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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY**

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Good morning, everybody. What's on everyone's mind all over this city is the restart of this city, taking the first step to getting us back to a better situation. And it's all been made possible by the extraordinary work all of you are doing every single day, and we're going to keep doing it, because that's how we get to that restart. Now, we want to make sure the restart works. So, of course, it is first and foremost about constantly staying on top of the health and safety situation. Making sure we are driving back the disease every day, watching constantly for any indicators, any evidence that the disease might reassert, because we want to address that instantaneously. But we also recognize a strong restart means making sure that our businesses can come back effectively, can come back quickly. We're talking about, as I said yesterday, 200,000 to 400,000 New Yorkers who can, and will be going back to work in a matter of weeks. We have to make sure it goes well, and that means supporting the businesses, not only listening to them, but helping them in very real ways. So, as I've been listening to business owners, big and small, what I hear from them is they need help making sense of all this. They need help getting off to that strong start. They know it's not going to be business as usual. They know we're in uncharted territory, but they're really clear that they need help to be able to start as well as they want to, and we want them to. So, we've got to make sure that business owners can keep their workplaces safe, that they can get their businesses going. We need to make sure that the people who work there are safe, that they can get their livelihoods back, but always in a way that's safe and healthy.

So, we have to work together to make this happen. And the city of New York is going to be right there side by side with each and every business owner helping them to make that strong restart. So, yesterday I talked about some of the things we're doing. We're putting out industry guides with real common sense, practical information about how you restart. We have, going to be launching this coming week a hotline. So, any business owner can talk through specific situations, get guidance, understand what's the right thing to do, what's the wrong thing to do, how to make things work. We are training a group of small business advocates, and compliance units to go out and work with the businesses. Not, we're not trying to penalize, we're trying to educate and help them get started the right way. Make sense of a whole set of rules, and constantly staying in touch with our sector councils that are giving us constant feedback from businesses, large and small. Here's what we need. Here's what's going to work. Here's what's not going to work. We're trying this. It is working. Let's do more of that. We're trying something else. We don't like it. Let's try a different approach. That's what we're going to do.

So, let's talk about something that is absolutely necessary for every business to succeed and to be safe, and this environment we're in, in this uncharted territory. One thing is simple,

straightforward, necessary, and that is face coverings. You need face coverings for all employees. You need face coverings for customers. Everyone understands that for business to work, people are going to have to get into some kind of proximity. We need those face coverings to make sure that everyone's safe, but we don't want businesses struggling to find them. We know they've got a lot on their mind as they restart, particularly the smallest businesses. They don't need another challenge. It's a hassle in many cases to find face coverings. Of course, there's an expense involved, but we're focused on the fact that businesses are getting ready right now. They need any helping hand they can get. So, what are we going to do? We're going to be providing face coverings for free for all businesses that need them. We'll start with 2 million face coverings that we're getting ready right now to deliver to businesses or have them pick up at sites around the city, whatever works better for them. And that work will be done by our Department of Consumer Worker Protection, our Department of Small Business Services, and our Department of Citywide Administrative Services. We'll put together a plan. We'll make it very public how you get these face coverings, or again, if businesses need them delivered, we'll deliver them. We want businesses to succeed, and having one less thing to worry about will make it a little easier, and it will make sure that health and safety is guaranteed. No one will have a reason to say, hey, I couldn't find face coverings, I didn't know where to turn. No, you need them. We'll come to you. We'll deliver them. We'll make sure you have them.

Now, we're hearing a lot from small businesses about other things they need and we're working on that too. And I'll have more to say in the coming days. A lot of them talked about it's hard to find enough cleaning supplies, and cleaning supplies they can afford. There'll be effective, enough disinfectants. We're working on ways to make sure there is a supply available at a price that businesses can afford. We'll have more to say on that as well in the next few days.

So, the businesses have to restart. They have to restart strong. But now let's talk about working people. Let's talk about the backbone of New York City. The people who do the work. Look working people have really been hurt in this crisis. So many working families are suffering, and they've lost loved ones in so many cases or they've fought back this disease. So, we know this city runs on the labor of good, hardworking people, and we have to keep them safe. So, people want their livelihood back. I hear it all the time. There's so much desire, so much energy to get back to work. People want their livelihoods back, but they know they have to stay safe, and they especially, I hear it all the time, they want to protect their families. They want to make sure they go back to work, and restore their livelihoods, which their families need, that they don't inadvertently bring the disease home. So, we have to be there for working people, making sure that they have what they need to be safe. Now, this is going to involve, of course, working with the businesses, making sure they're following those rules, making sure the businesses have what they need to keep workers safe. But we want to hear the voices of working people, so we're going to have teams we send out to talk to employees directly, to talk to working people led by our department of consumer, and worker protection. We want to make sure that we're working with unions. We're working with worker centers, immigrant rights organizations, all of the folks who are constantly talking to working people about what they're experiencing. We're going to be working with all those organizations, and out at the frontline, going into communities, connecting with working people, listening for the information they need, the help they need, the problems they're having, giving people a sense of their rights, giving people a sense of the right way to do things to stay safe. We'll give out information. We'll make sure there's signage of at

workplaces. Workers have every right to be safe when they return to work. Workers need to know where to turn if there is a problem, and that's what the city will provide. A helping hand to working people to make sure that every business treats them right during this restart.

Now, we're going to make sure that it's not just a matter of that outreach, and that signage, and those bigger efforts with unions, but we also want any working person who needs help to know they can call. So, next week we'll be launching a worker protection hotline, and anybody who either has a question, a concern, wants to know how to handle a situation at work or see something wrong or that they want to report, and want to see enforcement on, they can call that hotline. We'll announce the specifics next week. It'll be run by our Department of Consumer and Worker protection. We want to make sure that any working person who experiences a problem or a challenge knows where to turn to protect themselves, and their families, and their rights.

Okay. Now, talk about working people. Some of the people who do the toughest work in this city, the most necessary work in this city are nonprofit workers. This city for generations has been a place that created fairness, and decency, and took care of people, and had a compassionate reality because we had these wonderful nonprofits out there making sure that no one was left behind, making sure people were taken care of. This is part of what makes New York City so strong and so great, and our human services workforce, they've been heroes throughout this crisis, and we have to be there for them as well. So, we have so many different organizations. They work with our Administration for Children's Services, our Department of Health. They work with our Department of Social Services, our Department of Youth and Community Development. All of these homeless, excuse me, all of these nonprofit organizations, what kinds of things they do? They work on mental health, they work on homeless outreach, they work with young people, they do foster care – so many important, and crucial services this city needs. Well, we know that a lot of the people that do this work come from the communities that have been hardest hit by this pandemic. And we want to protect these folks that are not only members of the New York community, but they are people that make New York better, and stronger, and they protect other New Yorkers.

So, starting next week, we will have a testing initiative focused particularly on nonprofit staff. And we have a target of reaching 31,000 nonprofit staff. It's voluntary. People have a choice of if they want to participate, but we'll provide, we'll be providing up to 4,000 tests per day focused specifically on the nonprofit sector. We'll be doing it at Health and Hospitals, community sites. We'll give priority starting Monday. Another priority will be for nonprofit workers. So, anyone who's interested in getting one of those tests, and works in one of our nonprofits, you can go to [nyc.gov/covidtest](https://nyc.gov/covidtest). And we want to make sure that if you need a test, you get a test. I'll also say that there will be mobile testing sites set up focusing on these nonprofits starting June 15th. So, they'll go right to the workplaces of a lot of our nonprofit workers, and then the nonprofits themselves will start to provide testing in July. We'll provide all of the material they need, the PPE's, the test kits, and they'll be able to do their own testing starting in July.

Now, we talked about nonprofits. We think about a lot of different organizations, a lot of them very well known to New Yorkers all over the city. Settlement houses, and you know, different organizations that come out of faith traditions that provide social services. Everybody in every community knows about organizations that came up from the grassroots, and do amazing work

for their communities. One of the things that New Yorkers don't know as much about is the cure violence movement, also known as the crisis management system. This is a movement that I have come to know in recent years, and I have such respect for, because this is community people deciding to stop gun violence, and standing up, often putting their own lives on their line, to create peace in their own communities, to mediate, to stop conflicts before they happen. There've been extraordinary results.

So, as I've gotten to know the cure violence movement, I've been so impressed by what it means not only for stopping violence, but what it means about communities creating their own leadership to solve their own problems. And the City of New York needs to support that because it's the right thing to do and it works. Well, right now, in the middle of this horrible challenge with the coronavirus, it's become clearer and clearer that a cure violence movement can be such an important part of fighting back this disease cure violence is the original concept, but it also has so much to say about community leaders and community members coming together to solve a range of problems. It's not that cure violence can share the virus, but cure violence can help to contain the disease, can help to push it back in neighborhoods by educating people, giving them the tools they need, helping people to hear what's the right thing to do from trusted community voices. So, our racial and include racial equity and inclusion task force, which has been set up inside the city government representing a whole range of city agencies has been working on the issue of what's the fullest use we can make of the cure violence movement. And I had a great conversation with cure violence leaders just a few days ago and we all agreed that there's a frontline role to play in fighting the coronavirus. So, we have now 20 or so community partner organizations we'll be working with in this effort, and one example was on Monday when I went to Queensbridge houses, largest public housing development in New York City. Here is a place, again, biggest public housing development in the city and has had an extraordinary turnaround in terms of reducing violence and that shows us how much more could be achieved by this movement. The organization is 696 amazing organization has helped to bring a lot more peace and a lot less violence to Queensbridge houses, they're one example of many great organizations. So, we're going to support these groups through this summer and beyond. To address the coronavirus as well. Right now, we've got 150 cure violence organization workers out in communities, educating people, reminding them, giving them warnings about issues like social distancing, face coverings, giving out the face coverings for free. We're now going to more than triple that, we're adding 375 more cheer violence workers to this effort. The title they will be given is social distance enhancers, it's a great phrase, social distance enhancers. They'll be starting in the next week or so, building out through June, and this means 10 to 15 new staff at each site deep into communities and having a big impact through the summer into September. We're also going to do a great a public awareness campaign at the same time or partnering with an extraordinary organization called Art Not War. And they have done a really profound work on, many of you may have seen the work they did related to the people's climate March. They're a national leader in terms of putting together social justice messages that reach communities that are oven buying for the communities they serve. They're going to give us a— assist here and putting out a public awareness campaign, particularly for the hardest hit neighborhoods, 21 target neighborhoods, and there'll be a variety of media we'll be using to get the word out and how people can protect themselves and their families that will be starting the middle of June.

Now, talk about communities that have been hardest hit. We know that our seniors have been the most vulnerable in this crisis and we know that folks who are lower income and have had less access to healthcare because tragically healthcare has been about how much money you have, not about your humanity, that's the history of this country. And too often that's been the history of the city and that's something we have to change profoundly. So, we know if you're a senior and you're lower income, particularly if you live in a community of color, the coronavirus has been a particular threat to you, and all of those realities come together with our seniors who live in public housing in NYCHA. We made a commitment that we were going to help a number of seniors in addition to their health needs, keeping their buildings clean, getting them face coverings, doing everything we could to protect them where they lived. We wanted to also enhance their life because a lot of them are feeling really isolated, we want to connect them to the world around them to make sure that during this crisis they were getting the help they needed. So, 10,000, 10,000 internet enabled tablets have been sent out to NYCHA seniors. 10,000 seniors will benefit because they will now be able to get the information they need, the support they need, the connection to their families delivered to over a hundred sites across the five boroughs and this is not just about that human connection in that way of fighting isolation. It's also about telemedicine, so important to making sure that our seniors get supported by clinicians without having to leave their home. I want to give you some quotes because I think they're really powerful that we've heard from seniors in public housing who got these free tablets and now we're experiencing the power of being connected in a whole new way. One of them said when I got the tablet, I didn't realize how lonesome I was without visits from my children, it's like a connection to the outside without the fear of catching the virus. Another senior in public housing said simply this, I learned I can do telemedicine from the tablet by calling my cardiologist. Now think about that. Someone who had to travel often long distances wait and then have to be fearful of this virus for the first time. Now face to face with the cardiologist, able to have the right kind of conversation, get the right kind of support. One more quote, I love. The tablet is a lifesaver. Being able to see family and talk to them, that's really exciting. At least I know everybody is okay and they know I'm okay. Isn't that the most basic that every family wants to feel, I know it as a parent. All of us know it. The first thing you want to know is, is your family okay? And these tablets are helping our seniors to feel that comfort and move forward through this crisis.

Okay. Before we go to our daily indicators and thresholds, just an important note on a totally different subject because we've all been talking about coronavirus all the time and understandably so, but there's other things happening and one of them is there's an election coming up. This is a big important election year and there's an election coming up in just a matter of weeks. The New York primary is happening at toward the end of June and today is the last day to register to vote for the New York primary. So, it's not too late. This is a reminder, everyone, if you don't happen to be registered to vote and you want to vote in that primary election in the month of June, it is not too late. You can go online at [vote.nyc.gov](https://vote.nyc.gov) or you can register by mail. If you have the information center, you can send in—the registration by mail today, the instructions are online. So, there's still chance to do that, we want to see everyone make their voices heard. Voting by mail with the absentee ballots is the safe way to do it and it's a chance as always to make your voice heard. Our democracy is strong even during this pandemic, make your voice heard and make sure you're registered to vote.

Finally, let's turn to the indicators and thresholds. So, number one, daily number of people admitted to hospitals for suspected COVID-19. So, remember, need that threshold to be under 200 patients admitted per day today, 61 patients, very good number. Now on the daily number of people in health and hospitals, ICU threshold needs to be under a hundred, excuse me, under 375 this today is really good news. Congratulations cause again this is all your hard work paying off, we needed to get below 375 as of today, 391 we are on the gateway to getting below that threshold and staying there. So, this is really fantastic news and as they say on the late-night advertisements, but wait, there's more. This is the best of all, I would say the percentage of people tested citywide who are positive for COVID-19 we have to stay under the 15 percent threshold. Everyday we've seen progress in recent weeks today, the lowest we've ever seen, 5 percent testing positive. And how profound that is when you think about the fact that testing is growing and growing and growing all the time, we're getting more and more New Yorkers tested and the percentage is going down, what a good sign this is. So, congratulations everyone, this is putting us well on the way to our goal of in the first half of June. Well done, New York City.

Few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

And with that it will turn to our colleagues in the media. Please remind me of the name and outlet of each journalist.

**Moderator:** Hi all, just a reminder that we have Health Commissioner, Dr. Barbot, President and CEO of Health and Hospitals, Dr Katz, Small Business Commissioner Doris, Executive Director of Test and Trace Corp, Dr. Long, and Deputy Director of the Office of Neighborhood Safety at the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice Cumberbatch on the phone. With that, I will start with Rich from WCBS 880

**Question:** Morning Mr. Mayor.

**Mayor:** Good morning, Rich. How you doing?

**Question:** I'm doing alright. Mr. Mayor, of course, you just said that it'll be the first two weeks in June and for practical purposes to, you know, Monday is June, so do we rule out next week or is next week a possibility for the, for the restart. That's question number one, but number two is a multiple system inflammatory syndrome in children. We haven't heard anything about that in a while. Has that calmed down? Is that still a problem at this point?

**Mayor:** Very good questions and very much appreciate it Rich. I'll turn to our health care leaders in a moment on that and I'll preface before I do, but first, we are confident that we will be able to go to phase one in the first two weeks of June. This is going to be based of course on the tangible indicators and thresholds from the state and city. So that's what will lead to decision, we have to have that factual evidence. We're also in regular communication with the state to make sure we're all coordinated and all ready. So, I'm going to only say it that way, I am confident we'll be getting to phase one in the first two weeks of June. Not going to fine tune-it any more than that because of all these conversations going on to determine the exact right date to start.

Now, on the second question, it's a great question. I know parents all over New York City are really, really concerned about this, you know syndrome that we did not see in the first couple of months of this crisis. And it really came up in recent weeks. The last numbers I saw at least indicated that we have not seen thank God, a, a big growth of this syndrome in terms of the number of children affected, but we're learning about all the time. We're watching it very carefully; we really want to make sure this issue is addressed, and we need every doctor and healthcare provider to be a part of that communicating with our department of health. And we need parents as we've said many times to be very vigilant that they see the symptoms particularly in combination that they call their healthcare provider immediately or if they don't have on call 3-1-1 get connected to a health and hospitals clinician. So, again, thank God we have not seen a lot of growth of the problem in the last days. But let me turn to Dr. Barbot and Dr. Katz to give you more.

**Commissioner Oxiris Barbot, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene:** Thank you, Mr. Mayor. So, yes, we continue to get reports from pediatricians across the city about patients who have symptoms that can be consistent with this new Multi-System Inflammatory Syndrome in Children. The number of confirmed cases that we have are up to 124 and roughly about three quarters of them have an indication of having had a positive test for COVID-19. And I'll just remind folks that typically what we are seeing is that children present with symptoms of fever, abdominal pain, they can have a rash, they can have swollen hands and feet, very red lips - what we call a strawberry tone, which is very red and inflamed. And these are symptoms that we ask parents to be on the lookout for and pediatricians to be mindful of to determine which of these children will need to have more hospital centered care and may need to have intravenous medication. The other thing I will say is that we continue to communicate with providers to ensure that they are up to date on what we're asking them to be on the lookout for and to continue reporting cases to us. In fact, we have a webinar scheduled for today with providers across the city to ensure that we continue the drumbeat. This is definitely a syndrome that we continue to be very concerned about and that we want both parents and providers to be on the alert for it.

**Moderator:** Next we have [inaudible] –

**Mayor:** We'll see if Mitch wants to add. Mitch, do you want to add anything to that?

**President and CEO Mitchell Katz, Health + Hospitals:** [Inaudible] thank you.

**Mayor:** You're good? Okay.

**Moderator:** Next we have Jeff Mays from the New York Times.

**Question:** Good morning, Mr. Mayor, I just had a quick question. I saw that you tweeted yesterday about the police situation in Minnesota with George Floyd. You said that the officers needed to be charged immediately, but there's been some criticism of your remarks given the history of the Eric Garner case in New York City and, and the fact that it took five years for the officer involved in that case to even be removed from the force. So, wanted to see if you thought

there was any irony in calling for those officers in Minnesota to be charged where a situation in New York that is seen as similar you did not call for those, for that officer to be charged immediately? And my second question is about the borrowing. It doesn't look like that vote is going to come up this week. Are you still optimistic about the possibility of being allowed to borrow to cover revenue shortfalls and do you have any sort of alternative plans if the borrowing is not approved?

**Mayor:** Jeff, on the borrowing as I said I still believe that there is some fairness in this world and so if you look at the parallel of 2001 where the legislature acted within days unanimously - a republican Senate, a democratic Assembly - to provide the city of New York with borrowing capacity, no strings attached because it was the right thing to do to help make sure that New York City could come back after the tragedy of 9/11. There was not a doubt in anyone's mind in Albany that it was critical to the lives of over 8 million New Yorkers and the future of New York State to help New York City come back. And so they acted resolutely back then, it gave the borrowing authority, the city used it carefully, wisely and obviously it was able to come back and thrive thereafter because it got that helping hand; the city has been really, really responsible in the way it's approached its finances for decades. So there's that point and then of course, that the State of New York gave itself unfettered bargaining, excuse me, unfettered borrowing power just a few weeks ago, Jeff – just a few weeks ago the New York State government gave itself the ability to borrow \$11 billion, no strings attached. So, I think it's a matter of just decency and fairness, but we've had very good conversations with the legislative leaders. Everyone's working together; everyone's looking for the right way to get something done that everyone can feel good about and I am very confident based on those conversations we'll get something done during the month of June.

On this horrible just very, very painful situation in Minneapolis. Jeff, I watched that video and my heart broke. It was, you know, to watch someone before your very eyes and that I could not believe the officer's lack of concern and it was horrifying and it just can't go on this way. So, the fact is that I think the authorities in Minneapolis were right to say, you know, this was something that needed to be acted on immediately. And I've said that from this point on in the city of New York, we're going to act immediately as well. This kind of thing just can't happen.

**Moderator:** Next we have Matt Chase from Newsday.

**Question:** Hey, good morning, guys. How you doing?

**Mayor:** Good. How you doing, Matt?

**Question:** Good, good. Can you hear me okay?

**Mayor:** Yes, we can.

**Question:** Two questions for you. What is the specific trigger, in your words, tangible for identifying whether the disease has sufficiently reasserted itself to warrant a re-imposition of restrictions and what restrictions would be re-imposed? And second, yesterday, Erin Durkin of



Politico asked you what your advice is to carless New Yorkers who don't have a car and who don't feel safe riding mass transit? You did not answer. What is the answer?

**Mayor:** Matt, the answer is reality. We don't have – we were trying, obviously, always to have a solution for every problem we can have a solution for, but I really want to push back on the notion that we can solve everything all the time. We right now want to make sure the subways and buses are as safe as possible. There's a meeting yesterday with the MTA. We're still not getting the answers we need from the MTA. I'm going to be speaking to Pat Foye later on today. We have got to figure out how to make the subways and buses not only as clean as possible, which I think the MTA has done a great job on, but we've got to make sure there's maximum service levels; we've got to make sure there's social distancing and limits on how many people can be in each subway car and in each bus. We're going to work with them because we all have to get that done together. So that is obviously the most important piece of the equation. That's where the vast majority of people turn to get places. And we'll look at any and all other solutions that we can reach, but again, our job is to wherever we can find a solution, we're going to find one. I think New Yorkers are very resourceful. They also find their own ways to get things done, but I'm, I just want to be honest about the fact that, you know, where we can find a way to help people we will. There's not always the chance to help everyone all the time in terms of their transportation needs. People are going to have to improvise and I believe they will.

In terms of the trigger point you make the, the standards we have now, I think the state indicators, the city indicators and thresholds make a lot of sense. From the city perspective, we stay below those thresholds - we keep going. If we start inching up towards those thresholds, we're going to talk about it, we're going to tell people about it, we're going to warn people, we're going to take actions in the immediate term to ensure that we can help contain the situation. We have the test and trace initiative that's going to be a big positive x-factor. We have the ability to work with individual businesses if there's any things that need to be addressed. We're looking at if we have any kind of localized problem, we can get all over it with our health team, but the fact is nothing happens overnight so if we saw in our three thresholds a problem - we would immediately take action. But I think the simple answer to your question is if our thresholds were exceeded the wrong way, that's the situation where unless there are other extenuating circumstances, we would have to take a step back to where we are right now. So, it's as simple as, you know, when you go through each phase if one's not working and you have to go back to the previous phase. I don't see that, Matt, from what we're seeing right now, I think we, we are blessed that New Yorkers are doing such an amazing job and being so disciplined and the test and trace piece is going to hit at exactly the right moment to add an additional offense to push back on this disease, but I think that's the simple way to think about what we'd be watching for and how we'd address it.

**Moderator:** Next, we have Dave Evans from ABC 7.

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

**Mayor:** Good Dave, how are you?

**Question:** I'm fine. I wanted to ask you a couple of things. First of all about the, the social distance enhancers – the 375 workers – I think that may be seen as a great idea, but I'm just looking at is it a good idea to expand some of these programs if you're looking at a \$9 billion hole in your budget now? And, and my other question is following up on what Jeff asked you from the Times about the case in Minneapolis. I think, I think Jeff was asking, do you see the irony in this case versus the Eric Garner case in that you wanted the due process, process to play out, you know, and that took five years, yet here in the Minneapolis case, you've already asked for prosecution of these officers?

**Mayor:** Dave, look the bottom line here is we, I've been really clear about the fact we made a mistake. I made a mistake in believing the US Department of Justice would do its job and I will be very blunt and clear about that. When the City took over, there was due process, there was a trial. Our Police Commissioner made the decision, it was the right decision. The thing I feel very clearly in retrospect is we should have ignored the Department of Justice, because what they did was unconscionable in not acting, and just moved ahead, and that's what we will do from now on, absolutely.

On the question of the budget and the social distance enhancers – Dave, I'd say this, the budget right now and the budget we're really, really concerned about, because we have to get that stimulus support from Washington, we need borrowing authority from Albany. We don't have either right now, and if those things don't come, then we're talking about massive budget cuts and clearly every single agency will be affected, and unquestionably that leads us to something none of us want – horrible thing in the midst of all this, which would be layoffs and furloughs. But, right now, while we are trying to sort that out, we've got a disease to fight in the here and now. So, the money we do have has to be focused on the four things I've talked about consistently – health, safety, food and shelter. If we're talking about health and safety and we can help more and more New Yorkers to socially distance, to put on those face coverings, to be educated, to do the right thing in this related to this disease, particularly in the hardest-hit communities and they can be convinced to do so by people who they trust from their own community, that's about as smart and investment as we could possibly make right now.

**Moderator:** Next we have Katie Honan from the Wall Street Journal.

**Question:** Good morning, Mr. Mayor. I wanted to follow up to something you said I think in response to Matt Chayes' question – people are going to have to improvise when it comes to mass transit. You know, when I speak to every-day New Yorkers, your favorite kind, they are sort of dismayed at how they're going to get around. I'm curious, do you think that's a sufficient answer for someone who's, you know, worried about the safety of mass transit but doesn't have many other options? Or, even other people – you know, if someone's option instead of taking the subway to work is now driving, that affects way more than them driving, it creates more traffic. So, do you have any kind of plan? I think people are looking for a plan. They're looking for guidance from the mayor and I think, you know, you said New Yorkers are resourceful and they find their own way to get things done, but there's actually limited ways they could be resourceful when it comes to resuming their work and their livelihoods. So, do you have any more guidance or advice?

**Mayor:** My guidance, as I talked about yesterday, is, that the future of New York City will be mass and fewer cars. In the short-term, if people are going to use cars because that's what makes them comfortable and, obviously, there still is a lot less traffic on the road, then they're going to use cars. And we have to be pragmatic about this, Katie. I'm sorry, you know, the guidance is in fact really clear. We're trying to get the subways and buses to be as clean and safe as possible in a really, really imperfect situation. We're working with the MTA. And, again, we need clearer answers from the MTA, we need really clear rules that all New Yorkers can understand. We need to make sure that people have confidence that they get on that subway or bus, that it's going to be safe. That is overwhelmingly how people get around. But the fact is, if that's not something people are comfortable doing and they have an option of driving, they're going to drive. We're going to look at any and other ways we can help and support people. But, again, there are things we can do and some things we can't do. So, I always believe that people will make choices based on the options they have and they'll make smart pragmatic choices and they do not expect that the government can cover every single need. If we can find anything else that will help people, we certainly will, but, right now, it is about doing everything we can to make the subways and buses as safe as possible and that people can feel confidence in. And after that, people will make whatever choices they make.

**Moderator:** Next we have Luis from New York [inaudible].

**Question:** Good morning, Mr. Mayor. My question concerns the push for restaurant outdoor dining by the City Council and how your own team is examining the possibilities of thereof. Considering how we have no perfect clue as to what a phase three scenario would look like and what sort of social distancing rules would still be in place, I'd like to ask about those restaurants with alcohol licenses, and I guess bars. Mr. Mayor, you've often spoken of New Yorkers doing the right thing, yet even when one [inaudible] intoxicated, it's kind of hard to do the right thing. Are there any concerns about people individually and collectively forgetting themselves and doing that, which may defeat the ultimate aim of public safety?

**Mayor:** Of course. Now, Luis, you're – you know, every-day New Yorkers and everyday humans. Of course, if people are under the influence, they're going to think differently. And you know, look, I'm the guy who said we had to shut down our restaurants and bars back in March, because it was clear that we needed to do something different. And, obviously, we know, particularly in bars, there's not only a space issue, there is the fact that if people under the influence are not going to follow rules as well. But I've got to tell you, I think having talked to a lot of people in restaurant and bar industry, folks want to come back, they want to come back responsibly. They understand it's a different reality. And everyone talks from the perspective of understanding there has to be social distancing. And, you know, one of the things I've heard from a lot of the restaurant bar owners is that there's a conundrum for them because they want to bring back this part of New York City we all cherish and yet they also are concerned it has to be an atmosphere people want to be a part of – that if it feels too artificial and feels too difficult, you know, people are not going to feel comfortable. So, it's a really tough balance. But what we know for sure is we've got to get this industry back, we've got to do it with social distancing for the foreseeable future. We've got to come up with smart standards. Restaurants I think have an easier situation than bars in, we're going to have to figure that out and the outdoor piece is very, very appealing and I feel good that we'll be able to find some solutions there. But it's also going

to require the restaurant owners and the bar owners to be really vigilant that their patrons follow the rules. And if not, we're going to do enforcement. And I think everyone's gotten the point about that and that's why we see very, very little noncompliance. The vast majority of restaurant and bar owners throughout this whole process, the ones that have stayed open in various ways, everyone's been doing the right thing almost to a one. But enforcement helps to remind people, so it'll be there.

**Moderator:** Next we have Yoav from The City.

**Question:** Yeah. Good morning, Mr. Mayor, I just wanted to ask you, if Eric Garner was white, do you think that he would be alive today?

**Mayor:** Absolutely.

**Question:** Next we have Andrew Siff from NBC.

**Question:** Good morning, Mr. Mayor. Hope you're doing well.

**Mayor:** Good, Andrew. How are you doing?

**Question:** I have two questions. First, if I have a business in New York City right now that is eligible for phase one, and I'm wondering if I can open up Monday, June 1st, one would assume that if that were the case, you'd be able to tell us today. So, I know you don't want to narrow down the guideline at all, but wouldn't you imagine that businesses wondering about Monday would be frustrated for not hearing clarity on that? And the second question has to do with, we have found a business that opened up early – I know yesterday you said anyone doing so is making a big mistake. We have a – there's a salon in Midtown, a Brazilian wax salon that's been open, booked, taking appointments, nonessential business, wondering if the City's aware and whether any action will be taken?

**Mayor:** Andrew again, never fails to amaze me. You got, you know, whatever the exact number is, you know, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of businesses, the overwhelming, extraordinary majority are doing exactly the right thing and are listening to the rules, are thinking about health and safety are not just thinking about their own needs but the needs of everyone, and then there's a few bad apples that are trying to jump the gun even though it's not legal. So please give us the name and address of that salon and we will go deal with them. They're just not allowed to do that. So, we've made really clear to businesses, if you jumped the gun, we're going to tell you nicely to close down right now, and if you try to resist or come back, you're going to be hit with fines and it's just not acceptable. It's dangerous. It's a way to spread the disease. It's not the right way to do things. So, we will deal with each and every one, and again, very, very few are trying to violate these rules.

So Andrew, I've been talking to business owners throughout and they're very smart, resourceful people and they have been told now for many days, a day is coming in the first half of June, and the state has very clear guidelines, they've put out, we're putting out more and more information. We're going to help small businesses with the free face coverings. We're going to have the

hotlines up and running. Everything is moving a pace. If you're a business owner, you know right now, if you're in those categories for Phase One to get ready and then you'll get the announcement, that it's time to go. But we're just not going to give that announcement until we're ready, and I know the state feels the same way and we're coordinating closely so folks are mature, they know it's coming. Knock on wood that our indicators and thresholds keep looking good, but they know that it's very, very likely at this point and they'll get notice and then the minute they get noticed they'll get up and running as soon as they are ready thereafter. I think people are going to be able to handle it.

**Moderator:** Next we have Mark Morales from CNN.

**Question:** Good morning everybody. How you doing?

**Mayor:** Good. How are you doing Mark?

**Question:** I'm doing okay. I wanted to follow up on a question I asked a couple of days ago about the businesses and whether or not you guys have account as to what businesses are going to be opening up or which ones have already closed, rather – like how many have already closed. The second question I wanted to ask is when there is a real opening, and I know that this hasn't been fleshed out yet, but will the MTA continue to do the stoppage between 1:00 and 5:00 am with the cleaning and disinfecting of the cars?

**Mayor:** So, Mark on the number of businesses. So again, we'll get you, and I'll make sure to say it publicly even if you don't – in addition to giving it to you, that we will say publicly the number of businesses right now that are closed because of this emergency. I've said that in terms of working people we expect in Phase One between 200,000 and 400,000 to come back physically to work. But we'll get you a number of businesses that would be in Phase One at least, you know, they have the right to move in Phase One, whether all of them do it or not is their own decision of course. So, we'll get you those numbers and we'll make that a public as well.

Second part of the question – someone remind me, or bring Mark back.

**Question:** It was about the MTA and when they do start the reopening, is it going to be that they're going to be continuing to disinfecting between 1:00 am and 5:00 am?

**Mayor:** Yeah so Mark, we're working with the state, we're working with the MTA. We've said very clearly it's for this crisis, and then after the crisis is over, we'd go back to the 24-hour service. But again, Phase One is not the end of the crisis by any stretch of imagination. So, the way I look at it is let's get through these phases and get ourselves substantially back to normal. That's going to take several months by definition. But we'll work with the state and the MTA on when that end point will be. But again, I understand everyone rightfully, I don't ever blame anyone in the media or anyone in the public who wants sharp definition, we all do. But we're dealing with a crisis and we're dealing with a very challenging adversary in this disease and we're dealing with an ever-changing situation. So, I can't give you the exact date, but I can tell you when this crisis is resolved, that's when the MTA should go back to 24-hour service.

**Moderator:** Last two for today. Next we have Debralee from the Manhattan Times The Bronx Free Press.

**Question:** Hey, good morning everyone. Mr. Mayor, I wanted to follow up on a question that I just don't think has been answered yet, and this specifically regards expansion of testing citywide, particularly now as we enter one hopes will be a successful reopening of things. There seems to be a real, a real focus on H+H and private partnerships with the testing, at the expense of any community health based centers and federally qualified health centers, and I'm wondering if you could speak to that because originally the answer was we're having conversations with everyone. The partnerships extend citywide and we continue to burrow more deeply into these conversations. But to date, unless I missed something, there hasn't been a linkage there, and there have been at NYCHA sites and faith-based centers where testing is not natively possible and there has to be labs involved, and yet there hasn't been that connection with these credible messengers on the ground who in fact could use the volume—

**Mayor:** Okay, Debralee. I got it. I got it. What's your second question?

**Question:** The second question is regarding guidance. On the reopening, have you specifically look to see what the city will offer in terms of specific protocols, information and policies on cleaning, deep cleaning in these offices so as to provide the best work environment for workers who are coming in? What will you be providing on that front?

**Mayor:** Right thank you. Debralee, that's a great question. So the state guidelines, again, I think for government documents, they are unusually clear and specific and accessible of what's expected of an employer. Putting myself, again – I've talked to a lot of employers as they're preparing and you know, it's pretty straightforward what you need to do, but you're exactly right, you know, fine tuning it down to what exactly does it mean to get it to the level that's ideal. This is exactly why we're going to be providing this additional guidance through the city agencies. So we're going to get out you know, guides that really break down some of the exact information you're talking about – here's what that cleaning looks like, and again to have a hotline available to businesses so they can understand if any questions about how to do it, what's the right amount, that will be available, and further, as I said, we want to help them first with the face coverings. But I've heard from a lot of businesses that they really are dealing with the basics. Like they just need the right products to clean with and they're hard to come by. We have to figure that out with them, and we'll have more to say on that next few days. So, your question is right where we are. We want to make this practical and straightforward. I think everyone understands that the better the cleaning, the more consistent, the better we will do at fighting the disease. But also the more confidence employees will have in coming back. So, we need it to work, but that's exactly the kind of thing that I'm talking about today that the city will be doing reaching out to these businesses.

And then on the expansion of testing. Absolutely. We are working our way through an ever-growing testing initiative, Debra Lee, so as I've said to you, we – you know, we expect to be not too long from now at 50,000 tests a day. We're at 27 tests – 27,000 a day right now we expect to be at 50,000, and we want to keep going from there. We need more and more partners. The big opportunities like City MD, of course we're going to go where we can get the most growth

quickly and doing it in a single organization with so many outlets made total sense, Health + Hospitals obviously has vast reach around the city, but we want to keep going from there, and those community based clinics make tons of sense to be our partners in this. We want to reinvigorate them and I've said from beginning, we want them to do more telemedicine with their patients. We want them to do more grassroots public health work. We're going to be supporting them in all that. So, as we expand testing, absolutely, we're going to be working with the community-based clinics and we'll have more to say on that shortly.

**Moderator:** Last question for today. We have Gersh from Streetsblog.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, how are you?

**Mayor:** Gersh, my life is better because I have a new, exciting dynamic baker in my life.

**Question:** I'm honored Mr. Mayor, but as you know I cannot make daily deliveries of bread –

**Mayor:** Gersh, Gersh, I think it would be doing a great public service for all New Yorkers if you would. I do want to say your colleagues in the media, Gersh shocked me with how good that bread was. I thought I was going to have to smile and be polite. That was a damn good bread, Gersh.

**Question:** Let the record show Mr. Mayor, you ate about a half of it before even taking a breath.

**Mayor:** I did. It's true.

**Question:** I know you have a lot on your plate today so I just want to just ask a very quick follow up to what you've been asked already today. You know the federal government actually put out recovery guidelines that recommend against using public transportation or even carpooling and in fact recommend that employers reimburse workers for commuting alone in their cars. Now you've certainly shown no reluctance to criticize the federal government when it errs. So, what do you think of those recommendations that explicitly encourage New Yorkers to drive? And I'd like to ask Dr. Barbot to weigh in on this because she often does not get asked about the central implications of transit on transportation on public health.

**Mayor:** So, it's a really important question. Thank you, Gersh. Before I turn to Dr. Barbot, you know, the federal government that topic right there gets a heavy sigh from me because, you know, they have so rarely been there when we needed them in this crisis. I understand some of their guidance some of the time and other times I'm perplexed by it. This is the city that's most reliant on mass transit of any city in the country. And you and I have talked about this Gersh, the future is mass transit. There's no question. This is a horrible crisis. It is going to go on for a certain number of months, when we come out of this, we have to keep transforming the city. In fact, it's going to be one of the biggest transformative moments in the history of New York City. And we must move away from the automobile. We must move to mass transit and find new and better ways of doing that. That said, as I said in the earlier question with Katie, we know that this moment, these next few months are going to be aberrant because some people are not going to be comfortable no matter what we do and will choose to use their car.

But on the question of can you make mass transit work for people? Again, the federal government doesn't have to run it, doesn't have to deal with the ramifications. We're working closely with the MTA and State. Clearly the cleaning initiative proves that something very different could happen in terms of cleanliness. Now we've got to do something important and clear to people in terms of the social distancing and the limits on the number of people on the trains and buses. I think we can do that together. I think we can find a way to do that. That will mean for those who do take mass transit, they'll be able to do it with a real sense of assurance. And that's necessary because that's how most people get around. So we don't have an option of saying, oh, we're just going to ignore it, if that's what the federal government's suggesting, that totally doesn't work for New York City. But we do have an obligation to provide people with something they can believe in and start to feel more and more comfortable with, and that's what we're working on literally as we speak. Dr. Barbot, please add to that.

**Commissioner Barbot:** Thank you Mr. Mayor, so to add to what the Mayor has laid out, I think that there are ways in this early period when we are looking towards starting to lift a little by little restrictions on social distancing, ways in which we can minimize risk of exposure to New Yorkers. And I think we just need to remember that this is in the context of continuing to encourage working from home for those people who can work from home, and reminding New Yorkers about alternative ways of getting around. You know, if people can walk to work, then that would be the best way. People can ride to work, then that would be, you know, a more desirable alternative. And as the Mayor says that there are ways in which we are working together to ensure that those individuals who do rely on public transportation can do so safely. Right? We're still going to have people wearing face coverings. There are ways in which we can increase ventilation in buses for example. So you know, I don't think that we are in a situation where it's going to be the new norm to have everybody drive into work. I just don't see that. I think that there are alternative ways of getting around walking, biking, et cetera, that can be – have reduced risk and can actually have other benefits to public health.

**Mayor:** Thank you very much, doctor. Well, as I conclude, let me just say this. Many times we've talked about what New Yorkers have gone through and the challenges people have faced, and I've said, you know, as the City of New York, we care about each and every New Yorker, and think about - I'll use the example earlier, with the tablets for the seniors who live in public housing. Hardworking folks spent their life doing the right thing and now they felt very much alone. Our message to them was you're not alone, we're going to be there for you. Getting them those tablets so that they can be connected and get the help they need. Our message to New Yorkers who have been hungry is we have food for you. Do you need food delivered to your door? We're going to bring it to you. This is all about making sure that people are safe, making sure they have the basics. But we know as we prepare for this next phase, we prepare for the first part of the restart. That our small businesses, all our businesses, but particularly our small businesses have taken on the chin. They are hurting, they need help and we will be there for you. You are not alone. So we're starting with the effort to make sure people understand the rules and have all the help they need to navigate the rules and that real people will work with each small business to make it work. We're going to get those face coverings to businesses for free, going to help them figure out to succeed, we need all our businesses to come back, come back safely, come back strong. We need our small businesses to survive. So, to all the members of business



community getting ready for phase one, you're not alone. We are going to be with you every step of the way. We're going to help you to succeed and you're going to help New York City to come back through the great work that you do. Thank you, everybody.

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