25 miles per hour, officers will be monitoring the speed, and they'll be issuing summonses for speeding, but again, that doesn't mean we cannot issue you a summons at 26 miles an hour. Again, we're going to be taking a look at the violators out there, and our preference is that if there's a person speeding at a higher level, we certainly will go after those individuals. But our precincts, our transportation bureau, have been working closely with the Department of Transportation, where they will be assigning those particular mobile units to address speed violations. They will be out there on November 7th, and they're currently doing the enforcement right now.

Mayor: And I think the bottom line on that, Jen, is, you know, a speed limit's a speed limit. If you go above the speed limit, you are liable for a penalty. Again, the officer can use discretion. They might see someone go 24, 25, 26 down to 25 again, and say that's just a minor variation. But if someone's going 26 miles an hour, and veering back and forth in the road, the officer has every right to give that person a ticket. It's all going to come down to discretion. If you go above the speed limit, you are liable for the penalty.

Question: [inaudible]

Mayor: I think that – with all due respect to that newspaper – I think that is a very inappropriate judgment on their part. And I think it's misleading, and I think, when we're talking about matters of public safety, our friends in the media need to be a little more careful. There are many tools in the fight against reckless driving. The speed limit is one of them. Street design is another. Speed bumps are another. Speed cameras are another.

Enforcement is another. Education is another. You need all these tools. No one said there's a magic bullet. But the fact is, you post a lower speed limit, and in one incident, god forbid, someone violates it and there's a death, that does not invalidate the value of the speed limit. The lower speed limit is a matter of scientific fact, that it helps both to avoid crashes – and, if god forbid there is an incident – that the impact of the crash is lesser at a lower speed limit. That's just fact.

Question: [inaudible] elevation to 25 [inaudible] summons, or what [inaudible]?

Commissioner Trottenberg: Well, it's going to depend on the street, and you know, Speaker Silver mentioned the legislation [inaudible] in Albany. We're still in the process of ratcheting up to the full authorization of 140 cameras. So, on some streets, yes, if the speed limit is lowered, the speed cameras will be recalibrated. On some streets that are already signed, we won't be making a change. And remember, for speed cameras, all those cameras are near the entrances to schools, and only operational during times when the school is being used.

Question: [inaudible]

Mayor: You know, I think people have evolved on this question. I was a city councilman, as you know, for eight years, starting in 2002. And if you had asked me back then, I would have said a lot of people would have been resistant. I myself, you know, had a car, drove my car frequently, knew a lot of people who drove cars – but I think what's happened is, over time, the toll that these crashes have taken has really affected the thinking of New Yorkers. I think when it became clear, at the end of last year, that the number of traffic fatalities was almost as high as the number of murders – I think that was an eye-opening moment. I think these individual stories have really grabbed at people. And think about – this is something Commissioner Bratton has spoken about, and I think it's powerful – this city, over the last 20 years, has done a miraculous job of bringing down crime – particularly, bringing down murder. But when you then see another issue grow in its impact, you have to think, what is the best way to focus our public safety efforts. And Commissioner Bratton, again, was a very strong and early voice saying, this is a problem of similar magnitude, we've got to give it a lot more attention. So, I think it's happened organically. I think people are sick of hearing these very painful stories, of children lost, of seniors lost – I think people also, everybody, thinks they're, before the grace of god [inaudible]. And they don't want to lose their child. They don't want to lose their father or mother or grandfather or grandmother. They don't want to take the chance that another life will be lost. So, I have to say, the simple answer to your question is no – I go all over this city. I was riding the subway this morning, a lot of times, people come up to me and talk. I haven't had a single person say this is the wrong thing to do.

Question: [inaudible]

Mayor: Louder.

Question: [inaudible]

Mayor: Yeah, I mean, this is a broad view I have, and with absolute respect to the speaker, who's done an extraordinary job of working with us, and I think Speaker Silver is one of the reasons why the city of New York is able to achieve the things that it needs to to protect our people. But as a structural question, this is one of the areas where I think it would be more appropriate for the city to have more say over its own destiny, so we can serve our people even better. That's certainly something I'm going to continue to pursue. Mike.

Question: The commissioner –

Mayor: Which commissioner? Trottenberg?

Question: Commissioner Trottenberg. I'm just wondering if you'll be continuing to install countdown clocks [inaudible] I know the corridors that are particularly dangerous, they still seem to be using the older pedestrian lights, I'm just curious what the progress report is on that?

Commissioner Trottenberg: Yeah, I mean, we are, every year, trying to install a whole variety of technologies out there – countdown clocks, doing things like leading pedestrian intervals, so yeah – and as the mayor mentioned, redesigning 50 intersections, increasing our camera enforcement, so obviously, we have a whole suite of tools that we are going to, each year, you know, build upon the work we've done. And yeah, we know countdown clocks, particularly in areas like this, are very efficacious, so this will [inaudible].

Mayor: Okay, on topic. Anything else on? What do we got? Oh, sorry.

Question: I want to ask the commissioner if you've noticed any difference in accidents in the slow zones, or where the speed cameras are up already, do you have data? Has the lower speed limit in those areas made a difference?

Commissioner Trottenberg: One thing we have seen with the speed cameras, is that you get – as soon as people get that first ticket, it has a real effect on their behavior. We've seen this in New York, and this has been shown actually nationwide. You get tremendous decreases in speeding – 20, 30, 40 percent in given areas – and look, as the mayor has mentioned, speeding is one of the leading causes of traffic fatalities. So, we're going to be – I mean, look, our speed camera program, really – up until this year, we only had a couple of cameras. Now, we're going to be ratcheting up, we're going to be doing data collection, and all the areas will be deployed the cameras. We know we're going to see big speed reductions, and we will also be tracking the crash data.

Mayor: Okay, last call on topic. Last call.

Question: You mentioned [inaudible] overall fatalities [inaudible]?

Mayor: Well, I'm going to speak – this is a question of bicycle fatalities, and I'll let you guys jump in as well. Look, we are addressing all elements of this challenge, and so you've seen there's been a huge increase in the amount of enforcement, in terms of all elements of the picture. So, when it comes to bicyclists who are hit by vehicles, which is historically the bigger problem, we are going to continue everything we've just said, including increased enforcement of speed laws, and, you know, speed violations, or turning violations – all of the above. But we also know there are some bicyclists who have acted inappropriately, and we've increased enforcement activity towards them. So, this is going to be equal opportunity.

Commissioner Trottenberg: I'll talk quickly, and then have the chief talk. You know, yeah, Steven, you're right, and one thing we're discovering – look, we've made tremendous progress this year, but the progress is not – it's not simple and smooth, and we're very disheartened by what's happened on the cyclist front, and we've been really working with NYPD to up our educational efforts, and as the mayor said, we're really hoping lowering the speed limit, in particular, is going to be something very important when you have the impact of a crash with a cyclist. I know the chief will want to talk about their enforcement.

Chief Chan: The areas we're looking at – again, the fatalities in dealing with bicyclists has actually doubled this year, and that's an area we're very concerned about – and a key point is that the NYPD and Department of Transportation, and the advocacy groups – we met early in June, and we started an education campaign out there, to reach out to our bicyclists out there as they come off the bridges, and things of that nature. During the summer months, we actually had an initiative where the police department issued over 7,300 summonses. 4,300 of those summonses were directed at bicyclists – violations as riding on the sidewalk, going the wrong way, disobeying signs and things of that nature – signal lights, and things of that nature. But also, 3,200 of those summonses were written to motorists who were blocking the bike lanes, actually causing the bicyclist to go into traffic. So, again, it was about 60 percent issued to bicyclists, 40 percent to motorists who were blocking those

lanes. What I want to emphasize is that, along with our Department of Transportation and the advocacy groups, is that we want to encourage our bicyclists to wear helmets, because the helmets make a difference, it reduces the injury, and it certainly can be a difference between a concussion versus a skull fracture. So, we encourage everyone to utilize bicycle helmets. Thank you.

Mayor: Okay, we will go to off-topic.
Andrew.

Question: Mayor, can you tell us about the 5-year-old brought to Bellevue – not only the child's condition, but is the child treated any differently – is there a pediatric isolation, anything [inaudible] kid might find it terrifying?

Mayor: There is. There's a – first of all, I will start by saying Bellevue is an absolutely extraordinary place. I've spent a lot of time there in the last few days. I was up on the isolation floor yesterday. These are just extraordinary professionals – and you're exactly right, they do approach children differently. There are pediatric ICU nurses who are specially trained to work with children. So, there's a lot of sensitivity here to making sure we handle this child carefully. Look, at this moment, we know a few things, and then we'll know a lot more by the end of the afternoon. The child and mother – from what we know so far – very, very recently returned from West Africa. The child at first did not appear to have any symptoms. The mother has no symptoms whatsoever. So, a lot of caution is being taken here to be careful. We will have test results in the course of the day. I would like to caution probably late in the afternoon because there are some sensitivities again to how you handle a child. But so far, everything has been handled, again, according to protocol. We hope to have positive news, but in the event we don't, we know everything has been handled right. Again, we know the family has just gotten here, so in terms of retracing steps, that will be an easier process. But the – you know, it's very important in these situations not to predict – it's one of the things I'm learning every day talking to the healthcare professionals. I can only say the fact that the mother shows no symptoms at all is a very encouraging sign.

Question: Mr. Mayor, you said over the weekend that you and the governor were able to speak many times [inaudible]?

Mayor: The governor and I talk a lot, as everyone knows. We've known each other almost 20 years. I don't think it's my job to tell you how someone comes to their decisions. That's something you should ask him, but I think the fact is it's a very collegial relationship. The professionals as well – the two health commissioners have been in constant contact. I think one of the things to acknowledge here is this is a, you know, ever-changing situation. And all levels of government are adjusting their strategies at all times. We have to be smart about how we do it. Again, what happened with nurse Hickox was unacceptable and was unfair to her and disrespectful to a hero. That was not the smart way to do it. But there are ways to update our strategies that are thoughtful and careful and based on science. That's what we're endeavoring to do. The two health commissioners, city and state, are talking constantly and I watched them both in action. They are absolutely devoted to doing things based on science and based on the larger approach to this healthcare crisis. One of the things that's come out in all of this is the city and state are going to really play a leadership role here, in terms of encouraging and supporting healthcare professionals who will go to the three affected countries. This is a security crisis of a different kind and it's time for us to mobilize our forces, and not just the U.S. military which is going to the three countries and will play a leading role, but our healthcare professionals as well. So, we will be meeting with the healthcare community of the city to find out everything we need to do to facilitate, incentivize, support, and the maximum number of appropriate healthcare professionals to the front, so we can get at this crisis.

Question: Mr. Mayor. I have two questions. First, following up on the 5-year-old, [inaudible]?

Mayor: I will refer the second question to the folks who run our emergency management system, because I want them to give you very specific information. No spike has been reported to me or nothing so difficult that it

couldn't be handled. As you know, a week ago, we were experiencing a number of false alarms. In many cases it turned out to be Malaria. I'm sure that is continuing. But I'll get you the exact numbers. In terms of the procedure right now, we are taking additional precautions –for example, tracing the steps of the family as a precaution. We again, we will may find out in a matter of hours that there is no cause for alarm. But we are retracing the steps because it's the prudent thing to do right now. And we're in a position where we can create additional measures if we need to.

Question: [inaudible]

Mayor: Well, the isolation unit at Bellevue is separated into separate sections. The sections in which someone can enter without any exposure, as I did, do not require protective gear. They do a number of protocols as a matter of control. There's checkpoints you have to go through to get in. So, you have to be authorized several times before you can go in. Your name and contact information is taken. Obviously, if you had any kind of illness or something, you're supposed to report it. On the way out your temperature is taken and recorded. So, there are a set of checks and balances along the way, but the areas in which I went, with my wife Chirlane, were secure areas where there was no exposure to disease. There were several more stages after that. The elaborateness of the protocols is absolutely extraordinary. We were shown one of the rooms that would be useable in the event there was an additional patient. There are chambers after chambers leading into the room. There is elaborate audio and video systems that can keep in constant dialogue with the patient, even if there's not medical personnel in the room. So, I have to say, it's just extraordinary to watch. And as I was there, I mentioned yesterday, they were on the phone – a conference call with the experts at Emory University in Nebraska, reviewing the treatment plan for Dr. Spencer. You know, when you're there on that floor, it feels like the center of the universe. That is the frontline of all frontlines in terms of what is happening in this country. And, the professionalism is just extraordinary. So, it was a real honor to be with them.

Question: Can we get an update on Dr. Spencer's condition [inaudible]?

Mayor: The last reports I've received – and as you know, we always have to get updated reports – but the last reports I have received, the fiancé and the two friends are still symptom-free. The last I've heard, Dr. Spencer – serious but stable as he was yesterday.

Question: [inaudible]

Mayor: I think this is a misunderstanding that really needs to be addressed. And I appreciate your question because I do think it represents what people would feel, but we don't give in to our fears. If there's any people on this earth who don't give in to fear, it's New Yorkers. So, I want to urge all my fellow New Yorkers – pay attention to the facts. Don't give in to fear. Don't give in to hype. So, let me explain. The personnel at Bellevue right now, go through, by the way, extraordinary training for this kind of situation – they've gone through specific training for Ebola. They take extraordinary precautions. They then, at the end of their shifts, go home to their communities. The only way that there would even be a cause for concern, is if one of them were to have any symptoms. To date, none have. The medical personnel who cared for the American doctors – the very beginning of this crisis – the American doctors who were in West Africa, stricken there – didn't come over here and suddenly develop symptoms – they were stricken there. In a more advance state, they came back. A whole community of health care professionals cared for them. Those doctors were cured. Those professionals lived in their communities. The professionals, who have cared for the nurses, who thank god, are better. We've got to be clear. We've got to demystify this. People taking proper precautions, caring for these patients, are not a threat to anyone else. And if we treat heroic people who are serving us like there is something wrong with them, we do a disservice to the fight against Ebola.

Question: [inaudible]

Mayor: It's a fair question, but listen to the logic again. Hundreds and hundreds of American health care professionals have served people with Ebola – in Atlanta, in Nebraska, in Dallas. The folks who did that over and over again, overwhelmingly, had no symptoms, did not contract the disease, went on about their lives. The very few who have been exposed – just Dr. Spencer and two nurses – Dr. Spencer is in the middle of treatment, the two nurses are now recovered – because they had the benefit of western medicine. So, by any normal logic and by the numbers, the vast majority of people in this context of this country's health care system, who have provided care, had no negative impact from providing care – went on about their lives, interacted with their families and communities. There's been no consequence. There's been very few instances otherwise, and in the case of the two nurses, they quickly recovered. So we've got to look at this in context. We got to stop making this more than it is. This disease – now this is crucial – there are other diseases, very dangerous diseases that are easily contracted. By the way, the isolation ward at Bellevue was created to address the AIDS crisis and created to address a tuberculosis outbreak related to the AIDS crisis, and that was a disease that was airborne and dangerous for that reason. This is not an airborne disease. This is a disease that can only be passed by intimate contact with bodily fluids, which is why you have not seen it grow in any meaningful way here.

Courtney.

Question: Can we get an update on the child's mother who is with him? Should she be subject to any kind of quarantine? [inaudible] who are coming back from these countries who aren't medical professionals but have had contact with people with this virus. Is there any question about quarantining these people and how would you exactly –

Mayor: Well, Courtney, that's what the new state rules do. So, let's go over this. A couple of different pieces now – first, on the mother, yes she is with the child, again, being treated in a similar manner as a precaution. No symptoms, but by definition we want her with the child because we want the child to have the support of his mother. We'll have more to say at the end of the afternoon. In terms of what is happening now, the CDC mandated that starting today, there will be monitoring of anyone who returned – whose information was gathered by the screening process put in place at the airports, roughly two weeks ago. We've been provided with most of those names – not all – but we're continuing to get additional names. The City of New York is monitoring each and every one of those returnees. And these are people who reported no contact with the disease or with anyone with the disease, but CDC rules – which we respect – mandate local health authorities to monitor. We're in daily touch with those individuals as we make contact with them. And we will be for a 21-day period, meaning, someone arrives today, had no contact with anyone with Ebola, but they arrived from one of those three countries – we'll stay in touch with them daily for 21 days. If someone arrived 10 days ago, we'll stay in touch with them for the next 11 days. Once you pass 21 days, and there's no symptoms at the end of the sequence, than that person is considered safe. The new quarantine rules initiated by the state, details still being determined – the two health commissioners in the case of New York City, Mary Bassett will work with Howard Zucker, her state counterpart, to work out the details of how it will be implemented here in the city with flights coming into JFK. But the broad strokes are this, anyone who did come in contact with an individual with Ebola, either as an individual citizen or as a medical professional – they go home as normal but they are subject to the monitoring the CDC has mandated. And again, we will perform that. The city of New York will perform that monitoring. But if someone has been in contact with someone with Ebola, of course the first thing that will happen is they will be checked for any immediate symptoms. If there are immediate symptoms, they will be taken immediately to the emergency room. If there are no symptoms, the state is implementing a quarantine at home, as the governor described last night. But that is a quarantine in which there will be monitoring twice a day by health professionals, but it's a quarantine that allows family members and friends to visit with the returning health care professionals. It's meant to make clear that we have the ability to contact the person and keep touch with their health care condition daily. But we're also respecting the fact that these are heroes who are fighting for us against this disease and need an opportunity to have a proper reentry into this country. That's the balance that is being struck here. Again, the city of New York will provide the monitoring for those individuals. Please.

Question: Sorry, just to clarify [inaudible] health care workers as well as just, regular citizens [inaudible]

Mayor: So, separating the two – I’m glad you asked the question. An individual citizen, or a health care worker who says, I have been in contact with someone with Ebola, while in one of the three countries, is immediately checked for symptoms. If there are symptoms – immediately taken to emergency care. If there are no symptoms – home quarantine. Or, as the governor explained last night, if they are not going to a home, we will find an alternative facility that is appropriate. But if someone has not been in direct contact, they go about their lives, but we, the city of New York, will monitor them daily.

Question: [inaudible] the 5-year-old, what led somebody to make a 9-1-1 call to get an ambulance there in the first place, and what were the symptoms involved? Was the boy showing some sort of symptom initially?

Mayor: Again, we have to respect the privacy of all patients. I’m going to speak in very broad strokes. I think the child was having some difficulties but it’s not clear they were the kind of symptoms that would be related to Ebola. So, again, this is the abundance of caution dynamic – very recently returned family, the child was showing some signs of an illness – but not clear what the illness was. We did the cautious thing and brought the child in under the full protocol. We’ll now at the end of the day. It may turn out we have something here, or it may turn out that the child is sick with something totally different, and obviously the child will continue to receive care for that.

Question: What’s going on in the Bronx in terms of any decontamination? What is it costing this city to do this additional monitoring that is now being mandating by the CDC?

Mayor: So, on the first – you mean, when you say in the Bronx, you mean on this case? Again, we don’t have evidence that we have a case of Ebola. So it would not be appropriate to do any further decontamination until you know that. What we are doing is, first and foremost, taking care of the child and mother. It may be a totally different health care challenge. So, either way the folks at Bellevue are going to address the mother and the child’s needs. We are already retracing the steps, so we’ll have that ready. And then upon determining if there is something more, we’ll act. But that’s something, again, we should know in the course of this afternoon. What was your second question?

Question: The cost for the city with all of the additional monitoring?

Mayor: Look, in a crisis, obviously, we are focused on doing what we have to do to keep our people safe. So, cost is something we don’t worry about when it comes to keeping our people safe. This is the priority of this government right now, to address this crisis. Most of what we’re doing in monitoring, we can do with our existing Department of Health staff. They can be augmented with our Office of Emergency Management staff. We’ve also gotten a lot of cooperation, not only from our public health system, our public hospital system, but also from the voluntary hospitals. So, we have the personnel necessary to address this crisis now with the resources we have.

Question: Mr. Mayor, right now we have one patient. What would happen if the worst case scenario happened, that this [inaudible] became an outbreak, with several patients with Ebola. What’s the capacity of this city to handle these cases? How many cases?

Mayor: Well, look, right now we’re dealing with current realities as we seen them here and around the country. So, every question is fair and expressing the concerns of the people on it, and I appreciate it. But I want to put this in perspective again to answer your question. In Dallas –everyone related to the situation in Dallas has been very up front and admirably honest about what went wrong. Here was a case that wasn’t handled right. The gentleman, Mr. Duncan, clearly had symptoms, was sent home to a family. That family spent time around Mr. Duncan, some of them cared for him directly. When he was finally brought back to hospital care, the family was quarantined – 21 days in quarantine, every single member of that family came out safe. So, here are people who had intimate and prolong contact with someone with full-blown Ebola, and none of them were affected. So we

got to put in perspective. We don't see right now, a context for that kind of spread. What we know, for sure, every city hospital has been prepared. Five hospitals in the city have been designated as especially able to handle Ebola, leading with Bellevue. Each of them has capacity. So, for everything we can foresee at this moment, we have sufficient capacity for sure. But again, there is no evidence of a pattern of spreading here that would cause us to have a greater concern. The five hospitals have substantial capacity. Obviously, to the great credit of the health care community of this city, all elements of our hospital system have offered up personnel as needed so we'll have sufficient personnel and we're ready to handle the situation. Thanks, everyone.

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