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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good morning, everybody. We're going to talk today later on about some of the challenges that this city is facing as we continue to fight back against a second wave of the coronavirus. And we're going to talk about everything we need to do to continue to protect ourselves as a city. And as with every time we get together, I'm going to talk about the role that New Yorkers play. And the fact is it comes down to the people of this city each and every time to step up and people have done it heroically, brilliantly. And we need that more than ever.

But today we're also going to talk about the role that people play in working together with our police, to protect all of us, to keep the city safe. Today we're going to talk about the importance of moving forward as a city. We have a very bright future, and that future is going to be based on the people of this city, rebuilding this city, bringing it back, restarting our economy, recovering from this crisis. That effort by the people of the city who have proven incredible resilience and strength is what's going to make the difference in the future in New York City.

And what we've found over years is when the people in neighborhoods all over the city work with police, that's what truly makes us safe. We learned a long time ago, having a great police force is crucial. And continuing to improve that police force and our strategies, our approaches that matters so much, but nothing is as important as bonding police and community together. That's when really extraordinary things happen. So today we're going to focus on what it means to really make neighborhood policing come alive, to take our values, the values of the city. We believe in equality. We believe in fairness, we believe in community. Bringing those values together and deepening our strategy of neighborhood policing. To do that, we always need the right leadership. To do that we need to keep moving forward leaders who truly share that vision and understand it personally and passionately, and are going to act on it. And today a new generation of leaders is being announced, a new generation of leaders in the NYPD who will help us move forward. And I want to thank Commissioner Shea who has made it a point for years as we've worked together, to identify great talent, up and coming talent and move them forward. Because he believes in constantly rejuvenating and building the ability and the leadership of the NYPD. So with that, I'm going to turn to our Commissioner for some very important new announcements.

Police Commissioner Dermot Shea: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Good morning, everyone. Almost immediately we will have announcements you will hear about a series of moves that are taking place within the Police Department at the highest levels. We'll get to that shortly, but first, none of them are more important than the naming of the next Chief of Patrol for the largest police department in this country. As you can see, and probably the worst kept secret to my left is Chief Juanita Holmes. And I am beyond proud and ecstatic from Juanita on a personal level, but also

on a professional level, to tell you now that Juanita will be the next and first woman, Chief of Patrol for the New York City Police Department. Before I let Juanita talk, let me just talk to you about Juanita for a second on a personal level. When I was named and had the honor of being named Police Commissioner last year, which seems like quite a while ago, as we – I think we would all agree, Nita was not even a member of the New York City Police Department at the time. But I have a long history of friendship with Juanita. I've seen her work up close. I've seen her leadership skills. I can tell you that she has walked the walk and she talks the talk. She has been a precinct commander. She has been a PSA commander. She has been a borough commander. She understands this city. She understands the importance of neighborhood policing. She also understands the importance of keeping people safe. I think she is the complete package. I couldn't be more proud to be here with her and with the Holmes family. This is going to come up no doubt. There are – you hear about Blue families and police families, but then there is the Holmes family, which is really on a – it's kind of like the Brady Bunch. It's a complete different level. So without further ado, let me introduce the next Chief of Patrol for the New York City Police Department.

Incoming Chief of Patrol Juanita Holmes, NYPD: Thank you, Commissioner. Thank you so much. First, I want to thank Commissioner Shea for this privilege to continue to serve the people of New York City as the Chief of Patrol. I'm grateful and humbled to continue serving under his leadership. The NYPD is my family. And as the Commissioner said, literally I have 16 immediate family members that serve with me in this department and proud to do so. I also have the family, my NYPD family, which is my inherited family, my chosen family. And I like to thank each and every one of them, because I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for so many of them that shared my vision. I think about – we have some of the finest women and men in this department. They love what they do. They love the city, and they're very selfless when doing so. I thank everyone for their hard work. And I look forward to just serving alongside of them. As Chief of Collaborative Policing and in every role I think I've played in this department, equality, fairness, transparency has always been at the very heart of what I do. And as Chief of Patrol, this is how I will lead every day. So I'm so grateful for this opportunity. Thank you.

Mayor: Thank you. Go ahead. Back to you.

Commissioner Shea: So with that move which will take effect tomorrow, we have a series of other moves and I'll highlight them as you can see on the screen. First, we're going to have Chief Eddie Delatorre, who is currently our Chief of Transit, thankfully is not leaving us. He is merely sliding over to assist us in the labor relations field. So he will be sliding over as Chief of Labor Relations. Next, we have Chief Kim Royster who is going to be taking over as Chief of Transportation in a field that was opened up tragically with the passing of Billy Morris some months ago. Third, we have Assistant Chief Kathleen O'Reilly, and these transfers will come with promotions, who will be receiving a third star and replacing Chief Eddie Delatorre as the Chief of Transit for the nation's largest transit police. Next up replacing Kathy O'Reilly in Manhattan North as the borough commander, Chief, now receiving a second star, Phil Rivera. And as I recite these names, and many of these people I've personally over the years worked with, Phil worked with me many, many years ago in the Bronx, in the 44th Precinct. And he will be a tremendous asset in Manhattan North. He's already assigned there, but now he is taking the reins as its leader. And last but not least. Inspector Lola Obe, who will shortly be receiving a star

and be Chief Obe is replacing Juanita who vacated the position some time ago as the Chief at School Safety division. So a series of moves that will really round out our leadership team at such an important critical point in New York City. Thank you.

Mayor: Thank you so much, Commissioner. And Commissioner, I commend you for the people you've chosen extraordinarily talented, experienced members of the NYPD now stepping into leadership roles. I want to thank you for continuing to develop leadership that truly believes in a neighborhood policing vision, and that represents all of New York City. We know that a police force that listens to the people, works with the people, represents the people, understands the people is a police force that will be effective. And that's what neighborhood policing has been all about. And these new leaders will help us take that to the next level. I want to extend my congratulations to all who have been promoted today. Many of whom I've had the pleasure of working with closely. And I know they're an incredibly talented group.

I want to say to Chief Holmes, your family story really does defy description. It's absolutely amazing. The commitment of you and your family members to this city and to the NYPD, I've never seen an example so extraordinary of one family giving so much. But what you have done in every role you've had has been exceptional. And Chief, you know, it's a very critical moment in New York City history. You are being called to leadership at a particularly important time. But that is a time also when so many great things can happen in a transformative moment. You should everyone understand that Chief Holmes, just the experience alone recommends her for this role. But it's also her heart. It's also her understanding of our communities and her real passion for continuing to deepen the relationship between police and community. All of that is what matters most, but we have to also acknowledge and be really proud of the history being made today. The first woman ever to reach the highest levels of the uniform ranks of the NYPD. The first African American woman to be Chief of Patrol. These are important steps for our city.

So we have a lot of work to do, and a lot will be resting on your shoulders Chief. As Chief of Patrol, it is a fact everyone should know, as Chief of Patrol of the NYPD, Chief Holmes will have direct leadership over more officers than are members of any other police force in America. Just Patrol in New York City is bigger than any other police force in America. But she is ready and she has proven over the years that she's the right person for a crucial moment in our history. So, congratulations.

Incoming Chief Holmes: Thank you so much Mayor.

Mayor: Congratulations. All right, everyone. We've got a lot to do to move out of this pandemic, to move out of this crisis, this perfect storm, to overcome it. And we will. I have no doubt. People ask me all the time, is New York City going to come back? How is New York City going to come back? And I keep saying, just look at the history over and over again. Look at the people of this city. They've fought through so much, many times. We're going to fight through this again. And look at the last quarter century of the NYPD fighting back, reducing crime in an unprecedented manner, no matter what's been thrown at it. And that inevitably, absolutely will happen again, particularly because we have dynamic leadership that will help us achieve that. ‘

But to be able to recover, to be able to restart, to be able to drive down crime and bring back jobs and do all the things we need to do, we have to defeat the coronavirus. And that fight is raging right now and unfortunately in much of the world. And we see this particularly in Europe, very sadly, and we see it in some states in the United States. Right now, in many parts of the world they're not winning the battle against the coronavirus. And for reasons that are painful, including in some cases not paying attention to the data and the science, not making the tough choices about restrictions, not encouraging people to wear masks and practice social distancing. We sure know what not to do. And so in this city, we have to double down on what to do on all the things we've done, right. We have to own it. We have to be passionate about it because we cannot let a second wave happen here.

So now I'm going to talk about today's indicators because they do raise real concern. First of all, indicator number one, daily number of people admitted to New York City hospitals for suspected COVID-19. That threshold is 200 patients. Today's report is 81 patients with a confirmed positivity level, 26.6 percent. That number alone continues to be relatively good. The next number we've talked about for days now is worrisome, new reported cases, seven-day average. Threshold is 550 cases, today at 532. So there's stability there, but at too high a level. But here's where I am increasingly concerned, which is the percentage of people testing positive citywide for COVID-19, threshold five percent, today's report is 2.7 percent. That would be undoubtedly and is a worrisome number. It to be fair every day varies according to what test results come back, and then what quantity. The daily report is not a perfect measure, but that's a very worrisome number. It's literally twice yesterday, but that also points out it is somewhat aberrant as a number. What is not aberrant is our seven day average. And I said, yesterday, we have been hovering in the neighborhood of 1.5 percent at 1.75 percent over the last couple of weeks. This is the first time that number has taken a meaningful jump to 1.92 percent. That alone is not a number that would overwhelm us, but the growth is what worries me. And we cannot allow that number to keep growing. We're really going to have to double down.

So I'll say right now, and I know Dr. Varma feels this deeply as well, that we must be really strong at this moment where we're telling people to play it safe. It's not just an idle message. It's a deeply felt message. People really should not travel for the holidays unless it's absolutely necessary. Because unfortunately, pretty much everywhere else is doing worse at fighting the coronavirus. And if you go someplace else, the chance of bringing it back with you is high. We've got to be really careful this weekend, Halloween, you know, there's going to be a lot of celebration. That's normal, but we can not have big gatherings. We can not have big indoor events. If people want to trick or treat outdoors, small groups with masks on? That's great. Big gatherings, parties. That's not great at all. And if we find out about them, we're going to have to break them up because it's dangerous. We got to buckle down. We got to make sure that we do things right, because this is a dangerous time and we have to take it really, really seriously. So for everyone out there who is thinking today, should I wear a mask? Yes. Should you practice social distancing? Yes. If there's restrictions in place, honor those restrictions because they're here to protect us. And we have to be very cautious how we handle the days ahead to not let this disease back in the door. Okay. With that a few words in Spanish about our very important announcement earlier.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish:]

With that, let's turn to our colleagues in the media and please let me know the name and outlet of each journalist.

Moderator: We'll now begin our Q and A. As a reminder, we're joined today by Commissioner Shea, by Chief Holmes, by Laura Wood the Senior Counsel for Democracy NYC, and by Senior Advisor Dr. Jay Varma. First question today goes to Andrew Siff from NBC.

Question: Hey, good morning, everyone on the call, I'll start with the COVID uptick that you just alluded to Mayor. And I know you've been asked before about whether the two percent threshold in the seven day average would trigger any restaurant closures, but I wonder if contact tracing has determined at all that the uptick is related to indoor dining? Where are these cases coming from and what would a two percent threshold mean?

Mayor: I'll turn to Dr. Varma in a moment, Andrew, to give you some analysis of what we're seeing. My strong impression is we're seeing something generalized. We obviously had an uptick in Brooklyn and Queens and that's where much of this is coming from to be fair. Although, thank God that is all starting to come down. But I don't think we are able to say by industry, that there's a problem. What we do know is what are the more sensitive areas of concern. And we've said for a long time bars, restaurants, nightclubs, there's a whole host of things we've seen around the world that have been part of the challenge. So look, we are not at two percent on a seven-day rolling average. We are certainly not at that on a sustained level, but we are really concerned. The decision on restaurants ultimately will be the State's. I know they're looking at the same data with concern. I think the important thing here is just again, be led by the facts and the data, be led by the science, because it's really about keeping us safe and not letting a second wave in that would lead to huge restrictions on all of us. Dr. Varma, you want to provide a little more analysis?

Senior Advisor Jay Varma: Yeah, thank you very much. So a couple of critical points to think about. So we did take these very strong measures in Brooklyn and in parts of Queens. And when you look back at the data now for the past month, because we first made the announcement of the sort of intent to impose restrictions on October 6th, you did see a very dramatic impact on blunting the rise and actually decreasing the number of cases in Brooklyn. A little bit less so in Queens, but that also makes sense because there were fewer areas in Queens that were – had restrictions imposed on them. But you began to also see over time for the past several weeks, a steady rise in the number of cases in the other boroughs. Again, that rise has been relatively slow but it hasn't abated. And that's really what our concern is right now. Now, in terms of specific risk factors, again, it would be ideal if we had – if we were able to identify, okay, there was one specific activity that was putting people at risk. What we continue to see is actually a continuation of the same activities that have been problematic [inaudible] people reporting attending gatherings, people having been in close contact with people who had COVID-19, but not necessarily able to always take the right precautions. So, this really emphasizes that as the weather gets colder, as people celebrate things like Halloween, Thanksgiving, the winter holidays, and New Year it's going to be absolutely critical. And, again, this is a trend that you're seeing everywhere else in the world. And I just want to flag major cities in Europe, our sort of sister cities, are now going back to severe restrictions. They're effectively returning to pause.

And it's very important for us to take all those individual measures like avoiding gatherings, wearing masks, keeping our distance, if we want to avoid that same outcome.

Mayor: Go ahead, Andrew.

Question: [Inaudible] question, different topic, early voting – pretty less than stellar weather today and tomorrow expected for the early voting. I'm wondering if you think there's been enough of a turnout in terms of early voting to dent the Election Day crowds themselves. And would you consider at this point recommending to New Yorkers that all right, the weather's lousy, maybe just vote on Tuesday?

Mayor: Look, Andrew. The turnout so far has been outstanding and unquestionably will make Tuesday better. Absolutely fair of you to point out that, you know, when you have early voting – this is one of the best arguments we made for years for early voting, it takes a lot of pressure off Election Day and it gives people more options and, boy, have New Yorkers been voting with their feet. But I want to caution, it's going to be unquestionably the highest turnout election in generations. So, Tuesday is still going to be a hell of a lot of people. What I'd say is if you have an early voting plan, stick with it. If you can tough it out through the weather, I still think it's better to get that vote in early and get it done because I'm not going to be shocked at all if there are huge, huge lines on Tuesday. Most people are still used to only voting on Election Day itself. So, I'm not going to be surprised if there's a huge line. So, early voting is a blessing. It should be handled a lot better by the Board of Elections. They still have time to add even more hours for the weekend and they should. But it's still a great, great option. I encourage people to use it. Go ahead.

Moderator: The next is Marcia from WCBS.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor and Police Commissioner Shea. By announcing the appointment of Juanita Holmes, you and the other people, you've certainly shown a move towards making the upper management of the NYPD much more inclusive. Can you tell me what message you're trying to send to protestors and others who have been critical of the NYPD and said that it has not been as responsive as it should be to the minority community?

Mayor: Well, I'll start, and I'll turn to the Commissioner, and if the Chief wants to weigh in as well, look, Marcia, this is a group of incredibly talented, experienced people. One thing that is so clear to me is just the extraordinary wellspring of talent in the NYPD. Throughout my administration, I have been elevating leaders from within the NYPD or people who worked in the NYPD to the highest positions, obviously with the three commissioners, because there's just so much talent in the NYPD, there was not a need to look outside. So, what you see here is a lot of really deserving people getting their opportunity to lead. It's also incredibly important that our police leadership looks like New York City. And that's what we're showing here. You're seeing a leadership that understands the whole reality of life as it's lived in this city, leaders who truly feel our neighborhoods and our people. That's very healthy for the NYPD. So, I think it says to neighborhood residents, it says to New Yorkers all over the city that there are people there that they can immediately relate to, understand their lives, and that everyone's working together. That's really, really powerful. I also want to note that it is really time to have more and more

women in positions of leadership in the NYPD and, obviously, in police forces all over the country. And I want to thank Commissioner Shea. It's been a very, very tough time this last set of months we've been through, and the Commissioner has dealt with challenges he could never have imagined, I could never imagine. But if, you know, Dermot Shea, you know how committed he is to really giving the most talented people an opportunity and not just continuing the patterns of the past, but elevating new leadership. And he has really shown it with these crucial promotions today. Go ahead, Commissioner.

Commissioner Shea: Thanks, Marcia, for the question. As I'm sitting listening to the Mayor speak, I'm just thinking about all, you know, the last year or so, and appointments that I've had the honor of making throughout my time as police commissioner. I couldn't be more proud of the people that I've appointed. I certainly think of inclusion and diversity, but I just want to make the point that Juanita is sitting maybe 20 feet from me right now for one reason, and one reason only, because she's the best qualified and she's earned it. And she's an incredible talent. I alluded to before, you know, I was having conversations with Juanita when she was not an employee of the New York City Police Department, right after I found out I would be the PC and, you know, we had conversations and then we had more conversations and she eventually came back. And you know, I certainly think about making sure that the department at the highest levels is representative of the people of New York City. I think that's extremely important. I think it's extremely important that people have role models that they can look up to and relate to. But I also think that that shouldn't take away from, you know, as I said, in my opening, she's walked the walk, she's talked the talk. I mean, I'm looking at Lola's picture a minute ago, and I can say the same about Lola. Lola has never shied away from work. She's taken the hardest jobs. She's been a precinct commander, which is the hardest, and probably the most rewarding job in the police department. You are accountable to whether it's 50,000 people or 200,000 people in your precinct. You're essentially the mayor of that precinct. Juanita has done the same, she's, if anything, moved towards the more challenging assignments. And that's why I have zero qualms about sitting here today and knowing that she's going to shine in her new role.

Mayor: Do you want to add, Chief?

Incoming Chief Holmes: I'm just – Marcia, I'm just very happy to have this opportunity. Like the Commissioner said, my entire career path has been patrol-oriented. I stayed out there, I thought that's where I had the most impact, leading cops where they share your vision and having the community trust and, you know, have faith in their police department. That's always been my goal and now being the highest ranking of patrol, it's overwhelming, but truly humbling. And I'm very grateful to have this opportunity, and hopefully moving forward, restoring trust and faith in our community with their police department.

Mayor: Marcia, go ahead.

Question: So, this also is a question for all three of you. This comes – these appointments come at a time when the Governor is demanding that the NYPD and police departments throughout the state come up with changes to better reflect the needs and the desires of people in all communities in New York City. I wonder what your thoughts are as this may be the first step towards that. But what other changes do you see that will satisfy the State's desire for change?

Mayor: Look, Marcia, I don't look at it through the prism of what people someplace else want for New York City. I'll look at it through the prism of what the people in New York City want and need. We have been doing the work of change and reform for seven years now. It's not something that's new to us. You know, when I ran in 2013, one of the most central issues was changing the approach in the NYPD and it wasn't just about getting rid of the overuse of stop-and-frisk, it was about reducing arrests, reducing incarceration. You saw the retraining of the entire police force, de-escalation training, implicit bias training. There are so many examples of change and reform over the years, right on up to what we're doing now. The changes that have been taken in the discipline process to make it faster and more transparent. The changes, finally, thank God, in the 50-a law, the change the Commissioner made in reorienting anti-crime efforts and making them more modern and more connected to communities, this change has happened constantly, and there's a lot more where that came from. So, we will go through the formal process as you mentioned, but it's going to simply be a deepening of what we were already doing. And the leadership you see announced today absolutely exemplifies that belief in continuing to improve and reform the police department no matter what. Anyone else want to add? No. Okay, go ahead.

Moderator: The next is Henry from Bloomberg.

Question: Mr. Mayor, can you come back to me in about five minutes or so?

Mayor: Henry, we will hold your place in line. We surprised you. Okay, go ahead.

Moderator: The next is Kala from PIX.

Question: Hey there, good morning to everyone and congratulations to Juanita Holmes. What an amazing achievement. My first question, I want to go to you, as the chief of patrol you're the first response to handling race relations in the city. Do you have a plan or something that you want to change and implement moving forward?

Chief Holmes: Yes. So, the plan is to strengthen relationships. As the Mayor said, community engagement is ever evolving in the New York City Police Department. And I've been a part of the listening sessions. I think our last one is this evening in Manhattan, and you have to hear – the people want to be heard and we're there to listen to them, but they have to play an intricate part in crime reduction as well as improving quality of life and strengthening those relationships is my plan. I believe that a police department should be trusted by the community it serves, that community should have faith in their police department. And that's my ultimate goal to make sure that happens. When you restore faith and trust in the police department, it has an ultimate effect on the morale of police officers. You know, when your community feels good about you, you feel good about that.

Mayor: Well said. Go ahead, Kala.

Question: You have the most calming voice. I love that. So, thank you.

[Laughter]

And then also –

Mayor: [Inaudible] all of our public service announcements – “Calm down, New York City.”

[Laughter]

Question: Mr. Mayor, I want to switch gears, talk about education. We talked before about Wi-Fi in the homeless shelters. I got wind earlier from the Legal Aid Society saying the city is not able to offer a timeline right now for getting that Wi-Fi in homeless shelters. The goal is to get it done by the summer. So, what is your solution for these kids who need connectivity to get to school?

Mayor: Kala, it's such an important question because we've got to serve every child regardless of what's happening in the life of the family. And I always say when it comes to the homelessness, there but for the grace of God go we. A lot of people who have become homeless, a lot of families in recent years are working families, hard-working folks who just couldn't pay the high rents in the city or couldn't get a job that gave them the kind of wages they deserve. And so, we have to really have a lot of empathy for these families and particularly kids. All kids, you know, struggle when you're growing up. It's hard on a lot of levels, but in the middle of a pandemic, and then you're homeless on top of it, it's a lot. So, we have to be there for these kids. We are going to rewire all of the shelters that have kids in them, period. We'll have a timeline. I'm going to let our Law Department and our Social Services Department speak to that. And they will do that soon. But we're going to do it.

What we're going to do in the meantime is reach every single child, every single family. And if they have a device and they need a different internet service, we'll simply provide that to them. We'll make sure that's free for them. If they don't have a device, we'll provide that for them. We are going to make sure that whatever they need to get service in the short term, they have it. And we do know, Kala, that in some cases it was simply a matter of changing providers, that some providers have better reach, and we want to be able to make sure that every child has started. So, I'm going to say it again, if you, Kala, or anyone knows of a family in shelter that doesn't have service, let us know immediately. We will literally right away send people over to address it with that family. If any family doesn't have service, they want to call 3-1-1, we're going to get that addressed. Literally in a matter of a day or two, we can get the service turned on to make sure that that child can learn.

Moderator: The next is Emma from the New York Times.

Question: Hi, good morning, Mayor. Dr. Varma mentioned Europe and there are closures in Europe, but the schools are staying open. So, what do you say to parents who are watching that seven-day average rise and get closer to three percent and are very anxious about their kids missing out on this opportunity that's been so lifesaving?

Mayor: Yeah. So, Emma, look, I want to say to you, I'm really thinking about parents and what they're going through right now. I'm thinking back to when my kids were in public school and thinking about what it would feel like in this moment. And I would want a lot of assurance that it was safe. What I think has become clearer and clearer over the last weeks is a few things. First of all, we're seeing all over the world, a different reality in schools than in the surrounding community. Schools in many cases have been a lot safer. Younger kids, obviously, thank God, a lot less affected. But let's talk about New York City, which has set a very different standard than any school system in the country because we've layered mask wearing for kids and adults, which most places are not doing, with constant cleaning, with social distancing, with testing. And let me give you the latest on the testing. Since we started the school surveys, you know, that we were going to do every school once a month, we now have over a thousand schools, almost 1,100 schools have gone through the first round of testing, 55,000-plus tests taken, and only 64 positive cases. I just want this to sink in. This is astounding. These cases are both students and staff, 64 positives out of 55,000 tests. What it says is our schools are extraordinarily safe. So, yeah, we are watching these numbers very carefully and we're concerned, but the – at the same time, we're testing constantly in the schools and we're seeing literally the opposite. We're not seeing movement in the wrong direction of schools. We're seeing incredible stability in the schools, very, very low level of test positivity and that is a blessing. Go ahead, Emma.

Question: Thank you. My next question is for Ms. Holmes. First of all, congratulations from me and my colleague, Ashley Southall. Ashley wanted me to ask you, you're being promoted during a tumultuous time when the NYPD is dealing with the pandemic, the push for stronger reforms, including stop-and-frisk, a policy that you supported. So, how do you view this moment in policing and the way forward?

Incoming Chief Holmes: Well, it's like the perfect storm. And to relate to the stop-and-question – I always say stop-and-question, people often add frisk. There were times that – numerous times that it was overly abused so that I don't support. I want to make that perfectly clear. Is it a valuable investigative tool when used correctly? Yes, when used correctly. And you're absolutely right, it's a very tumultuous time. Like I said, the perfect storm, but New York is always been met with adversity and we weather the storm. Trust me. And we'll get through this. This too shall pass, and it'll be on a more positive note. It'll be a – more stronger relationships with the community, building morale with the police officers. I have nothing but a positive hope moving forward in this position that we can do this, and we will, and we will.

Mayor: Thank you. Go ahead.

Moderator: We'll go back to Henry from Bloomberg.

Question: Thank you. How are you doing, Mr. Mayor?

Mayor: I'm doing well, Henry. Henry, we believe in redemption. You do get a second chance when it comes to our press conference.

Question: I appreciate it. How do you feel about Steve Cohen buying the Mets? There have been reports that you are trying to stop it, that you oppose it. What is your position on this? What are you trying to do?

Unknown: [Inaudible]

Mayor: Yeah right – you want to speak to that? The – you know, it's funny, Henry, people like to read things in. And I think I've been asked this several times and I've said, literally, exactly what's going on. What matters is that we have responsibility in New York City. It's our land. There is a legal requirement that if there's an ownership change, it has to be evaluated. Our Law Department is doing that evaluation based on the law. And why? Because it's about protecting the interests of the taxpayers in New York City and making sure that the transaction is appropriate, given what it means for the City's ownership of that land. That's all that we're doing, is making sure that we are satisfied under the law. And that process will resolve very quickly. I've said it's coming close to completion. When the Law Department completes its work, they'll publish their results. But it's not, you know, some folks are trying to ascribe it to personal feelings, or one thing or another – it's not, it's a legal responsibility that we have to undertake appropriately. That that's what this is all about. Go ahead.

Question: Thank you for that. I also want to ask you about using test percentage results as an indicator, because – and this is almost like the opposite of President Trump's argument – but as you test more, you're going to get a lower percentage of people who are testing positive. And if you focus your tests on a hotspot, you're going to wind up with a greater percentage of people who were testing positive. So, why do you think that this is a reliable indicator of the prevalence of infection in the city?

Mayor: It's a very important question. I'm going to start and I'll turn to Dr. Varma in moment. Henry, I think we went through over the first weeks of this crisis, a lot of discussion about the best way to inform the people, the best indicators. You know, our indicators evolved over time. But what was always clear is, you couldn't just look at one, you have to look at multiple elements. You'll remember, Henry, in the beginning, we were particularly concerned all of us about hospital capacity, because that was where there was the life and death reality, that of hospitals couldn't handle the cases we might lose people's lives. Thank God our hospitals held. That's why that hospital capacity number, we constantly look at. That's the life and death number, and, thank God, that one has stayed reasonable. But you're exactly right that if you have a problem area, you do more testing, you're going to get more positives. That's true. On the other hand, I wouldn't agree with the point that more testing inevitably leads to fewer and fewer people testing positive over time. That's what we actually need to know. If you do a lot more testing and your numbers continue to go down in terms of positivity, that means something good is happening in reality and you're getting a truer picture. But there's nothing that says you do a lot more testing and, in fact, have numbers – the positivity numbers go up, and that would tell you a real warning, and you have to take a really intense measures. The pure question of, do more testing, you're going to have more positive cases, we account for that. And that's why in the last few days I've said the higher number of cases per se wouldn't be a problem if the positivity level stayed low. It's the fact that the seven-day average positivity is going up, that's, to me, worrisome. That's the most objective factor and that's what's worrying me now. Dr. Varma?

Senior Advisor Varma: Yeah. I think two points – one is, testing alone isn't the – we don't use testing as an intervention in these hotspot cluster areas just because we want to fix the numbers. The reason we're using testing is we're using it as a tool to identify people who are infections that can be safely separated and identify their contacts and have them safely separated. So, while the numbers mathematically may change a little bit, that the effect is actually much more dramatic than that, because we have seen the power of contact in those areas. The second point is, just a very quick, you know, understanding of epidemiology terms. You know, in an ideal world, we would have absolutely accurate real-time indicators of two things – how many new people develop sickness every day and how many infectious people are there in the population, because, you know, you can stay infectious for several days. So, you get added to the group – some people leave the group because of [inaudible] infections, but there's a larger number. So, one is called incidence – number of new cases. The other is called prevalence – how many infected people are there? Incidents we currently measure using confirmed cases, but that's a slight underestimate [inaudible] you know, because people don't get tested. So, that number we use, but we also know that it's an underestimate of the new people every day. The second is prevalence, how many people in the population are actually infected any one time. We use test positivity for that, and that is a slight, or maybe, sometimes, dramatic over estimate of it. So, that's when we have to balance those two numbers together, because both of them have some imperfections, but when used together are very powerful.

Mayor: Thank you very much. Go ahead.

Moderator: The next is Julia from the Post.

Question: Oh, thank you, Mr. Mayor. And I just – I wanted to note that it is maternity leave that I'm going on. Some people were a little confused why I was going away for a while. So, just wanted to clear that up.

Mayor: That's right. It's a good thing.

Question: And then, I'd like to follow up on Henry's question about the purchase of the Mets by Steve Cohen. First of all, I just wanted to see, do you think Steve Cohen on a personal level would be a good owner of the Mets? You know, he's a hedge funder worth a lot of money who has a bit of a checkered legal history. What's just your personal opinion – should he own the Mets, going forward?

Mayor: Julia, I appreciate the question, but I really want to be clear – when we're in the middle of a legal review, which, again, is our fiduciary responsibility as a city to do this, it's not appropriate to be commenting on the people involved. The Law Department's handling this, you know, very, very professional operation, looking at these facts. Again, this'll be concluded quickly, but I'm not going to issue personal views in the middle of that kind of review. Go ahead.

Question: Okay. And then the MLB deadline to vote on this is, is Friday. And it doesn't look like they're going to wait for a decision from you. Does the Law Department expect to have it

wrapped up by then? And can you just address why you had a conversation with MLB Commissioner Manfred? And what did you two discuss?

Mayor: Sure. I want to respect the private conversation, so I won't go into a lot of detail. I'll just give you the very simple point. I reached out to Commissioner Manfred, simply let them know that we had this legal responsibility and we were pursuing it and doing due diligence, and that we intended to obviously go through that process as quickly as possible. So, it is winding down. I'm not going to give you an exact day or hour, but it will be very soon. We understand MLB has their process. That's understood, but we have our process. We need to go through the right way and very professional people are doing that work. But it was just important to me to just let him know that we have a legal obligation and we're going to fulfill it. Go ahead.

Moderator: We have time for two more for today. The next is Shant from the Daily News.

Question: And if I could add my congratulations to Chief Holmes, I know my colleagues and I look forward to covering your work. And I wanted to ask you to Chief about what looks like, you know, the most pressing challenges on the horizon for the NYPD, which will be demonstrations and possible unrest around next week's presidential election. Could you just share your thoughts and strategy for keeping things safe next week?

Incoming Chief Holmes: I think that we are definitely structured in our response should we be met with that. Next week is going to be a challenging time. I mean, we're making no qualms about it. But, with that being said, you know, we took a look at what we did last time and, moving forward, we can all get better. There's some training that's been implemented in our response as far as our officers are concerned. We've met with a lot of the BID's and spoke with them about their due diligence and how they can help in preventing some of the matters that took place during last demonstrations. But I can honestly say that we are prepared should there be a necessary response.

Question: Yeah, thanks for that. I directed that at Chief Holmes, because I know both the Commissioner and you, Mr. Mayor, have addressed this topic before. Switching gears, Mr. Mayor, I wanted to ask about a warning that the FBI has issued about cyber criminals targeting the U.S. health care system by apparently, you know, trying to jumble up information and extort hospitals. The AP reported that a hospital system in upstate New York has been targeted. Can you just say what's being done to protect public and private hospitals in the city?

Mayor: It's a very, very important topic, Shant. New York City is blessed to have a very strong capacity to address cyberattacks. Our cyber command has an extremely talented group of people, very strategically conservative in their approach and really making sure that we have what we need across all elements of City government, that obviously includes our public health system. So, we've talked about this a lot over the last year, and I feel very confident about that. We've watched attacks on other cities and learned from them and put additional measures in place. In terms of private hospitals, we'll make sure that we're coordinating with the Greater New York Hospital Association and making sure that if there's any concerns they have, we're working closely with them. I'm sure the State is doing the same, which regulates the private hospitals. But it's a really important question. And, you know, while we're all focused on a host of other

problems, we should never go to sleep on the danger of a cyberattack, which could be even more devastating. So, we're going to continue to take a lot of precautions.

Moderator: Last question for today, it goes to Erin from Politico.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor. I wanted to ask about, following up on Andrew's question earlier, where these increases are coming from? I understand that you can't trace it specifically to oh, it's restaurants or something, you know, at that level of specificity, but if the cluster areas have actually been doing a little bit better, is it just across the board in the city it's rising? Or, is it particular neighborhoods or demographics? Or, you know, just sort of, what is your best explanation of what's going on here?

Mayor: I'm going to start and turn to Dr. Varma. Look, I think, first of all, we have to understand those clusters were a serious, serious problem and those restrictions are absolutely necessary or else things would've gotten out of hand. We need to stop a second wave from hitting New York City. If we had not moved quickly, there well could have been a full-blown second wave. You're still seeing numbers coming off of that, Erin. Remember, that higher level of positive cases and higher-level positivity is also related. As we talked about earlier, there's a lot more testing happening in those communities in Brooklyn, Queens. That's a blessing, that's a great thing for now and for the future. But, of course, it's bringing back a lot more positive cases and a higher positivity level than the rest of the city. So, that is some of it for sure. Then, there's the bigger worries. Everyone is traveling here and that's why we really need to double down on quarantining and travel warnings, and that's why yesterday I called for a change at the federal level that I don't think anyone should be allowed on an airplane in this country unless they have a recent negative test result. We're just playing with fire here as a country if we allow people to keep traveling who may be carrying the disease. But, you know, we do have to keep an eye on the travel situation because so many of the places around us are doing so poorly that any travel to New York City, or people from New York City coming back from one of those places could well be contributing. So, we don't have the best, as I understand from the conversations with our health leadership, we don't have a focal point industry. We don't have a widespread trend across the city in the sense of, you know, big swaths of the city seeing the same exact problem. We do have those cluster areas that aren't done yet and I think that's the single biggest we need to overcome. Dr. Varma?

Senior Advisor Varma: Yeah, correct. I would love for us to have been able – and we've looked exhaustively through our data – from our contact tracing data to our general epidemiology data to try to find, you know, are there, you know, one or two or three specific things, specific settings that we could – if we stopped or we altered in some way we could control it. What we see is that there are a lot of areas of the city, smaller geographic areas where there's been increases. We have brought in resources to help control them and had a very big impact on helping to blunt the rise. But, at the same time, we do see a slow and steady rise throughout many, many parts of the city. And so, what are the factors that we're seeing? We're seeing a lot of the same things that we have before, just more of them. So, as the Mayor has said, travel – it represents right now about 10 percent of all of the cases that we've had in the past few weeks. About seven percent of that is due to domestic travel and about three percent related to international travel. Again, those numbers change over time and travel season is coming up, so it

could become a problem, which starts our warning. We see a lot of smaller cases associated with various different indoor settings, whether it's people going to work, people having gatherings, any of those other places. And that's why, right now, our guidance is not about any one specific industry or type of setting, changing its behavior, but it really has to be across the city, wearing a mask, avoiding any gatherings, keeping physical distance, particularly as it gets colder and people move indoors.

Mayor: Go ahead, Erin.

Question: Thank you. And then secondly, I wanted to ask about the agreements that you made with DC 37 yesterday, avoiding layoffs for the time being. There's been some criticism from, you know, budget watch dogs that this isn't actually saving any money, because you're just delaying the payment, which will eventually be on the hook for. So, you know, how do you respond to that and, kind of, how are you going to deal with this budget gap in the longer term if you're eventually going to have to pay this off?

Mayor: Erin, look, I think the most important thing here is that we have our labor unions, representing the people who serve us in the city, finding ways to help us through this challenge. I want to thank DC 37. I want to thank Henry Garrido for working with us to recognize we're in a dire situation, there's still no stimulus, there's still no help from Albany. We have to do something to address our immediate budget problem. And the amount that has been achieved here is really going to help us through. So, I think the important thing to recognize is when our workforce is willing to make sacrifices to help us, that's the kind of spirit we need in this city to get through. It's real money. It's real money that comes off the books now that we don't have to pay now that helps us to weather the storm. The big question will be whether Albany is going to act to help us, but especially Washington D.C., what will be the results of the election? Will there be a stimulus? How big will that stimulus be? That's the big game changer. And if there's the right kind of stimulus, like the one the House of Representatives passed, we're going to be able to keep our workforce intact and we're going to be able to keep our commitments to our workforce. We're going to be able to keep serving people and having the kind of recovery we deserve. So, to me, this is a question of how do we get to that point where real relief might come in a way that's fair and equitable to the people of this city and our workforce, and this agreement helps us do that.

Everyone, as we close down today, look, I just want to say it's a historic day. It's a wonderful day when the city moves forward and our Police Department moves forward. And I really want to express the hope that is inherent in this day. New York City, if there's one thing that's true about the history of city, it is our ability to change. The City has changed all the time through its history. And, you know, sometimes we have nostalgia for things that we've lost, but we, as New Yorkers, we are so focused on the power of positive change. We, as New Yorkers, understand that this place is always evolving. That's our greatness, our ability to improve, evolve, innovate. That's who we are. So, here we have the largest police force in the country making a decision to move forward and have leadership that represents all the people of this city and to break the glass ceiling and provide an opportunity for women to lead that's unprecedented and necessary. This is a very, very good day for New York City, and an example of how we will move forward, and another step in our rebirth. Thank you, everybody.

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