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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good morning, everybody. Well, we're about to start a very important weekend. And it would be important any year – obviously, it takes on added meaning this year. Memorial Day weekend, let's remember why it exists to begin with – to honor the lives of those who gave their all for us, and to not ever let it be forgotten that people have come forward over the generations to protect all of us, to serve their nation, and gave their lives fighting for an idea of what this country is about, the freedoms we enjoy, the way we live, and the idea that we could all create something better all the time. So, this is something that is very real to me, very real in our family, because my parents, Chirlane's parents were part of that greatest generation, the World War II generation. And my dad, Chirlane's dad served in the US army during World War II. Thank God both of them came back. But I heard the stories from my dad of the guys in his unit who didn't come back. I could feel the pain every time he talked about it. The sense of loss, and the comradery, and the sense that they would never ever be forgotten by those who served with them, by their families, by their communities. So, Memorial Day is about remembering something bigger than all of us, remembering these heroes. It's obviously also a time to appreciate all those who serve us now and all those who have served us and live here in our city. Over 200,000 veterans in New York City, and we every day work to support them. It shouldn't just be on Veterans Day that we help veterans, shouldn't just be on Memorial Day that we remember those who gave their lives for us. It should be every day.

So, that's why Memorial Day exists. But we also know there's a whole other reality that has emerged over the years to Memorial Day. It is for all of us something also very different, very immediate, very human, very real. It is the unofficial start of summer. It's something we look forward to every year, and we celebrate, and you could feel the energy when you're coming up to Memorial Day weekend. So, when we think of a normal summer, we think all the things we love to do. All the time we want to spend at the beach or with family barbecues, outdoor concerts, you name it, and one day those things will be a part of our life again. I keep reminding everyone the coronavirus is time limited. New York City is not time limited. The coronavirus will be contained over time. There will be a vaccine at some point, hopefully really soon, and we'll be able to go back to so many of the things that we've known, but right now we have a very different reality, everyone knows it. And even going into this weekend, we associate with the joyous summer, the freedom of summer. We got to start our thinking with this simple thought. If you want freedom, if you want to go back to those things we love, you cannot let your guard down. You can't throw away all the progress we've made. We all have fought to get as far as we've gotten in these last weeks. We talk about every single day, and I thank you every single day, and I'm going to keep thanking you, and I'm going to keep reminding you. Memorial Day is

a time to redouble our efforts, not lose our focus, because we want to get to that better place, and we've got a lot of momentum now, we got to hold onto it.

So, when you think about it, I know people want to do the right thing just because they want to do the right thing. I know people want to do the right thing, because they want to move forward. Sometimes it helps to think about the alternative. If we get a little too loose, we're going to start going backwards. And the last thing we want is more restrictions on our lives. So, I'm going to keep reminding you, if we play this right, fewer and fewer restrictions over time, more and more normalcy, more and more restart. And we play it wrong. You go backwards, you play it really wrong. You could go backwards a long way. We cannot let that happen. I will not let that happen. So, when you go into Memorial Day, think about the many, many ways you can enjoy it – the many wonderful things about Memorial Day, even in the middle of this crisis, but be smart about how you approach it.

So, there's going to be a special effort this weekend to help people, to make sure that we do things the right way. I've been really clear about the beaches, they are closed for swimming. There will not be lifeguards. People are not supposed to go to the beach to swim. There's not going to be anything with group activity. No sports, no volleyball, no gatherings. We want to make sure that people understand what the beach is for today. You can walk on the beach. You can hang out on the beach, but do it in a manner that is consistent with everything we've been talking about. You go out for the amount of time you need, then you get back home. You socially distance the whole time. You were the face covering. These are the smart moves to keep our progress going. Now anyone who's unhappy about that, anyone who thinks it's unfair, the buck stops with me. This is a decision I'm making as the elected leader of this city to protect all of us. And I'll tell you something, I've talked to a lot of New Yorkers of all different walks of life, and the number one thing I hear is people want to play it smart, play it safe, move forward, play the long game. Not instant gratification, but how do we actually get out of this crisis, get out of this time of restrictions, and most importantly, how do we keep saving lives? So, I know it won't always be easy, but I'm going to ask everyone to keep doing what you've been doing. 8.6 million people, one team, one cause, keep devoted to this strategy because it's working.

Now, overwhelmingly we have seen people comply with these rules – overwhelmingly. You'll always see photos, and examples of some people who don't, but they are very few in the scheme of things. Vast, vast majority of New Yorkers are following the rules, working together, helping each other out. So, I'm very hopeful that this weekend at our beaches you're going to see people following the rules because they know it's the right thing to do. But if they need some reminders, of course there'll be people out there educating, giving out face coverings. We will have the Parks Department out there in force to get the word out. They've been doing an amazing job, as we talked about earlier in the week. Parks Department has been stellar in this difficult season. They've been out there educating people, helping people. Anyone without a face covering, they go up and say, “Hey, we can fix this right now. Here's a face covering for free”. They're going to keep doing that. They'll have over 150 parks personnel out across the beaches this weekend, and every year the NYPD has a summer beach detail, we will add to that detail. So, it will be hundreds of officers out there. Again, if things are going well, they're going to be in the background. If there are gatherings, if there are people trying to go into the water, Parks is going to take the lead, but if they need support from the NYPD, they will have it.

So, when you – if you're someone who particularly lives in local communities, because, again, the last thing we want to see is a lot of people on subways and buses. So, when we think about the beaches, it's folks particularly in local communities near the beaches. When you get to the beach access points, there'll be teams of City personnel there reminding people of the standards we're holding, giving out the free face coverings, counting how many people are going on the beach, checking to make sure that there's the right number of people, and we don't see any crowding on the beach, we don't see any crowding on the boardwalk. There are some parking areas. If we see those parking areas start to fill up, they're also going to set limits on that. So, the important thing is to, it's just common sense, you'll know when things are not to the standards that we've been holding all along. That's when Parks Department will step in, if needed PD will step in. And there will be vehicles constantly reminding people, no swimming, no barbecuing, no sports. The things that will cause a problem. There'll be constant reminders to people. Look, I'm going to start from the very positive position, that again, I think this'll work. I think it'll work well. I think New Yorkers have gotten the message. If they need a little extra reminder, there'll be people there to remind them. I'm going to start with a positive view that this has got to work. If we see over time that it's not working, as I've said before, we have the option of doing something more strict, which is not what I want to do, and we could put up fencing, and close off the beaches entirely, but that is not our goal. Our goal is to make it work with the standards that I've delineated, and give people the option to enjoy the beach, but in a different way than we would other Memorial Days to help us move forward in this crisis.

Now, in parks around the city, and all over the city, our social distancing ambassadors will be out in force. So, these are civilian employees of the City government – 2,300 city employees will be out educating people, reminding them, giving out free face coverings. There'll be in 230 parks citywide. And I want to tell you – talk about giving out face coverings – our ambassadors, and all city agencies, and all our partners at the community level have given out now more than 6 million face coverings in just the last couple of weeks. Originally, I said we were going to give out 7.5 million. We obviously want to increase that goal because it's gone very well, and people are enthusiastic to get the face coverings. So, we're going to more than double where we are now. We're going to go to 12.5 million, and just keep growing. So long as it's helping people to follow these rules and be safe, we're going to keep giving them out. So, right now, the 6 million we have given out will turn into a goal of 12.5 million face coverings. There'll be 50 city vehicles out. The loudspeakers reminding people of the guidance on how to handle things, reminding people there are free face coverings available, etc.

Now, a new innovation. It's fascinating, in any crisis we go through the pain and the challenge, but we also see the amazing ingenuity. I've talked about the people who came up with a way to create PPEs in New York City. The people built a ventilator here even though none were being produced here. There's amazing ingenuity right now, and right down to the neighborhood level and the block level. People are coming up with ways to keep each other safe, and new ways to approach social distancing. And one of the more interesting ones has been the social distance circles. So, there's an example right there. The idea of showing people what it's like if you're going to spend some time in the park, how to do it in a way that creates safety, and creates the right kind of distance. This is something that, as you can see right there, that's a live action shot that that worked. And we want to make sure that that kind of model is used in other places where

it could work. Something we never thought of before, it came up in the last few days. That's a good idea. We're going to see if there's other places that we should apply that idea.

Now, one of the things a lot of us are missing a lot this city – I can confess I'm missing it all the time – are amazing restaurants and bars. I spent a lot of time at those restaurants and bars, and I would love to see them back, and they will come back and due time. Normally, Memorial Day would be a time when they're very, very full. People are partying, people are having a good time, but that's not where we're at yet. So, want to remind people that there are clear standards. We're not doing any dining-in, want to remind any restaurant or bar that tries that, that is not going to end well. There will be enforcement – there has to be penalties, there will be penalties. We're going to have teams from our Office of Nightlife and from Police Department going out around the city to restaurants and bars, getting these posters up, reminding people that the idea is if you go to a restaurant, a bar, it's for takeout, keep moving or of course you can get delivery at home. We're not doing congregating, we're not doing gatherings. We want people to keep moving, observed social distancing, stay safe. So, the message is as simple as it could be – take out, don't hang out. I want to give credit to the writers of this slogan, because it's pretty damn clear. Take out, don't hang out. We did not want to see people try and create de-facto outdoor seating or de facto parties. We'd love it, but we can't do it. It's not safe. So, want to keep people moving along, make sure that we stick to the standards that are working. So, you will see in places where we've had some problems, you will see the presence of the police department and other agencies just going around to bars and restaurants, checking in any place we had a problem last weekend that will be particularly present. I know the upper East side was a focal point, you'll see some real presence there. We'll also have the Office of the Sheriff out in nine parts of the city that are particularly bar-heavy. That's the exact wording they gave me – bar-heavy – just making sure that we don't see crowding and we don't see things that would undermine the safety of all New Yorkers. So, the rules are pretty clear and we want people to enjoy themselves, but we want to get out of this crisis and every single time that people don't follow these rules, these rules, there's a chance that the disease spreads and every time they do follow the rules, we're pushing the disease back. It's as simple as that.

Now, another great way to be outside is our open streets and this has been a new initiative. And again, thanks to our colleagues in the City Council, a great idea that now that we have sufficient enforcement capacity, by the way, a lot of our city agencies are almost back up to full personnel NYPD, especially almost back up to the full personnel levels that had before the coronavirus. Now we have that sweet spot where we can do the open streets, keep them safe, make sure there's enforcement when needed, allow people to enjoy it, especially in strategic where it's going to help avoid crowding parks and other areas where it's important to have them. So, we've been off to a great start and today we are announcing a huge expansion. So far there are over 31 miles of open streets and bike lanes. Tomorrow, we will open over 13 new miles of open streets across the city. So, you'll see the exact locations, we have 1.8 miles managed by local partners local organizations that we're working with closely to keep them safe and keep them effective. 8.8 miles supported by local precincts, working with the community, 2.7 miles of park adjacent streets. All of them open tomorrow and will bring us to a grand total of 45 miles of open streets. So, this now means that we have more miles of operational open streets organized, protected, enforced. We are now having more than any place because any place in this nation, and I should say, because we have found a model that works and it's very, very gratifying to see the way

everyone's worked together. And it's something that people can enjoy and we're going to keep building on it through this crisis.

Okay. Now, another important point is to think about how as we move forward, we learn lessons and how we keep people safe. And we're constantly looking at what's happening in the right way to do things. So, we have been all of us dealing with uncharted territory these last weeks. It's kind of stunning to think we've been doing this for a little more than 10 weeks. It feels like it's been a lot longer than that, but this crisis came on and so suddenly, and we've all made a lot of adjustments and we had to figure out the right way to get our standards understood by people and acted on by people the right way to enforce, but also the right way to stand back and let people figure out how to do it themselves and let community step forward in terms of educating people, helping make sure they're social distancing. The best of all worlds of course is when people are bought into something, believe in it, and when the leadership comes from their own community enforcement is something we want to do only when absolutely necessary. So, we, obviously, a week ago, changed the NYPD approach with the focus only on gatherings, but for the day to day work of educating people, reminding them, giving out the face coverings, really getting people to feel why it's so important. Of course, we have our ambassadors, that's a wonderful group of over 2,000 people as I mentioned, but we want to go farther and we want to take this idea down to the grassroots more to the community level, more make it more of and by and for each community.

So that idea, community-based solutions is what animates the next thing I want to talk to you about. I had a remarkable conference call video call with leaders of our cure violence movement yesterday. And these are folks who have in the last few years, folks in the care violence movement, also known as a Crisis Management System, have rewritten how you fight violence from the grassroots. It's an idea that's been around for a while, but in the last few years in this city, it has blossomed, and these are extraordinary people from the community of the community. Some have had problems and challenges in their life before, but they've turned them into strength, and they've turned them into the ability to communicate to others and help them on a better path. They are mediators, they are educators, they are people who stop violence before it even happens. And I've had the privilege of getting to know a lot of these folks and getting to know a lot of these organizations and they're doing something amazing and it's every year contributing more and more to reducing gun violence in this city and saving lives. So, as a result of this conversation yesterday we agreed that it made sense for the cure violence movement to step forward in this moment of crisis and play a crucial role at the local level. Now, fighting the coronavirus just like they fight gun violence every day. So, we will work with 18 Cure Violence organizations across 21 neighborhoods of this city and use the trust that they have built in communities. The important standing they have the reach they have to educate people about the coronavirus to help people do social distancing, to make sure folks have face coverings and are using them to make sure they have a sense of all the things to do to keep themselves safe, their family safe, their community safe. This is a very exciting new initiative because it is the best way to move people when it's their own neighbors, helping them to understand what will keep them safe. And I want to thank everyone in the Cure Violence movement, the crisis management system, not only for what you do every day and you're still doing that crucial work of stopping gun violence right now, but for this new initiative that's going to expand your work further and help you save lives in a new and different way, and we're so, so appreciative for this partnership.

And speaking of partnership, some of the best partners that City government has is our nonprofit organizations. Our nonprofit and social services sector does so much good for New Yorkers, we depend on them all the time. We've put together an advisory council to help us think through how we restart, how we support this sector of these folks who really, people are depending on more than ever. And these are nonprofit organizations, a lot of them are hurting right now, they need special help, special support. That's what the conversation was about, talked last night in detail with them. I've gotten to see this work up close over at years and years, what you see there as an example from Bed-Stuy from the campaign against hunger, which I visited a few weeks ago, the amazing work that Dr. Melanie Samuel's and her team and her volunteers do to feed people in central Brooklyn. They didn't wait for the government to tell them this was important to do, they started something at the grassroots years ago and now they're, they're doing twice as much as they were doing just a few months ago to feed people in Brooklyn who needed help. This is one example, there are so many more. The folks who work in homeless shelters and in organizations that help our children settlement houses, I mean, you name it, a broad, broad range of community-based organizations. And I want to remind you, these are also unsung heroes in this fight because in communities all over the city, if you need food, you're turning to a nonprofit organization or a social service organization. If you need help staying in your home or finding someplace or God forbid, you're homeless, you're turning to someone for help. These are nonprofit organizations. If you need to be healthier for your family, a lot of people of course go to community-based clinics. If you need to be safe, think about the amazing organizations that do the noble work of protecting people from domestic violence. Go down the list, and this city couldn't be the city without these amazing nonprofit organizations. We have more and better and bigger in this city than anywhere in the country by far. And its part of what makes New York City great, it's part of why we've made the progress we've made. And I want to offer my thanks to everyone who works in our nonprofit organization serving New Yorkers. I see you and appreciate you and I have for years and years. I want New Yorkers to recognize the amazing work that folks do. We will support our nonprofit sector; we are going to find a way to keep these great organizations going through thick and thin. And I want to ask people to help them in every way you can. Thank them, anyone in your neighborhood that you know does this work. A thanks is always helpful, but a lot of them are hurting financially. If you're looking for a great place to donate, if you're looking for a way to help out, help one of your local nonprofits that are doing such important work, we will help them survive this and come back stronger and we're going to learn ways, as we talked about last night to make sure the city government supports them better in the future so they can keep doing this crucial work.

Now talking about another great nonprofit organization, I had an experience just yesterday with one, the New York Blood Center. What amazing work they do. Chirlane and I went and gave blood yesterday and this is something that's really important. As you see, that's us at the New York Blood Center location in Lenox Hill, they have locations all over the city and we need help. Let me give New Yorkers a goal and we'll keep track of this goal with you. I'd like to see a thousand New Yorkers a day give blood through this crisis to keep the supply up, to make sure we can protect our fellow New Yorkers. And I know people want to do something positive. I know people want to contribute. Again, this is essential, this is a reason to go outside and travel to get to one of these locations. Chirlane and I went in there and there you see all the locations around the city. We went in there yesterday. It was actually a very positive experience because the staff is amazing. They're positive, they're upbeat, they want to help it, make it a good

experience and they know what you're doing is so important. So, they let you know how important it is. I know people want to do something positive. I know people want to contribute. Again, this is essential, this is a reason to go outside and travel to get to one of these locations. Chirlane and I went in there, and there you see all the locations around the city. We went in there yesterday. It was actually a very positive experience because the staff is amazing. They're positive, they're upbeat, they want to help it make it a good experience and they know what you're doing is so important. So, they let you know how important it is. And I want people to recognize that you can make a big difference by giving blood, particularly want to make an appeal to people of African descent, that it's very important to give blood at this point. And there is a reason for that and people know about the scourge that is sickle cell anemia. Obviously, it hurts and hits the African-American community most deeply. When you give blood, if you are a person of African descent, it is helpful because only a small percentage of blood supply can actually be used to treat a sickle cell patient most effectively, fact is less than two percent. So, making sure there are enough blood donations that could be used for those suffering from sickle cell is crucial. So please everyone, everyone give blood. It makes such a difference. Let's hit that goal of 1,000 per day. Again, sites all over the city, essential travel to say the least. If you're able to do this, to make an appointment, go to nybc.org or call (800) 933-2566.

Now, a few quick thank you's. I'm feeling tremendous gratitude as we go on this crisis. All the people who stepped up. We have made a lot of progress, particularly when it comes to personal protective equipment, the PPEs. But thank God a lot of people keep coming forward to help. So, I want to thank some of those who have stepped up. Peter Tu, wonderful community leader, Peter Tu and American Fuso Business Community have donated 200,000 N95 masks and 2,000 thermometers. That's fantastic. Maple Tree, a real estate firm, 252,000 nonsurgical masks. Peloton, 150,000 nonsurgical mass, Deloitte, 25,000 KN95 masks and the Networks for Emergencies and Relief, 40,000 disposable masks. Transperfect translation company, which is focused on a very particular need right now. Making sure we can help people get what they need in the language they speak. They're providing 125,000 and free translation services. We thank them for that. So those are wonderful donations people are making.

Okay, as we get to the end here, I want to offer a special warm salute to our Muslim brothers and sisters in this city because we are marking the end of the month-long celebration of Ramadan. Most important part of the year for the Muslim community. Want to wish a special Eid al-Fitr to our Muslim community. This was a tough Ramadan to say the least. Just like we had a tough Passover, a tough Easter, all great faiths together are dealing with the challenge of having their holidays during this crisis. And yet there is also a message in that that people's faith was strengthened. People were reminded of all our ancestors, what they endured. The faith came through stronger than ever in this time and all the faith communities in the city supported each other. So, to all our members of the Muslim community wish you a very special moment in this holiday and we will all move forward together.

Now, to our daily indicators and this is going to be a moment to talk about what all of you have achieved. I tell you every day, but actually you have achieved more than you might've even realized. You've achieved so much that we're actually able to think about our indicators in a new way today because this is about the reality on the ground. The indicators are numbers that they actually just reflect what you're doing. So, for the last weeks, we've had these indicators now up

for about five weeks, everything was about the trajectory. And there you see that downward sloping line, and we love the fact that it's gone down and down. Everything was about trying to move in the right direction. I constantly talked to you about. I wanted all of them to go down. I want them to go down together and it was all about making clear we could do that and we could sustain it and some days we've had those ups and downs, but what's gotten me interesting is the ups and downs have been happening in a pretty narrow bandwidth. More and more what we're seeing is sustained progress, that we've gotten to a point that is the kind of level we were hoping for and we were hoping we could have sustained. And I mentioned yesterday we're seeing these numbers at a point that seems to be pretty consistent, now we got to keep it that way. I'm going to be constantly talking about it, if we don't do things right, those numbers can start to go up. If they start to go up, more restrictions could come with them.

We want to move forward. We want to get to that first phase of restart. To do that we got to stay tight. Stay disciplined with what we're doing. But what is clear is we for the first time I've seen these indicators stay consistently low and so it's time to talk about the indicators differently as we prepare for phase one. The day to day changes, the small up and downs matter less, what matters more now is staying at a low level and keeping that way. And so, we're going to be about thresholds now. So, our indicators that we talked about before were trend lines, now we're going to talk about thresholds and that's going to be the focus going forward. The threshold is simple, it's the level you want to stay below. We've been working on this constantly with our Health Department, Health + Hospitals, our whole team. And every day, of course, the Health Department has put out these statistics. And now we want to say very clearly, staying below those thresholds on a sustained basis is what makes clear to us that we are ready for more progress. So, now, we have three thresholds and I'll describe them. We want to get below them, stay below them. Again, I've talked about that 10- to 14-day window – that's still super pertinent, because that is about the incubation period for the disease. So, that tells you the trend lines. But we want to get there, stay there 10 days to 14 days and keep staying there. So, let's talk about them now and they directly relate to the previous indicators we've talked to in terms of trend lines. First, daily number of people admitted to hospitals for suspected COVID-19 – so, the threshold is to stay under 200 patients admitted per day. 200 would be about double the seasonal rate for similar types of diseases to COVID. So, we sort of grouped together similar respiratory infections. We say, what would that normal rate be? And then, what would double that be? 200 is about that magic number. If you're below 200, you're doing okay. So, that's the threshold we will now live by. Today's report is good news – 76 patients admitted. That's the daily number – 76, well below the threshold and we've been staying below the threshold. And I talked about this yesterday, we've been consistently between 50 and 80 people admitted per day. That's been a great trend in recent days. Let's stay there. And that gives us that entry to the next phase. Let's talk about number two – daily number of people in Health and Hospitals ICUs. So, this is a really important issue. When we talked about this indicator, originally, we're talking about ICU patients with COVID or suspected of having COVID. Now, as we're about to go through changes, you're going to see fewer patients with COVID, but you will see other patients start to come in with non-COVID problems, because more and more our ICU will start to deal with a bigger range of health issues. So, what we care about here is the total capacity ICU. That's obviously the measure of, are we able to deal with whatever's thrown at us? So, we'll be looking at total capacity going forward, all patients in Health + Hospitals ICUs. To-date, it's overwhelmingly been COVID patients to the tune of over 95 percent. Now, we're going to generalize it and say any and all

patients in ICUs, going forward. So, let's look at that daily number. The threshold is to be under 375, and that's, again, a hard indicator to reach in a sense it's about each individual patient fighting for their life and the work that's being done to save them, but we are steadily getting there. Today, we're at 451 – not there yet, but we are down more than 100 patients in the past 10 days and we're confident that this number will continue to decline. And, finally, indicator three, the percentage of people tested citywide who are positive for COVID. The goal was to get under 15 percent and stay under 15 percent. And, as more and more testing occurs, we're watching that percentage. We want to keep it there. Today, we're at 11 percent tested positive. The last 10 days, we have been below the 15 percent threshold. So, again, very positive trends overall. And so, I will from now on continue to talk to you about the indicators, three of them, but it'll be in the vein of the thresholds. Two, we are there. On one and three – indicators one and three, we are there. Indicator two, not yet there, but we think we will be there soon and then we have to hold it. So this is all about everything you've been doing and about keeping up this progress. But I want people to see the fruits of your labors. You've gotten us this far, now let's keep going.

Okay. A few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, we'll take questions from the media. And please remind me of the name and outlet of each journalist.

Moderator: Hi, all. Just a reminder that we have Police Commissioner Shea, Health Commissioner Dr. Barbot, President and CEO of Health + Hospitals Dr. Katz, Commissioner Silver, Transportation Commissioner Trottenberg, Deputy Director of the Office of Neighborhood Safety at the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice Cumberbatch, and Senior Advisor Dr. Varma on the phone. With that, I will start with Henry from Bloomberg.

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

Mayor: Good, Henry. How are you?

Question: I'm good. You know, a bunch of reporters have a problem with the way in which these news briefings are structured. We don't know when we're going to be called, we don't know who is really on this call with us. We don't get an opportunity to ask a follow-up question because you mute our mics, and it's not a very productive way to conduct these news briefings from our point of view. We've had discussions with your press office about this. We still haven't seen any progress about this. And, today, in particular, when we see that you're moving the data criteria to a different kind of data and we're looking at these graphs and they're not explicit in the numbers that we're seeing on these charts, it's extremely frustrating to a lot of us that we're in this mode of communicating with you. And I think that I just felt compelled to bring up these issues and see if we can get them resolved. A lot of times you misunderstand our question or you don't directly answer it and we don't have an opportunity to follow it up. So, I just wanted to raise this issue and hope that our [inaudible] that we can resolve this with your office.

Mayor: Thank you, Henry. Let me just say on that and then if you have a question on the matters at hand. Again, I think – and I've talked to a lot of New Yorkers about this, that people have found these daily briefings extremely helpful and informative and that I think you guys have asked a lot of really pertinent questions and has led to a very helpful conversation and a lot of clear answers. But I'm happy to talk to you about it. I'll give you a call and we can talk through if there's other ideas to think about. I'm not going to respond right now, because obviously we're in the middle of doing this. But let me happily talk to you about that and we'll think about it together. Now, do you have questions in the here and now?

Question: Well, my question is basically, it's very similar to the questions that a lot of us have been asking over several weeks, which is, you know, as the data indicates that people have stayed home, they've sheltered in place, the numbers are going to go down as people hunker down. But as soon as we relax these numbers – or relax these restrictions, the numbers of cases will invariably go up as long as the virus is present in our population. We know this. You know this. So, the measures of declining caseloads, all they mean is that our hospitals have more capacity to handle new cases –

Mayor: Henry, I want to just give a little time check. We do have a time limit here. So, could you just tell me what you're trying to ask?

Question: My question is this, in light of these numbers going down, how did they promote the opportunity for New Yorkers to get back to some semblance of normalcy in restaurants, in construction, in commerce, in retail? How is it – you know, when is the point at which New York can begin to maintain some semblance of normalcy?

Mayor: Right. Henry, let me – again, we've got a lot to cover and a lot of people willing to ask and I obviously have other things I've got to do as well today. So, let me cut to the chase here. We talked about it the last few days very clearly. Right now, again, if we keep doing the work we're all doing – 8.6 million people – if we do it right, if people stick to the plan, stick to the guidance, we will move to phase one in either the first or second week of June. I said it yesterday clear as a bell. I'm saying it again today. Now, we've got to get there, which means people have got to stick to the plan. But that is where all of our indicators are pointing, that is where the State indicators are pointing, and phase one is clearly delineated. It is manufacturing, construction, wholesale and curbside pickup retail. We will have a lot more to say on how that will work on any specific restrictions or standards within that. What it means for mass transit and how to address that. There's a lot of pieces we will be putting together. And I expect to be explaining a lot of that over the remaining days of May before we act in the first or second week of June, but that's where everything's lining up. These standards right now, we are in a very good position on two of them and confident on the third one, the ICUs, and if we stay below them, that is a sustainable level. I hear you when you say it is inevitable there might be some growth as people do more, but our job is to really keep that as limited as humanly possible and keep it within these thresholds. So, even if there's some increase, to keep it very limited so we can stay under these thresholds and then move from phase one to phase two, etcetera. If we can't stay under the thresholds, we have a problem.

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: Was there – did I miss something there?

Question: Well, we've heard about June, we haven't really heard the specifics of how, of what will be open, and how we will begin to see life in some sense of [inaudible] –

Mayor: Henry, again, I'm going to conclude on this and then – and, again, we will have a conversation about any ways that we might be able improve these press briefings. But I'll just put a [inaudible] on it again, and then, for your colleagues, for them, we're going to continue where we are now until we make an alteration, if we do. So for everyone else, going forward, for the rest of this press briefing, you get two questions upfront if you want to use him. And, Henry, to conclude, the fact is that we've given you a timeline. We know the types of industries, we're talking to folks in those industries, that's why we have the advisory council to figure out – and beyond – to figure out what's going to work for them. We have time between now and when we actually make the announcement to answer some of the outstanding questions. That's what we're going to do in the rest of May. We will get into the first or second week of June and then tell people when we've gotten to the point that we can make the move. So, we're going to definitely be leading into it, but there's still work to be done to perfect those standards. So, I've told you everything I can tell you today that is settled. As each additional matter becomes settled, we'll announce it.

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

Question: Hey. Good morning, Mr. Mayor, and everybody. I'm curious if you could expand and explain a little bit – I'm confused – doesn't mean that this isn't not confusing, maybe my brain is just fried – but previously with the daily indicators, the City needed 10 consecutive days of daily indicators all moving in the right direction at the same time. So, could you explain a little bit more now about the thresholds? And then secondly for a fun question, what's your favorite beach in New York City?

Mayor: Coney Island, unquestionably. I love Coney Island for so many reasons. I love it because of the history, I love it because of the culture. I think that's one of the – when I have – when we get back to the time where people can visit from outside New York City, one of the places I try to always bring them, if I only can take them a few places is Coney Island, because I think it exemplifies so much that's good about New York City. And it's an ocean beach, I mean it's a beautiful beach, let alone the amusements, everything else. So, far and away – God bless the other beaches, but far and away Coney Island.

Yeah, no, Katie, I don't think your brain is fried. I think all of us are struggling with the nonstop dealing with this issue now for weeks and weeks and weeks. So, I'll try again on this. The trend line was what mattered before, because, bluntly, until we all could prove to each other that we could do shelter and place in social distancing and face coverings and knock these numbers down with 8.6 million people, until we could see it on a sustained basis, it was highly debatable and we had to prove it. And the trend lines were a great measure, because they said to us, we couldn't just, you know, make a little bit of progress. We have to make a lot of progress. We have to keep moving in the right direction. But it's a very high bar, unquestionably – we said 10

to 14 days, all moving in the same direction. But we then realized in recent days that with two of the three indicators, we are below the threshold we would need to be at on a longterm basis. In fact, in the case of the hospital admissions, we were even below, in some cases, the days that we had seen in previous years for similar respiratory diseases. So, it got to the point of saying, hey, we need to look at our definition and see if it makes sense at this moment. We're going to always, always vary our approach according to new information and new realities. We're all learning together about this. So, it's this simple. The thresholds now make sense. This is a standard. If you just think about it in this, sort of, common sense way – if you could stick to these thresholds for June, July, August, September, October this year, next year, you would be fine. I mean, you still would be fighting this battle, and we want to save every single human being. But in the sense of the city as a whole, if you were at these levels where so few people were having to go into the hospital each day and so few people in the scheme of things were in ICUs, your hospitals would be safe, your ability to protect people and serve them in the hospitals would be safe, and the number of people who were infected would be very small in the scheme of things, and we would be in the position to keep deepening our restart. So, that's why we believe these are now the smart standards. It's a measure of improvement, Katie. It's a change for a reason. It's because actually things got better and kept better for a meaningful period of time and people did it right. We've got to keep doing it right. And if we see those numbers start to go up and we start to approach those thresholds going too far up, we're going to call that out distinctly and talk about whatever changes we need to make.

Moderator: Next we have Juliet from 1010 WINS.

Question: Hi. Good morning, Mr. Mayor. How are you?

Mayor: Good. How are you, Juliet?

Question: I'm fine. And thank you for the acknowledgement yesterday. I think we're all there to help and I'm glad it's working out.

Mayor: Thank you.

Question: My question is, as far as this weekend is concerned, can people physically sit on the beach with a chair or a blanket, or is this just walking? And if you can't picnic or barbecue or go to the playground in the park, what can you do there? And my second question is, what are your plans for the virtual graduation ceremony?

Mayor: Ah, excellent. I spoke to the Chancellor and his team on the virtual graduation just a few days ago and we are going to have more to say on that. Typically, as you know, Juliet, these kinds of celebrations happen third or fourth week of June. So, we're talking about, you know, we have a lot of kids who would be graduating normally in June. There's a lot of kids who also do graduate in August. So, we're figuring out how to do that, how to balance and reach each groups of kids – each group of kids. But we will have announcements on that, I'd say in the next week, maybe 10 days, something like that. And then on the beaches, yeah, you can walk, you can sit down, you can bring a chair, you can bring a blanket, but you have to follow the same concepts – socially distance from people who are not a part of your own household, if you're going to be

close to people at any point, wear a face mask. So, we want to make sure that people who – again, especially folks who live nearby can take advantage of it, but we will not allow crowding. If we start to see any crowding, we're going to make sure to limit. We're not going to allow swimming, there will not be lifeguards. But if folks just want to go and enjoy the beach for a period of time in these other much simpler ways – it's definitely simpler. You know, we don't have all the things we used to have at this exact moment. If you just want to take in the simple beauty of the beach, it's there for you, but with a lot of good watchful eyes from the Parks Department and the Police Department.

Moderator: Next we have Rich from WCBS 880.

Question: Hi there, Mr. Mayor. Happy Memorial Day Weekend.

Mayor: Thank you, Rich.

Question: And just wondering, you know, given these new indicators, the thresholds you speak of, how long do they have to hold until you can pull the trigger on an announcement, if you will. And by what date would you like to make a definitive announcement or do you have a date in mind? And also, what are your Memorial Day plans?

Mayor: Well, I would just say, Rich, like everyone else. I wish I had more elaborate Memorial Day plans. We used to go with the kids every Memorial Day to see their grandma who lived up in Vermont – Chirlane's mom. And Memorial Day was like a really special time of year and family gatherings. I don't have any particular deep family plans this year. We're keeping it real simple. As I said, I think people are learning to appreciate their neighborhood and just stay local in their neighborhood and appreciate a lot of things in the city that maybe they didn't recognize before. So, we're going to be super simple, super local. And then on your question about timing – so, to me, Rich, I'm just looking at these numbers. I'm looking at the consistency of them. I'm looking at our indicators, the State indicators, and I said everything's pointing to either the first or second week in June. I don't have a preferred day, like I must have it by X-day. I want it to be the day when we are convinced we're there. Every day – sooner I want, of course, in terms of restarting the economy and getting people to start back towards their livelihoods. But I'm all about the health and safety. This is – and I'm playing the long game here, I want us to get it right. I want us to move into phase one and sustain it. Sure, that might be some setbacks, but I don't want the big setbacks. I don't want the boomerang and that's what I'm guarding against. So, the day – it's an organic thing, Rich – the day that we can do it safely is the day I want to go. But it looks damn clear right now it's the first or second week in June to go into phase one. Again, that's manufacturing, construction, wholesale and retail only for curbside pickup. Those are the big standards and then we'll fill in a lot of blanks between now and then about how to do those things and how to approach them safely. But I think it's going to be first or second week in June unless, unless people get undisciplined and start to lose track of the standards and we start to see a resurgence. That kind of thing could slow us down. But if we keep to what we've been doing up to now, it seems very clear, it's going to be a date in the first 14, 15 days of June.

Moderator: Next we have Jillian from WBAI.

Question: Hi there, Mr. Mayor. I have to agree with you on Coney Island, if only for that classic New York City film, *The Warriors*. So here are my questions, they're all related. On May 7th, the Governor extended the eviction moratorium from June 20th to August 20th, but housing activists say he essentially ended it. He's put the onus on tenants making things much more difficult, fewer protections, a lot of confusion and little guidance. And then earlier this week the courts issued a directive allowing remote evictions to start taking place against existing victims. So my questions are what is the City going to do regarding things like the right to counsel because you're going to need it again. And the second is, is there anything planned for commercial tenants who have fewer rights than housing tenants? Because there's already an eviction crisis going on that preceded the pandemic. So those are the two questions.

Mayor: Thank you, Jillian. No, those are great questions and I thank you for that. So, no, I don't think there should be any evictions. So, let me start with principle. I don't think there should be any evictions during this crisis. And I've said there should be at least a two-month window after this crisis. And you know, I don't think, and I appreciate that the State extended the moratorium. I really do, but I want them to go farther. We – there's no schedule that says we will be done with the coronavirus crisis by August. I think we could be greatly improved by August, but we're not going to be done. So, until we are really substantially back to normal, there should not be evictions. Whether they are commercial or residential, there just shouldn't be evictions. It doesn't make sense in the middle of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression to be evicting people. We need to give people a timeline and a grace period thereafter, once we're out of the crisis because it's all about people having money to pay their rent with. And if they have no source of income, it's not their fault if they can't pay the rent.

Now I want to be clear, if someone owns a building, they have expenses too and they ultimately have to be made whole in some form or fashion. The ideal would be for the federal government to do the kinds of things that would help everyday working people and help small businesses and not leave people in this kind of horrible situation. So the best thing would be a stimulus that embraces the notion of covering people's back rent and directly subsidizing it so we can all be made whole and move forward. But while we're fighting for things like that, there should not be evictions. We're going to work to in every way we can, help tenants with those free legal services we put in place, the right to counsel. So anybody who fears an eviction right now should call 3-1-1 and if we can give you free counsel, we will. But I think it should be a simple standard, extend all eviction moratoriums of all kinds, no evictions of any kind, commercial or residential until this crisis is over. And then some.

Moderator: Next we have Gloria from NY1.

Question: Thank you. Good morning Mr. Mayor. So it sounds like you're starting to move in a direction where the question becomes more about risk and risk mitigation and less about an all-out avoidance of that risk. So with that in mind and what we've seen in the past for example, is that total abstinence never really does work. So as we enter this period where people really are tired and they're struggling and they want to get back to work, they want to see their loved ones, what is the City doing to really teach New Yorkers about how to live life in this moment? Because people to some extent want that guidance. So beyond social distancing circles and posters, which are all useful and they're working, how has the administration taken on this part of

the effort? What are some of the things that New Yorkers could look forward to? And for example, have you considered using the color system? We saw this post 9/11 where we would, the City would issue a warning, if there was a possibility of a threat, we would be in red or yellow. Have you considered doing something like that? Say if there was an outbreak that you could tell New Yorkers, okay, right now we are in a red zone. So people would know that they have to kind of put up their guard even more than they have been doing as we start doing this reopening thing?

Mayor: Yeah, that's a really interesting point, Gloria. We're going to look at all sorts of possibilities and that one is a very worthy one. But I think what's interesting here is when we were fighting against terrorism and warning people against terrorism, of course it came with the danger, it could be anywhere, anywhere. You know, any place at any time. And the reality we're going to be facing now is we might well see those very localized challenges in a single building, for example, in a single company, that can be addressed in a more immediate way. So I think your initial frame is right. We are not even at this moment, we're not in a no risk stance, but we're in a very, very low risk stance. I think you're right to say if we go into phase one, in a sense, you're implicitly doing risk mitigation, but you're doing a very sharp form, I believe, a very sharp form of risk mitigation. That's the way we're structuring it. I think the State standards make a lot of sense. They're careful. They go through stages. You have to prove each stage before you move to the next one. Our indicators, again, just look at them absolutely – like forget that we've moved this whole distance and forget what was before. Just look at them today and look at these numbers. If there's 76 people admitted to hospitals for suspected COVID-19, even, not everyone that may even have COVID in the final analysis after they're tested, but even if it's 76 who have COVID compared to where we were. This is now a situation if you're holding at that level, you can manage it. You can protect people's lives. And again, we would always be guarding against any resurgence. So we would put the foot on the gas more if we needed to, whatever it took.

So yeah, I think yes there is a risk mitigation viewpoint, but a very sharp, tight version of that. Very clear ability to turn on and off restrictions quickly if needed. Yes, to teaching new ways because as we talk about phase one, we're going to have to talk very overtly about how you go about proper manufacturing, construction, wholesale and retail, curbside pickup. You know, we're going to go over those standards, those rules, how they're going to be enforced, what kind of social distancing happens. So we're always going to be teaching new ways until this is over. But I think your point about color codes, we aren't using that now, but it's a real interesting idea or things like that that help people to know exactly where we stand. And then if we have a problem, see if it's a problem that could be addressed in a very local way, if that solves it or if it's something that needs to be addressed on a bigger level.

Moderator: Next we have Debra Lee from the Manhattan Times and Bronx Free Press.

Question: Hey, good morning everyone. I wanted to address some of the concerns that some of the neighborhoods who have been disproportionately impacted by COVID, and arguably by some of the social distancing enforcement are facing as they go into this weekend. Can you speak Mayor and Police Commissioner Shea to those concerns and what they should be preparing for? I know that this is the official start of summer, but for many who are going to be

not able to get to beaches or spend any real time outdoors and recreation like sports, this is going to be a very difficult weekend and not necessarily one to mark with a great deal of celebration. So I wonder if you could speak to that specifically to those concerns? And then also forgive me, there's also a conversation about a greater investigation into how the City has handled the underlying concerns about COVID and the health inequities that existed, including the Department of Justice probe that some are calling for. I wonder if you could speak to that and also have Commissioner Barbot weigh in on that?

Mayor: So on that again, we are, I want to say, and I want to give credit to the Health team and I know this is something that Commissioner Barbot believed in strongly that we put out the transparent data about the disparities as soon as we had it in a form that we believed was accurate. And very soon after the absolute height of this crisis when all of our energies were going into just trying to save our health care system and save as many lives as possible and keep the health care system from collapsing. So Gloria – I'm sorry, Debra Lee, I feel strongly that we did that in very close proximity to the absolute high point where everything was all hands on deck. And then as soon as we were able to confirm that information, we started talking about it openly and started acting on it with the community based testing, with the outreach initiatives, the advertising, the focus on the community clinics, the telehealth, all of the things to get more deeply into the communities that were most affected. So I think it's really clear that, especially given all of us and that we came here to fight disparity, when we saw it we immediately turned our energies to addressing it. And we will for the long term. And that is what our Fair Recovery Taskforce has focused on. Our internal working group, City leaders, City government leaders on inclusion and equity. So much of the effort that will be engineered in the days to come will be about addressing these fundamental disparities and using this moment despite the pain of the crisis to also find the transformation in the crisis and change the city profoundly in terms of addressing disparity in general and particularly health care disparities. So that's underway. Any, any part of government that's looking at the situation, I'm quite certain there'll be different reviews and that's understood. But we're not waiting on anyone else to review the history or assess from their own perspective. We already are acknowledging unacceptable disparities and acting on those disparities.

So let me turn to Commissioner Barbot and then I'll come back on the weekend and social distancing and all and speak to that and then turn to the Commissioner. I also want to get Eric Cumberbatch into this in a moment to talk about the Cure Violence piece. So first Commissioner Barbot, do you want to speak to that?

Commissioner Barbot: Yes, sir. And thank you Debra Lee for the question. Because you know, I want to just start off by saying that I appreciate the issue that you're trying to bring out. And I couldn't agree more that the fact that black and brown New Yorkers are dying twice the rate of white New Yorkers is alarming and distressing. And we are committed as we have been committed during the course of this administration, to addressing those underlying drivers. The reality is that during this response we in the Health Department did something that really was unprecedented. We released data before it was fully complete because we saw an emerging trend with regards to black and brown people being more affected. And we didn't want to wait until the data was a hundred percent completed. We saw the trend emerging and we didn't want to wait. And so, you know, I think that, as the Mayor alluded to, there will be ongoing initiatives. There

will be ongoing reviews. I think the important point to note here is that these disparities and outcomes have really been to a great, great, great degree a product of decades of disinvestment driven by structural racism. And even though this administration has really been quite in the lead about reinvesting in our communities, the amount of money that the Mayor has put into the public hospital system, the amount of money that we have put into M/WBEs, all of those investments to try and undo decades of structural racism, I think only take us so far. And so, you know, the sad reality is that in spite of our efforts, there has been this disproportionate impact on communities of color and it really is a call to action for all of us that as we emerge from this public health crisis, we do it with a racial equity lens at our center.

Mayor: Yep. Exactly right. And also, I think Dr. Barbot is making a crucial point. Debralee, we're going to get you an updated number in the coming days, but a few years back Juan Gonzalez did an analysis and talked about the billions of dollars that have been transferred, you know, wealth redistribution that had been achieved through initiatives like pre-K and the affordable housing efforts and paid sick leave and so many other things this administration has been focused on, and that number has gone up quite a bit and we need to give you an updated number. To Dr. Barbot's point, nothing like that's ever happened in New York City history. And yet it's still not enough. So, there's a lot more redistribution that has to happen. There's a lot more transformation that has to happen. What we intend to do with all the different platforms I've talked about led by our Fair Recovery Task Force is talk about much deeper changes that need to happen in this city.

But that is just the beginning. I have said so many times, I can't count, you cannot change New York City just from within New York City. Obviously, we need the State government to be a part of this and even more so the federal government, if we had universal health care in this country, we would be having an entirely different discussion about disparities. If we had the kind of affordable housing programs we need, the kind of support for public housing we need, we'd be having an entirely different discussion. We got to stop kidding ourselves. And I think New Yorkers are very proud and we are very, in a funny way, insular. We think about ourselves all the time and what we can do here, and we can do a lot here, but you know what – and they say, no man, no woman is an island, well, no city is an island either. And if we're really, really going to deal with these disparities, it means maximum transformational effort in New York City, but also getting real about how much has to change at the federal level. And I think that opportunity actually is looming in November in a good way for more transformative change.

On the question of folks being out and about this weekend in their neighborhoods. And obviously with restrictions and not being able to do a lot of the things they would like to do, it will be difficult, very quickly because we have a little bit of time crunch here. I'm going on WNYC soon, Commissioner Shea, if you could just speak to, in light of our new approach that we announced a week ago, how NYPD is going to comport itself in neighborhoods, understanding people are going through a lot. And then I want Eric Cumberbatch to just jump in briefly and give people a flavor of, as the Cure Violence Movement starts to get more and more engaged in taking the lead on social distancing, what that's going to feel like at the neighborhood level as well. Commissioner Shea first.

Police Commissioner Dermot Shea: Yep, good morning. everyone. Happy Memorial Day weekend to everyone on the call. I think that, you know, our position from the beginning has been one of trying to do education, trying to do cooperation through compliance, always having summonses and unfortunately arrest as a last resort. You know, I think the numbers bear that out. And we've moved even further recently. You know, with some of the recent events throughout the city, I think it's incumbent upon all of us. There's been discussions between PD and community groups, PD and elected officials, PD and our partners. I know Eric is going to speak next. I think it takes all working together and trying to gain compliance and recognizing that it is very stressful times for all New Yorkers. So, I think what you're going to see this weekend is continued – you'll see a high visibility of NYPD employees from School Safety and Parks auxiliaries coming on next week in the parks.

You'll see a number of uniform police officers both at the beaches as well as parks, but they're going to be out there as stewards. The last thing we want to do is be, at this stressful time for the city, resorting to some summonses. So, I think you'll see more of the same in that respect from one corner of the city to one end of the city to another. I expect it to be, considering everything that we've been through, considering the weather, I think it's going to be a very nice weekend and I encourage all New Yorkers to get out there, stop and talk to the cops, stop and talk to the cops, engage in that dialogue. And I think that's really what it's all about. And I do have to just say one last thing. I love the Cyclone. I certainly love Brooklyn, and the Mets play in Brooklyn, but there is no comparison, the number one beach is clearly, clearly Rockaway Beach.

Mayor: Okay. We're having a little, a little borough pride showing here. So, I appreciate you being a proud son of Queens and I will continue to assert the superiority of Coney Island. Eric Cumberbatch, thank you for your leadership in all the work we do in City Hall in terms of criminal justice reform, in terms of bringing communities to the fore, in terms of making change, and obviously all you've done to help build the Cure Violence Movement in the city. So, just give us a quick sense so people can feel it, of what it will look like to have Cure Violence folks out, encouraging social distancing.

Deputy Director Eric Cumberbatch, Office to Prevent Gun Violence: Sure. Thank you, Sir. Local leaders from the community that have pre existing relationships with the community, that have in depth knowledge of the culture within neighborhoods, in depth knowledge of individuals that may want to do very traditional events or hold functions, really engaging, focusing on engaging with individuals, sharing best practices around safety, and really how to best utilize the urban scape. So, we'll have partners across 21 different communities out on the street from the community of the community that have deep inroads and deep touch with individuals that ultimately City agencies and government have struggled to reach. So, at the core this is really about empowering the community to be the ones at the forefront to create the change that they want to see in their community.

Mayor: Excellent. Thank you very much, Eric.

Moderator: Last question for today. Jeff Mays from the New York Times.

Question: Hey, good morning, Mr. Mayor. I totally agree with you about Coney Island since I grew up there [inaudible] --

Mayor: [Laughter]

Question: – [Inaudible] Shea, you know, Rockaway is great but there's nothing like the Coney Island Boardwalk. Anyway, quick question about beaches since everyone's [inaudible] to go there. We learned this morning that lifeguards are being trained now in anticipation of possibly reopened beaches for swimming in June. Can you just give us any more details about that plan and exactly when you think beaches may be ready to open for swimming?

Mayor: Absolutely, Jeff. And I appreciate your affirmation of Coney Island. It's going to be a running theme here and I did not know you grew up there. Now that I know you are a native Brooklynite, I like you even more. So, thank you for standing up for Brooklyn. The fact is we are getting the lifeguards ready right now. I'll have Commissioner Silver speak to it, but we're getting them ready right now. Now, I think, Jeff, it connects to the whole question of progression here. So, right now if we're saying in the first or second week of June, we expect to be able to – again, if everyone keeps doing what they need to do, we expect to be able to move into phase one. But remember phase one, construction, manufacturing, wholesale, and retail only in the sense of curbside pickup. So, it's about limiting contact between people. Those are all part of phase one because they come with very limited need for people to be close together. And beaches at full strength come with people really being close together. And the whole idea of a beach, of course, you know what Coney Island looks like on a summer weekend, it's lots and lots of people in close proximity and they would like to have all the things they normally can have there, the concessions and play, you know, volleyball or whatever it is. Everyone would like the whole experience.

We're not there yet to say the least. We're just trying to get to phase one and hold phase one where we're not doing any large gatherings, we're not doing concerts, we're not doing sports events, and obviously beaches are similar to that in lots of ways. So, what I'd say to you is we have to kind of earn our way into phase one through phase one, on the phase two, and then later in the summer if we keep making steady progress, there's a real opportunity to look at doing more with our beaches. And remember for the time being, even if we got to that point with all the restrictions that the State has on all beaches in the state, you know, real limitations on how many people can be on the beach, on parking, you know, all sorts of limitations on what kind of activities. So, it's just a long way in one step at a time. We can't give you a date when we could open up beaches more, but it's on the table as a possibility. In terms of the lifeguards being ready, that's moving now. Commissioner Mitch Silver, talk to us about when – what you're doing to get the lifeguards ready and when you would have them ready so that if we could move forward, we know that piece is in waiting and ready to go.

Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver, Department of Parks and Recreation: Well, thank you, Mayor and thank you for the question. We started training lifeguards this week. As you know, beach lifeguards are really the strongest and most experienced because they have to execute a rescue in the beach situation. So, we found a way to socially distance our training for the lifeguards rather than having it at one location, pool. We've now established several locations so

that they can social distance as they're being trained. We expect it'll take a few weeks. We want them to be strong and conditioned and then at that point we'll work with the Mayor and other public health guidance to determine when it's safe to bring back the lifeguards. So, it's not just training. We want to make sure that the lifeguards are ready, but at the same time we want to make sure it is safe. People continue to social distance and that we can do it in a safe and responsible manner. So, that already is underway and it should take a few weeks.

Mayor: Okay, thanks so much, Mitch. And the bottom line to Jeff's question, Jeff, is that the lifeguards will be ready long before we would be able to push the button for any kind of deeper reopening on beaches so people can rest assured that piece will be ready to go.

Let me conclude real quickly and just say, look, this is going to be a special time of the year, this weekend. Just remember, again, it is to first and foremost honor those who have served us and in the spirit of their service let's serve each other, let's be there for each other. So, yeah, we're going to have fun this weekend, we always do, but we're going to have it a different way. There's still lots of wonderful things that people can do while staying safe. But remember right now we're talking about we are just a few weeks away from a big step forward in this city. If we can hold, if we can get below these thresholds, stay below them consistently, we're going to go into phase one, we're going to start the first process of reopening. That's really exciting. Let's hold onto that momentum. Let's build that momentum so we can get there. So, whatever else, the many good things I hope people are able to do this weekend, I want to wish everyone a Happy Memorial Day weekend. I really want us to be happy because we kept making progress and we got to the point where we could open up a little more and take another step towards a better life in this city. Thank you, everyone, and have a great weekend.

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