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

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Good morning, everybody. So, we've talked about what 2021 needs to be in the city. It needs to be a year of recovery for all of us and that is going to be our focus during this year. A recovery for all of us. That means in every part of this society, every part of our city, we're working to bring this city back, bring it back strong, bring it back fair, bring it back better. That's what 2021 is going to be all about and we're going to have constant updates on this effort at [recoveryforall.nyc.gov](http://recoveryforall.nyc.gov). Now, when we think about that recovery, when we think about equity, again, it means everything. It means in our economy. It means in education. It means in transportation, as we talked about yesterday, it obviously means something powerful in the relationship between our police and our communities, the continued reform. We need to make the deepening of the bond between police and community, the strengthening of trust.

Now, historically, the key element to ensuring that the public had access to follow up on their concerns, to accountability, to making sure they could turn to a civilian entity with any experience they had that they did not find appropriate, the place to go has been the Civilian Complaint Review Board. And the Civilian Complaint Review Board, there's a long history of the fight to create a real and strong and meaningful Civilian Complaint Review Board, and in that long history, it goes back decades and decades in this city. Today is going to be one of the most important moments in that entire history. If you go back and you look at video from the early 1960s, you'll see Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy talking about the importance of a real Civilian Complaint Review Board in New York City. Today with the signing of an MOU between the CCRB and the NYPD, we take a historic step forward for accountability, for trust, for transparency. That's what happened today, and it matters so deeply because it's going to help people to feel that their concerns are heard and acted upon, and that is how you create trust.

So, the idea here is that the CCRB, after all those decades in which there was advocacy, just to get it started, over many decades, didn't get the support it deserved, didn't get the funding it deserved, didn't get the rules it deserved to make it strong. The discipline matrix, which we've talked a lot about in recent weeks, is a game changer. The discipline matrix lays out in the clearest terms for all New Yorkers to see exactly what happens if, God forbid, an officer does the wrong thing. And I'll be the first to say it, I want to say it, the vast majority of our officers do the right thing every day, and we thank them for that. We thank them for serving our city, but when someone does the wrong thing, it's crucial that everybody understands what the consequences will be, and those consequences are followed consistently. That's what the discipline matrix created after a two-year process, going back to a Blue Ribbon Panel named by then Commissioner O'Neill two years ago until now, the creation of a discipline matrix with a huge amount of public input. That discipline matrix needed an additional step to be more powerful and that was the MOU signed this morning between Commissioner Shea and Chair Davie, and you'll hear from both of them in a moment.

The key to build in that trust is to keep adding additional reforms and that's what we'll be talking about throughout the weeks ahead, because this is one step, but there'll be many others. In the State of the City, I talked about a variety of changes and reforms and remember the work of improving the relationship between police and community, it goes on every year, every month, every week, every day, I want to emphasize this, for seven straight years we have been changing the way we police New York City, making a host of reforms, going back to originally ending the broken policy of stop and frisk, but many, many others. The retraining of our entire police force, adding body worn cameras, de-escalation training, implicit bias training, so many examples, reduction in arrest, reduction in incarceration, there's so much to talk about, but it is never ending work because it's the most human of work. It is so important to keep working on the relationship between those who protect us and the communities they serve.

So, this work never ends, and in fact, in the next few months, you're going to see many additional reform measures in place, but let's talk about the things we talked about in the State of the City. The Joint Force, the concept of bringing together all the key players in criminal justice, working together with the community, bringing in community input, bringing in the work of the Cure Violence Movement or the Crisis Management System to consistently address the specific places where violence is occurring and the specific individuals, a very small number of individuals, just several thousand in a city of 8.5 million, who are committing the violence. The top 100 Block Strategy, focusing on the specific streets where the biggest problems occurred, is precision policing at its best. The things that allow us to go and use all the resources at hand to address the need to keep the community safe. Now again, coming off of this pandemic, we look forward to having all of our tools back, including the court system, and I want to emphasize how important it is that we get jury trials up and running on a large scale, and that means the ability to vaccinate anyone who participates in the jury, to vaccinate the folks who do the prosecution, to vaccinate the court officers, everyone who works in the court buildings. This is something that idea brought to me by DAs Katz and Vance, and I agree with them. This is something we need to do because having the criminal justice system back up and running allows these other strategies to fully be realized.

But on top of that, what we announced in State of the City, the David Dinkins plan, to expand the role of the CCRB and follow up on the suggestions from the DOI report of several months ago, make the CCRB, the umbrella accountability entity when it comes to the ongoing work of oversight of policing. The work that we will do at the precinct level, we talked about last week, the new role of the Police Precinct Councils in choosing precinct commanders, the work we will do in the Police Academy, using the People's Police Academy model more and more, to bring the voices of community into the training of our officers from the beginning. The work we will do at the neighborhood level with the doubling of the Cure Violence workforce, this initiative that's done so much to help stop violence, community-based solutions. All of these things will be coming together as we enter 2021, we build out a deepening relationship between police and community that will also make us safer.

I'll finish with this point between – before turning to my colleagues, we get safer by bringing police and community together. We get safer when neighborhood residents feel they can approach a police officer and let the officer know that something happened, that they were a victim of crime, or they witnessed a crime, or they think there might be an act of retaliation coming. That is a foundation of neighborhood policing. That's why neighborhood policing has

worked so well. Throughout our experience with neighborhood policing, what we heard was the stories of New Yorkers who came forward and felt that they had a personal relationship with the officer who worked in their community. So much so the officers would give them their cell phone number, their email address, and community residents would say to me, I've talked to so many, they would say that's my officer. I want to call my officer. I want to call the officer who knows me, knows my community. That's what we have to continue to build, but today's historic moment showing that we are entirely ready, willing, and able to be transparent and open about discipline and to be consistent, to have it all clear from begins to end, this is the kind of thing that will encourage those neighborhood residents to come forward, that will encourage them to have faith that the NYPD is listening, that there'll be fairness throughout. That's how we get safer. So, here to talk about this historic signing of the MOU, our Police Commissioner Dermot Shea.

**Police Commissioner Dermot Shea:** Thank you, Mr. Mayor. We just came from a historic event, one I could not be prouder of. Chairman Davie and I have signed what I would categorize as a living document. That document is going to bring greater transparency and oversight to the NYPD's disciplinary process. I view it as an important step in the ongoing journey – and the keyword is ongoing here – to build strong public trust, and I saw, you know, in the Mayor's words, there are two words that kept reverberating, accountability and trust, and that is what we hear all throughout New York City. Just like to take this final opportunity to thank Chairman Davie and everyone at both the CCRB and the NYPD for the work put into both the discipline matrix and the recent memorandum of understanding that is really going to serve as a cornerstone as we move forward. And lastly, the Mayor mentioned Jimmy O'Neill, so special credit has to go out to the former Commissioner from my view, as well as Ben Tucker. Ben Tucker and his staff have really worked very hard liaising with the Civilian Complaint Review Board during these last couple of years as we iron out this new policy. So, to them, I say, thank you.

**Mayor:** Thank you so much Commissioner. And Fred Davie, Chair of the CCRB, has been doing extraordinary work. Being chair of the CCRB is a big responsibility. It involves dealing with extraordinarily complex matters. It takes tremendous commitment and also the ability to hear everyone involved, making sure there is accountability and trust takes a lot of patient work, a lot of listening. He happens to be a minister as well, and I know in his pastoral work, he has done plenty of listening and shown plenty of compassion and the ability to work towards a common solution. And it is his hard work and of all the members of the CCRB, their hard work and the staff, that led us to today with this historic signing. So, it's my pleasure to introduce the chair of the CCRB, Fred Davie.

**Chairman Frederick Davie, Civilian Complaint Review Board:** Thank you. Thank you, Mayor. It's really good to be here with you and the Commissioner this morning. Let me think Commissioner Shea again for the signing of the MOU and for all the work you and your team have done to get us to this point. So, thank you. I also – I give a shout out to First Deputy Commissioner Ben Tucker, because I spent a lot of time with him on these issues when he was with Commissioner O'Neill and now with you, and so I'll just give a shout out to him as well this morning, but I really appreciate your work. I appreciate the work of the staff of the CCRB as well and getting us to this point, the City Council and others, all advocates, all who've contributed to our being here this morning. I'm really grateful for all the work that has been done to address some of the issues we face in policing and civilian oversight. The David Dinkins Plan, Mr. Mayor, that you've put forth is an important part of the future of public safety in New York

City. For years, the CCRB has recommended changes to the NYPD patrol guide and advocated for a direct access to body-worn camera footage, or body camera footage. The Dinkins Plan formalizes the way the public can affect NYPD policy through the Patrol Guide Review Committee and promises to improve the agencies access to body-worn camera footage. We've also raised concerns about not being able to investigate incidents of misconduct because of a lack of a complaint. The Mayor's plan would allow the CCRB to investigate alleged misconduct without a complaint, guaranteeing accountability for more misconduct, not just those incidents reported by someone who is aware of the agency. The emphasis you, Mr. Mayor, Police Commissioner, and the City Council have placed on the CCRB and your policing reform plans suggest a paradigm shift in the way the city thinks about public safety.

The disciplinary matrix, and the memorandum of understanding that we signed today shifts the way our city deals with police accountability and police discipline. In the past, the NYPD's application of discipline, particularly the disciplinary recommendations made by our agency, has to be very candid, long been inconsistent and inconsequential. I believe the establishment of the NYPD's matrix, which is unprecedented and continual public input on the matrix, is critical to turning the page on the NYPD's downgrading or reversing of our disciplinary recommendations, plea agreements, and guilty verdicts, and the MOU makes that extremely clear and explicit. Through the use of the disciplinary matrix and a memorandum of understanding, our agencies are making a public commitment to greater accountability and to resetting the police disciplinary process in New York. The CCRB voted last week to immediately begin using the guidelines set by the matrix in our cases, regardless of when the discipline occurred, and it is my expectation that the NYPD will do the same for CCRB cases. Absent legislative changes that address the issue of final authority and CCRB adjudicated cases, the disciplinary matrix is the best step the City can take and I look forward to analyzing its impact on our recommendations in NYPD discipline. It is clear that civilian oversight and increased transparency do not come at the cost to public safety. Empowered oversight actually is integral to public safety. I am grateful for your work, Mr. Mayor. Again, your work, Commissioner Shea, the work of my fellow board members, CCRB staff, the City Council, the advocates, and all those who made their voices heard this past summer. And I am thrilled with New York City's plan to improve policing and to have CCRB at the center of that and to understand the importance of increasing trust and accountability in this process. And it does my heart good to know that this is named after our former boss, the late Mayor David Dinkins, as the David Dinkins Plan. So, thank you. Thank you both.

**Mayor:** Thank you so much. I'm looking at Reverend Fred Davie with a smile, because, yes, we both worked for Mayor Dinkins here in City Hall. And I wish he was here with us still to see this moment, it would mean so much to him. But we do it in his memory and we do it for the future of New York City. And I'll just say that we've looked around the country at different models, and this really puts New York City in the forefront, having this discipline matrix, having this MOU between NYPD and CCRB, having the process be open and transparent. This is something that's, I think, going to make things so much clearer for everyone. And I think it's a good model for other parts of the country to look at as we move forward to building a much deeper relationship between police and community. And any New Yorker who wants to learn about the discipline matrix and literally see exactly what happens if there is a particular offense and it's adjudicated and found – someone who's found guilty, what the consequences are, you can go to [nyc.gov/disciplinematrix](http://nyc.gov/disciplinematrix).

Okay, let's go to the topic we talk about every day, the fight against the coronavirus and the way we keep New Yorkers safe. And, look, the key here – I'm going to say it again – supply, supply, supply. We need more supply. We need every conceivable action by the federal government and the State government to increase our supply. I have spoken two leaders at the federal level about the need to change the approach to manufacturing the supply and the need to free up second doses. This is crucial. We need the flexibility to use doses that were designated for second doses to be able to use them right now for first doses, because so many New Yorkers need that first dose. I keep thinking of the seniors I've met, who are scared to death – and I am literally using that term accurately, they're scared to death. They are scared for their lives. They can't get a vaccination, because there's such a shortage of supply. It is just not right to withhold that supply from them. I've sent this letter to the State government today, making clear our desire to have the State formally allow New York City to use second doses as first doses, to use those doses that were designated only for second dose use to put them in play right now. We know more supply is coming. We know the Biden Administration is committed to increasing the supply every single week and month. We've seen it already. We've seen real results already. We know the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is coming. It makes no sense to hold back supply when people in desperate need could be getting that first vaccination right now and getting that 50 percent protection, which will make a world of difference – and a world of difference medically, but also a world of difference in terms of their heart and soul. They will have some reassurance, some hope that will reduce the fear they feel every day. This is the right thing to do. So, we need our federal and State partners to help us.

In the meantime, very good news, working closely with the State, the City – the City, the State, SOMOS community care, the New York National Guard, and the New York Yankees have banded together to open the site at Yankee stadium, that will be open tomorrow – tomorrow. And, specifically, as a commitment to equity, that site will be for Bronx residents only. I want to really emphasize this, it's something the City and State agree on strongly. We've got to do actions that will really support equity. The Bronx very hard hit – very hard hit by the COVID crisis. This site, this historic site, this amazing site will be for the people of the Bronx. And so, we're really looking forward to that. 15,000 appointments will be available during the first week. And Bronx residents, if you want to get your vaccination at Yankee Stadium, you can go online – [somosvaccinations.com](https://somosvaccinations.com) – [somosvaccinations.com](https://somosvaccinations.com), or call 8-3-3-SOMOSNY, and you can get your appointment. And we look forward to Bronxites, stepping up, getting vaccinated at a great, great location, and that will help us move forward.

Now, in terms of overall vaccine effort, we had a little bit disruption because of the storm. Thank God, not much disruption. All appointments have been rescheduled. All our vaccination sites are moving again. The problem the sites are having, it was not mother nature, it's lack of supply. But to-date, New York City has administered 859,803 doses. Again, we could be doing so much more with supply. We could be doing half-a-million a week. But, you know, we'll take every piece of progress we can get. And, certainly, having this Yankee Stadium site up will be a game-changer. Yes, they wrote that line for me – I like it.

Okay. Speaking of games, the Super Bowl. So, I'll give some good advice. I'm not a doctor, but I'll give some good advice. I know Dr. Chokshi and Dr. Katz will certainly amplify this advice. So, a lot of us really look forward each year to watching the Super Bowl. Typically, it's like one of the great party moments of the year. I'm sorry that this year is different, but I guarantee you this is the last year that we're going to be going through this, because the vaccine is here. But if

you want to have a – you know, a huge Super Bowl party with lots of people together, having a great time, this is not the year for that. Next year will be the year for that. So, it's the same thing we said about the holidays. Please just protect each other, protect your family. Use common sense. If you're going to do a Super Bowl gathering, it should really be just the people immediately in your life. It should be a safe gathering. The last thing you want to do is to get together for the big game and someone gets sick as a result. So, we all know what happens – lots of people are indoors in close proximity and don't have their masks on, because they're eating and drinking. We've got to be careful. So, please, real simple advice – let's beat the coronavirus once and for all. Let's not allow it to keep spreading. Let's not let Super Bowl parties be the reason it keeps spreading. Keep your gatherings small and close. And then, next year, you're going to have the biggest party you've ever had, because we'll be past this, thank God.

Okay. Today's indicators – one, daily number of people admitted to New York City hospitals for suspected COVID-19 – today's report, very high. I want to frame this – we believe this is because a number of people did not go into the hospital on Monday and Tuesday, because of the storm. And so, we're seeing sort of an exaggerated number, but we're going to watch that carefully to see if that's true. Today's report is 300 patients – a very high number. Confirmed positivity of 66.77 percent. Hospitalization rate is 4.74 per 100,000. New reported cases on a seven-day average – today's report, 3,627. And percentage of people testing positive citywide is on a seven-day rolling average, 8.48 percent.

Let me say a few words in Spanish, and I'm going to focus especially for our friends in the Bronx, on the Yankee Stadium site.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

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

**Moderator:** Hi all, we'll now begin our Q-and-A. With us today is CCRB Chair Fred Davie, Police Commissioner Dermot Shea, Health Commissioner Dr. Dave Chokshi, and Health + Hospitals CEO Dr. Mitchell Katz. With that, we'll go to Jen Peltz from the AP.

**Question:** Hi, Mr. Mayor. How are you?

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

**Question:** Good. Thank you. I guess I'll start with the topic of policing since you did as well. You know, obviously, over the years, there's been a lot of reformulations of efforts to change this relationship between civilians and police and with respect to input and police discipline. Maybe for you and the Commissioner, why are you confident that it is the – this is the moment?

**Mayor:** Well, I'll speak to it, and the Commissioner – and I want Reverend Davie to speak to it too, because he's been on this road a long time. Fred and I were talking about the fact that we remember very vividly the day when the City Council passed the modern CCRB legislation. We were both serving with Mayor Dinkins in City Hall. It was a really important day. We could feel it. There had been – again, this history, so important, you go back to the early and mid-1960s, voices like Martin Luther King, Bobby Kennedy, calling for a real CCRB in this city. Didn't

happen then. Didn't happen in the 70s. Didn't happen in the 80s. Finally happened in 1990s. Then, I'll be simple and straightforward in saying, for about 20 years over two mayoral administrations, there was not much commitment to the CCRB. We came in with the goal of reinvigorating and strengthening the CCRB. I think it's gotten stronger every year. I think now we're doing something that really takes it into its fullness. So, this is going to be the strongest the CCRB has ever been in its history, the clearest it's ever been in his role by having this disciplinary matrix and having the MOU between PD and CCRB. It really means that people can have faith that if something goes wrong, God forbid, there's some place to turn and there'll be real consequences. I want to emphasize, Jen, I believe in due process. So, the CCRB is also predicated on the notion of due process for all – every officer, every civilian deserves due process. But also, it has to be clear if someone has done something wrong and it's been proven that there are clear consequences. I think this makes things so much easier and clearer for everyone. Commissioner?

**Commissioner Shea:** Yeah. Jen, thanks for the question. And it really is such an important topic. Trust – one simple word, but it means a lot. You know, as I sit here and think I've been the Police Commissioner a little over a year, but I've been a police officer coming up on 30 years and I've grown up in this city, I've lived the majority of my life in this city. And the topic of trust between the police, as you hit it on the head, we've been hearing about this for a long time. I would counter that to say that I wouldn't necessarily – I think the Mayor touched on this earlier – that this has been going on a long time, but let's not lose sight of a lot of positives too that have – this is a step, an important step. And, as Fred said, built into this is a process to reevaluate that step on a yearly basis and it's not going to be a year before the first evaluation, because I believe it – the first one takes place in August. This will not – this document here, which I can't tell you how many meetings I've been – sat at over this document. It's not perfect. We've already heard some criticism about it, but it is – it's something that I'm proud of. I think it's right. I think it's going to go a long way to be an additional step in this process. It's not the end. It's part of this continuum. And I would just say before, you know, Fred jumps in, look at all that's happened just in the last six or seven years – the body worn cameras, the training that has been put into place, the policies that me, personally, have been involved with that I am very, very proud of as you look back at – as we shift the latest iteration of how we keep New Yorkers safe with neighborhood policing, with precision policing. So, it's training, it's policies, it's reducing arrests and stops and summonses, and reducing crime. There is a lot of good and I would just like the public to hear this point – you know, as much as we're committed to further building trust. And I will be the first to say, unfortunately, we have a lot of work to do. This year showed it. It really did. We have a lot of work to do. And that's not to say we're completely fractured – I don't think we are, I think we have a good base to build on, but we got to water it and we've got to let it grow and we got to nurture it. But when you look at the NYPD currently, we have 34,000 uniformed members, I think I would surprise a lot of people if I said that 31,000 of them don't have a substantiated CCRB – 89 percent. That's pretty significant too. And with all these policies that have been put into place to change how we police New York, I think a real positive to continue to build on is that since 2009 – that's right around the time too that we were at the peak of arrests and things of that nature – it's within a year or two of that – since 2009 complaints to the CCRB about members of the NYPD are down 49 percent. That's a positive. How do we get it low? How do we continue to refine the training? You know, I was up in Harlem yesterday at Street Corner Resources, talking to kids with one of the violence interrupters, Iesha Sekou. And like, I would encourage everyone to go onto – I think it's on my Twitter or the NYPD News Twitter, and just watch. It's a little long, but watch what the kids say, watch the dialogue that we

have, and we can learn a lot from them. And we're going to work that into how we, you know, teach in the academy, that every interaction is important. And it's, you know, it's really powerful to me as a police executive, as a parent, as a lot of things, to hear these kids talk about one interaction five years ago that changes the trajectory or changes their output. So, that's kind of how we're approaching this. A lot of work to do still. We're proud of some of the things we do. We also own the mistakes we make. Fred?

**Chairman Davie:** Thank you. Clearly, the key to increasing trust and improving the relationship between the Police Department and the community is for people to really believe that they have a civilian oversight agency that can address consistently and with consequence the issues of police misconduct. And the steps that this Mayor has taken, the work that we're doing with the Police Commissioner, with the input, again, of the City Council, advocates, and others really help to advance that trust in the Civilian Complaint Review board and its work. Particularly one of the ways in which that trust has been challenged is when the CCRB makes recommendations to the department and those recommendations are either reversed or downgraded. This MOU, along with the matrix, guarantees that we'll get closer to consistent concurrence – that is, consistent agreement – about the disposition of cases and the penalties that go with them. The matrix is very specific about the types of penalties that apply to specific infractions of the patrol guide and those that fall within the CCRB's jurisdiction. The MOU is explicit about those decisions being reversed or downgraded only in extraordinary circumstances. So, this is a major step, it's a breakthrough step in terms of getting us closer to ensuring that the decisions that the CCRB makes are final. Now, I want to say for all my advocate friends out there, Mr. Mayor and Police Commissioner, I've been on the record about the CCRB having final authority over the cases and complaints that it adjudicates. This gets us as close as we can get given how the current laws are structured and it's not to be underestimated. I don't want to go on too long, but I'll make one other point if I can, and that is that, we have precedents for the ways in which an MOU, like the one the Commissioner and I signed this morning, can actually guide and direct how the CCRB interacts with the with the Police Department in a way that's going to be – and it is effective for New Yorkers. So, I will cite the CCRB is ability after all was said and done to prosecute former Police Officer Daniel Pantaleo in the death of Eric Garner. The judicial system had run its course, but because of the MOU that the CCRB established with the NYPD, the CCRB –

**Mayor:** Previous, previous –

**Chairman Davie:** Previous – previous MOU that focused on our administrative prosecution unit that allows the CCRB to prosecute cases at departmental trials – because of that MOU, we were able to take a step with Officer Pantaleo that otherwise would not have been taken. The same is true with officer Isaacs and the death of Delrawn Small. So, we have precedent where these MOU's – or an MOU like – this has had real impact on the ability of the CCRB to do its job and carry out its responsibilities for the citizens of New York. This MOU is in that tradition. It is as strong as the previous one. And we believe it not only will sort of pertain, because we're here, but we believe just like the previous MOU, which was signed in 2012, this one will be durable, it will last, it will be a game-changer in the concurrence rate between the CCRB and the NYPD. Thank you.

**Mayor:** Thank you very much. Go ahead, Jen.



**Question:** Thank you for that. Turning to a different topic, which is vaccination – you know, thinking about the period of mid-January when the City really accelerated the first doses. I think there was something like 327,000 people getting them over two weeks. Now, we're just near the point where second doses are due for everybody – you know, are you confident you're positioned to meet that demand?

**Mayor:** Yeah. Good question, Jen. Thank you. Yes. The answer is absolutely yes. I want to start where you started, our high point was around 220,000 doses in a week. Again, we could be going to 500,000 this month in a week, if we had the supply. Our supply is – right now, it's about a third of what we could be doing. I just want people to understand, we're leaving about two-thirds of our capacity on the table right now, given the really small supply we're getting. So, this is very, very frustrating. But what I want to emphasize is, the CDC made clear over a week ago that second doses can appropriately be given anywhere between the ideal date, three or four weeks after the first dose, and up to six weeks later. We know – we've had this conversation here several times, Dr. Varma has spoken about this in detail – we know that once you get that second dose, it's totally effective. It does not matter if you were supposed to get your second dose on March 1st, and instead you get on March 20th. It does not change the effectiveness of that second dose. Now, of course, you say, well, everyone wants to get their second dose as quickly as possible. I agree, but I think it is morally crucial that everyone who needs a first dose get a first dose. And if someone needing a second dose wait a little longer, but still within those CDC guidelines, I think that is absolutely the right thing to do. So, we'll always make sure that we're keeping the supply necessary to keep up with those second doses. But I want to use the flexibility that CDC has offered so we can maximize first doses and initial protection for the maximum number of people, especially our seniors. Anyone out there with a senior you love, if it's your mom, your dad, your grandparents, your aunt, your uncle, I think you know what I'm saying right now. They are desperate to get any protection at all. If that first dose gives them 50 percent protection, isn't it the moral thing to do to maximize the number of first doses? And then we'll double back on second doses, for sure, even if we stretch out the timeline a little bit. So, we'll protect the supply to make sure we can do it, but I'm asking the State to help us by giving us that freedom to vaccinate, giving us the freedom to use the second doses that right now are waiting on the shelf for prolonged periods of time. Let's put them in play right now. Let's protect our seniors and all the other folks who need help right now. Go ahead.

**Moderator:** Next is Emma from the New York Times.

**Question:** Hi, good morning, Mayor. So, it's sort of surreal, I have to say to see two of your top commissioners on this call who have gotten COVID recently. I was wondering if we could first hear from Dr. Chokshi and then Commissioner Shea sort of, how did you feel on your worst day? How are you doing and what lessons would you offer to New Yorkers who are still very anxious about this? Somethings are happening like reopening indoor dining and weddings. And I think a lot of us are still afraid to go to the grocery store. So, do you have any sort of lessons for us?

**Mayor:** That's a great – I really appreciate that question, Emma. You are the voice of the people today, because you're right. There's tremendous fear and concern out there. So, let's get some firsthand experience. Dr. Chokshi, you and I spoke yesterday. I hope you're feeling okay today. Tell us all how you're doing.

**Commissioner Dave Chokshi, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene:** Thank you, sir. And thanks Emma for the question, I am doing okay today. And you know, and I hope that, of course, that that remains the case. What I'll say from my own experience with COVID-19 is that it is a fresh reminder of a few things. First that all of us are susceptible to this virus. And you know, for me that is even more motivation to do everything that we can possibly do to try to interrupt and curb the spread of the disease. It's also a reminder that COVID doesn't just affect us as individuals. You know, for me, it was another reflection on the worry and the anxiety that comes with COVID-19 in terms of its effects on family members, you know, other people whom we care for so deeply. And that too is part of the reason that we've been working so hard to try to ensure that people are taking the precautions that they need to, to prevent the spread of the illness. But as the Mayor has really emphasized, encouraging people, particularly our most vulnerable New Yorkers to get vaccinated when their turn is up as well. And I guess the last thing that I would say, you know, just from my personal experience is that this is something that you know, that affects people's lives in so many different ways. Yes, in terms of physical health but also in terms of emotional health and mental health as well. And so, we have to make sure that our response to COVID is focused not just on the infection itself, but also on all of those reverberating effects. So, for me, you know, this has just been a, you know, a personal experience that has underlined all of those things that we've tried to do for the city as a whole.

**Mayor:** Thank you, Commissioner Shea, you want to talk about your experience?

**Commissioner Shea:** I feel like I've lost as you know, the month of January in many ways. Thanks for the question. I feel really good. I feel lucky and I feel blessed. I would say that in many ways, I think I probably had a mild case, complicated a little bit by asthma issues that, you know, going back to 9/11 related. But I feel really good right now. I took it slow. I headed the advice of the experts, the doctors. And you know, I actually, I think I said it publicly – I actually started to, a little toe in the water in terms of exercise this week. Very slow, still feel it a little bit, but I feel I'm past it. So, I really feel lucky. And to the other part of the question, I think you know, there's so many people to thank. And it reminds you of number one, how fragile life is. And number two, you know, we are a crazy city that we all love and 8.5 million people in the hustle and bustle, but it gets real small at times like this too. And how people rally around each other. And you know, whether it's offering to bring somebody food or, you know walk a dog or anything else, you know New Yorkers looking out for New Yorkers. I just love it. I think it really highlights the best of the world. And I think we need more of that and it's going to get us through. And, you know, in terms of the vaccinations, I echo, you know, the Mayor's thoughts there. The quicker we can – I'm proud of the work the NYPD has done on this front, helping New Yorkers. You know, we did a lot of work in NYCHA recently. NYPD you know, we are a unique job just to size. And we have X everything and we have X EMTs and we have X nurses and they stepped right in. And, you know, we do a lot of things pretty methodically and plans. And our medical division really you know, you're either exposed or you shine and they have shined throughout this entire process. So I thank them all.

**Mayor:** Amen. Go ahead, Emma.

**Question:** Thanks for that. And wishing you both good health. Next, I wanted to ask you about some of the policing stuff. So, news reports have documented how the NYPD has been notoriously uncooperative with the CCRB, DOI, and other oversight agencies. Will you seek to

codify any of the changes in the MOUs so that it truly carries the force of law? What happens under the next administration?

**Mayor:** Yeah, that's a – thank you for the question, Emma. That's an area where I want to see things tightened up for sure. Look, I understand these are very complex issues. There's tremendous confidentiality issues, both because we're talking about employee and personnel dynamics. We're talking about security issues. There's a lot going on here. But I want to see very clear sharing of information between the NYPD and the CCRB, the NYPD and DOI whenever needed. Now in the changes and reforms, we have announced as part of State of the City, we are clarifying the way that the CCRB can get, for example, body worn camera footage. So, we're making those rules much tighter and clearer so CCRB can get the information it needs. But anywhere else, where that needs to be tightened up, I certainly want to do it. Reverend Davie, you want to speak to that?

**Chairman Davie:** Sure. Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Yeah, so one of the other pieces of the MOU that helped in that regard, that helps in that regard is that the CCRB will now get summaries of the entire employment history of police officers against whom there is a substantiated allegation. In the past we were only able to use the officer's history of engagement with the CCRB when determining the disposition of a case and the penalty to attach to it. Now, we will have a summary of not only that officer's engagement with the CCRB, but with the entire -- his or her entire involvement with the police department. And that's a major change in terms of the information we get. The other piece I just emphasize here is that there's a real commitment in this memorandum of understanding to transparency. So, the Commissioner has committed to – the matrix requires – the Commissioner has committed to writing dispositions not only on the most serious cases where there is an extraordinary circumstance deviation but also for all cases. And in addition once we win the challenge to the 50-a repeal, and I do believe that the City will win that case, those written explanations of the deviations to the dispositions will be made public so that everyone can see and know what's going on. Those are the two major steps I believe in ensuring that we are moving forward and continuing to build this trust and accountability between the department and the people it has pledged to protect and serve.

**Mayor:** Thank you very much, Fred.

**Moderator:** Go ahead. Next is Marcia from WCBS.

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

**Mayor:** I am doing well, Marcia, How about you?

**Question:** I'm okay. I mean, I'm still here, so I guess that's good. I have a question that is –

**Mayor:** That is a fine conclusion, Marcia. You said it all.

**Question:** So, my question, I think is important because it just so happens that the Police Commissioner is there, but there's been an increase it seems in subway incidents, shoving, people being shoved onto the tracks by emotionally disturbed people, people being slashed. So much so that the Police Commissioner has said that it's becoming too common and it's something that's very disturbing. All the while lamenting the fact that the police department has basically been

taken out of dealing with these people on the subways. Also, it comes as Sarah Feinberg wrote a letter to you on January 5th, asking for increased police presence on the subways. So, I think that it's come down to the point where the buck stops with you, Mr. Mayor. And I'm wondering what you are going to do to make people feel that it's safe to take the subways?

**Mayor:** Yeah. Marcia. The buck always stops with me. I respect you. And I respect your question, but I think your question does not portray the reality. The bottom line is the subways in New York City have been made safer and safer over years. I remember when the subways were not safe at all. NYPD has done a remarkable job improving safety in the subway over years and years. We have now the ability of the NYPD to go out there, in fact we brought the neighborhood policing strategy into subways. Everything got disrupted because of the pandemic, but the basic strategies work. No, there's any suggestion that the NYPD can't do what it needs to do to stop an incident like that in the subways is absolutely false. And the Commissioner never said that. So, don't put words in his mouth with all due respect. The PD, we will apply whatever resources we need to keep the subways safe. It's something I know the Commissioner focuses on constantly. And we're going to go out there and keep making adjustments whenever we need to. Commissioner?

**Commissioner Shea:** Yeah, we each had meeting yesterday, Marcia, thank you. Myself, Chief Monahan, members of the executive staff, Kathy O'Reilly. Socially distanced you know, in this world that we're in. And talked about many topics including transit crime. You know, when you look at the transit crime numbers, they are down significantly. You mentioned the MTA with Sarah Feinberg. I've spoken to her over the last couple of weeks as well. And I know that she's in dialogue with Kathy. We're committed to – you know, I think Kathy's done a real good job on the deployment side, of freeing up resources, of putting additional resources into the transit system. High visibility, moving, you know, moving some people from plain clothes into uniform for that increased visibility. So we are on top of deployment within the transit system. The numbers are low. You spoke to push incident, I think. That was spoken about yesterday, but, you know, year to date we've flattened that. One is too many. I mean, we always find ourselves saying that. One is too many. But we remain committed to working with our partners to keep the transit system as safe as it has been.

**Mayor:** Thank you. Go ahead Marcia.

**Question:** The reason I'm asking the question is because yesterday Commissioner Shea said, and he was talking about the latest subway pushing. And he said, I think we would all agree it's becoming too common, that this is something disturbing. This is his quote. He says, it's not easy, but we need to talk about it because at the same time, we're saying take the police out of mental health illness. He said in appropriate circumstances, we support that, but there's got to be follow-up. These people are a danger. So, the question really becomes what is it that you should be doing to try to deal with the problem of mentally ill people who are on the subway? Or people who act out on the subway and make people who ride the subways feel afraid?

**Mayor:** Okay, again, we can talk about facts and encourage the people to understand the facts. Or we can just create fear for the sake of fear. We choose the former. We choose to tell people that the NYPD is out there every day protecting their safety. That subways have been made much safer over time. We've got more work to do. That's true. And I think that was implicit in what the Commissioner said. So how do you address this problem? With the right police precinct

– excuse me, the right police presence in the right places. That's a crucial approach that the NYPD takes with precision policing, get the right officers in the right places at the right time. PD has been doing that. We provide mental health services on a much greater scale than ever before. We've been doing that as a city. You try and reach people with mental health challenges early, not when it's too late. Our society has always reached people when it's too late. We have created an approach to reaching people early, identifying mental health challenges early and getting people the help they need. These are the building blocks. It's going to take a lot of work. But clearly there are times when obviously NYPD has to be involved in addressing someone with a mental health challenge. And that's exactly what happens. There's other times where it isn't the right approach. And that's why we announced months ago the ability to send mental health professionals out to deal with folks with mental health challenges when a call comes in in distress. Send mental health folks out, experts out, social workers and folks with a training, medical personnel to go out and help someone in distress. But if that someone is violent, it has to involve the NYPD. And we've made that clear as well. And we're going to keep doing that.

**Moderator:** Next is Andrew from WNBC.

**Question:** Hope everyone on the call is doing well. I'd like to go back to Dr. Chokshi. Dr., to the degree that you're comfortable, how do you think you contradicted COVID?

**Mayor:** Dr. Chokshi. Hold on.

**Commissioner Chokshi:** Yes.

**Mayor:** There we go.

**Commissioner Chokshi:** Thanks for the question Andrew. So, in my case it was a family member who developed symptoms of COVID-19 before I did. That led our whole family to get tested. I found out that I tested positive on Tuesday evening. And then I developed symptoms after that. So, most likely this was a case of household transmission.

**Mayor:** Thank you. Go ahead, Andrew.

**Question:** Another question for Dr. Chokshi. And the Mayor weighed in on this yesterday and Dr. Varma did about your decision to not get vaccinated. When a lot of people heard that as much as they would applaud your unselfishness there, as far as we understand, you double qualify. You're a doctor and you're volunteering in vaccination sites. And I can't imagine anyone in the New York audience who would hear that Health Commissioner, Dr. Chokshi got vaccinated -- oh my goodness, he's jumping the line. Quite the contrary. I'm just wondering if you have any sort of second thoughts about not getting vaccinated? And what your current plan is?

**Commissioner Chokshi:** Well, thanks for the opportunity to speak to this as well. And first I want to stay as clearly and unequivocally as I possibly can, that I will get vaccinated once I recover. And Andrew, as you have heard me say many times, COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective, and lifesaving. And that's the most important message that I have for my fellow New Yorkers. For my own case, you know, I hadn't felt quite right getting vaccinated while we still had such limited supply. And particularly when there were so many more vulnerable people who



still needed to get vaccinated themselves. As you pointed out, I was doing shifts at our Health Department vaccine hubs and had planned to get my first dose, once more New Yorkers had been able to get theirs.

**Mayor:** Well, thank you. Dr. Chokshi. And Andrew, I think you can hear, Dr. Chokshi is a really noble human being, a very good man. And he obviously did something selfless in deciding other people needed the vaccine more than him. And I admire that. But obviously I'm very heartened to hear he will be getting it soon given the importance of his role. And he'll be protected going forward. Go ahead.

**Moderator:** Next is Katie from the Wall Street Journal.

**Question:** I have two questions. The first and I hope the Health Commissioner can maybe speak to this, but you know, looking broadly at the numbers, they continue to remain steady or at least go down. I know hospitalizations are up today, but you said that's a special case. Is there any data that backs up that this is due to vaccinations? I know we don't have widespread vaccinations, but I don't know if there's any correlation between, you know, not seeing that large post-holiday spike and vaccinations or any information you have?

**Mayor:** Dave?

**Question:** Thanks, Katie for the question. And the short answer is no. We don't have evidence yet that any decline in cases or hospitalizations is due to vaccination yet. We do know at the individual level people who are getting vaccinated, of course, you know, that confers protection for them. But for us to really start to see population level effects will require a much higher level of vaccination. Which we do hope to be able to achieve in the coming weeks and months. Of course, if we have sufficient supply for that. So, in terms of what we're seeing, you know, with respect to cases appearing as they're plateauing and potentially even declining, it's likely due to other factors. Including the decline from the post-holiday spike, as you mentioned. And potentially, you know, some other factors that remain to be clarified. The final thing that I'll say on this is that we cannot become complacent in the face of looking at the numbers. With the presence of the new variants, I remain quite concerned that cases could go back up in the coming weeks and months. And so, all of the things that we've been talking about, the public health precautions that we have to take to curb the spread, as well as encouraging vaccination, these are all critically important for us to try to make this downward trajectory, something that is sustained for New York City.

**Mayor:** Thank you. Go ahead, Katie.

**Question:** Thanks. And my second question, Mayor de Blasio on Sunday, you had noted that the City would work to improve the, I guess vaccination appointment website? You said it was kind of cumbersome or bad, I forget what word you used. And now it seems with the introduction of the Yankee stadium site, we've introduced a third website. Right, we have the City to make an appointment, the State to make an appointment, and now the SOMOS Community Care. I'm just curious how that improvement is going? And if there's someone taking a lead on it, are they addressing usability issues or doing any UX testing? I'm just curious about the process of improving that process?

**Mayor:** Yeah, no, you're absolutely right. We're going to have an announcement on that shortly. The lead is our Information Technology Commissioner Jessie Tisch who's very aggressive and very resourceful. And wants to see the user experience greatly improved. As we said, applications in multiple languages, just a simpler process requiring less upfront information, making clear whether there are appointments or not at the beginning to help people understand. We definitely need to improve it. So, we'll have an update on that very shortly. This Yankee Stadium site, you're right, it's a separate approach. But it is very specific. It is this joint effort between City and State, SOMOS. And because SOMOS is the provider and because it's only for Bronx residents in this case, it is a specific way to apply. It is not something we put into the city-wide pool because it's actually a targeted effort to address disparity by getting more and more Bronx residents to get vaccinated.

**Moderator:** Next is Dan from WABC.

**Question:** Good morning, Mayor. Thank you so much for taking my question.

**Mayor:** How are you doing today, Dan?

**Question:** I'm doing well. Thank you, sir. I have a fairly quick question for you. Earlier this week, you released the racial breakdown for who's getting vaccinated, but unlike some of the previous information that your office has released it was fairly general. It didn't have ages on it or ZIP codes from where those people were getting vaccinated and where they lived. Why haven't you released more specifics, so we know who's getting vaccinated and who's not?

**Mayor:** It's an important question, Dan. I said, Sunday, we will be doing that. Data collection, I just want to confirm – data collection, making sure it's accurate, getting it in as much real time as possible is its own very extensive effort. And, obviously, to date, the central concern has been speeding up the vaccination process, getting more and more sites online, finding ways to get more vaccine, reaching deeper into communities. Data's crucial, but I want to be clear that we've tried to prioritize actually getting the results to people and data does take real work to make sure it's accurate. But the next steps will be to provide it by ZIP code, as you indicated, and then I want to get it down over time to the actual site level so we can see what's happening in real time site by site, meaning each vaccination center. So, our team will get you an update on that and the timeline on that. But we do look forward to providing that data soon. Go ahead, Dan.

**Question:** Another quick question. The Chair of the Health Department had suggested, you know, just a few months ago, census workers were going door to door in the community, educating people about the census and the importance of getting counted. He's questioning why we're not doing something similar when it comes to vaccinating people in our most diverse communities. We have this new vaccination site in the Bronx, do you see something like the census idea happening or anything else in the future that could help make sure that people in our most vulnerable are getting vaccinated?

**Mayor:** Yeah, it's an important question, Dan. It is the approach that we have been building from the beginning. That's what our Vaccine Command Center focuses on is ensuring that we work on equity with a real grassroots organizing approach. There will be everything from a texting campaign, door to door, paid media, you name it, the whole range of approaches. We're going to

be saying more on that soon, but I want to see if Dr. Katz or Dr. Chokshi want to add on some of the specifics of how we're doing that grassroots outreach.

**President and CEO Mitchell Katz, NYC Health + Hospitals:** Mr. Mayor, I think you've covered the issue. What we know is that people who are reticent to get the vaccine need to be approached in small groups. People are not going to change their minds based on large town halls or webinars or auditoriums. People are going to want to be vaccinated because they're talking one-on-one or in very small groups with other people who have been vaccinated already. And so, I think the City's effort is right to focus on reaching out to people. It may be door to door, but it also may be small community groups in order to be able to convince people that they want to be vaccinated and also to help people who have access issues to solve those problems. Thank you, sir.

**Mayor:** Thank you. Dr. Chokshi –

**Commissioner Chokshi:** Just to add briefly, sir, to say we will use every single channel that is available to us to conduct this outreach. That means telephonically, using print mailers, working with community groups, faith leaders, in many cases, yes, doing some door-to-door outreach as well, particularly for example when we're reaching out to fellow New Yorkers who live in NYCHA housing. So, the effort here is one that is all hands-on deck and there will be no wrong door with respect to someone who wants to access information about vaccination, but also the ways in which we're proactively pushing that information out as well.

**Mayor:** Thank you. Go ahead.

**Moderator:** We have time for two more. First, we'll go to Erin from Politico.

**Question:** I first wanted to ask about the policing issues. There was a proposal, a series of proposals, introduced in the City Council on Friday. One, which is to remove the final authority for discipline from the Police Commissioner and give it to the CCRB. I'm wondering what's your position on that, and I'm hoping to hear from the three of – the Mayor, the Commissioner Shea, and Chair Davie.

**Mayor:** Sure, Erin. Look, the Council put forward a proposal. This is going to be the crucial part of a process playing during February and April. And just to frame it really quickly, there have been – there's been an extensive engagement already with the City Council, with advocates, community leaders. The process that Commissioner Shea has been engaging on with some of the leading voices of change in this city, going out into communities, listening to folks, listening to their perspective on what kind of reforms we need. That's all been going on. There's going to be a lot more over the course of February and March, and we're going to bring together a reform package working with the City Council. The Council's offered a number of proposals. We have a number of proposals. I'm not going to go into the details of the Council proposals at this point. I want to analyze them carefully and talk them through with the Council, and then I'll speak to what I feel about each one. What I do know is, that process will yield substantial additional reforms on a variety of fronts. And I'm looking forward to that. Go ahead, Commissioner.

**Commissioner Shea:** Yeah, thanks for the question. As the Mayor said, a lot of different reforms, we're in talks and we anticipate that we will be very involved as this moves forward on



a host of topics that are presented. To the specific one that you mentioned, you know, when you talk about much of what we have talked about today and why we have taken the position that we have, and I will highlight one that I don't think we talked about yet today. I think Fred may have brought it up, but I didn't. And it's the topic of, you know, we've developed the discipline matrix, we've developed the MOU, we've done it collaboratively. And a lot of work went into it. My expectation is we're going to follow that discipline matrix, period. You know, there is a process if that does not occur. I added in specifically that if that happens, I specifically have to release that to the public. And it's just one example of – I think that's critical here. So, I appreciate and respect a lot of different views. I look forward to the discussions and we'll move forward and make decisions that we think are in the best interest of New York City.

**Mayor:** Go ahead, Reverend Davie.

**Chairman Davie:** Thank you. Thank you, Mayor. And I also thank you for the question. I'll echo what the Mayor and the Police Commissioner have said about engaging with the Council on their proposals. The CCRB looks forward to doing that. As for the specific issue of final authority, I think I've been clear about where the CCRB stands and where I stand on that. That said the fact that we are not there, does not in any way preclude us from working on the things that we've laid out here, which again, I think get us closer to there being, only in extraordinary circumstances, any deviations from the recommendations that CCRB makes when it comes to dispositions on police disciplinary matters. Thank you.

**Mayor:** Thank you. And I'll affirm that what both the Commissioner and the Chair have said, Erin, this matrix is what will govern our actions, period. It couldn't be clearer. Everyone was involved in negotiating it. We're talking about the year ahead, while we're all here in our positions of leadership, we're going to follow this matrix. Go ahead, Erin.

**Question:** Okay, thanks. And then my second question is for Commissioner Chokshi. Just kind of wondering now that you've been, you know, on the other side of it personally, if you can tell us a little bit about your experience with the contact tracing process, have you heard from a tracer, you know, have you gotten any information there, and also where are you quarantining? Maybe it might not be relevant if your family has already had it, but did you consider using the hotel program or where are you isolated?

**Commissioner Chokshi:** Thanks very much. Yes, I'm isolating at home, you know, with family members who are also isolating due to COVID-19. And, so, you know, like so many other households in New York City who have had this experience, this is something that we're going to get through together, taking care of one another. And with respect to contact tracing, yes, I've been contacted by the Test and Trace Corps. I've had, truly, a terrific experience interacting with them. They reached out to me on a timely basis. They asked me a number of questions, you know, the routine contact tracing script, and handled it not just professionally, but also with a lot of compassion. So, I'm grateful to the Test and Trace Corps for everything that they're doing, not just to ensure that I and my family are taken care of but also others, you know, who are at risk of exposure are reached out to expeditiously so that they can quarantine and get tested as well.

**Mayor:** Thank you.

**Moderator:** Last, we'll go to Henry from Bloomberg.

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

**Mayor:** Doing well, Henry, how about you?

**Question:** I am okay. I wish this wasn't happening, but it is.

**Mayor:** That is a – that was a very fine summary. We all feel that.

[Laughter]

**Question:** Right. I want to ask you, you know, the Governor's health commissioner, Howard Zucker, just released a letter in which he takes issue with your position on second doses. And he specifically says that his guidance that he's received from the CDC definitively says, no, don't use a second dose. And he – just to quote this letter, which is addressed to you, he says your suggestion that a brief delay of people receiving second doses would be acceptable, does raise a caution flag. People have worked very hard to get a vaccination appointment, and there is much public anxiety that second doses will not be available on their appointment date. So, it's – I guess I would like you to respond to this letter. Maybe it's unfair because you haven't seen it, but the State's position on this is, number one, the CDC has not given any sort of approval about this. And, you know, they say that a brief delay might, you know – it's open to dispute. The science is unclear as to whether this might have an effect on the vaccine's ability to make people immune. So, in light of the difficulties that the City has had just getting appointments for a first appointment together, in terms of the software, why would you press the City or the State or the feds to free up the second doses?

**Mayor:** You know, Henry, just talk to someone who has not yet had a first dose, talk to a grandmother who is waiting for any protection at all and can't get it. Talk to family members who are scared to death for their elders. And it's abundantly clear. It's just not right to withhold second doses we could be using right now. What we know is that when you get a first dose, you get some protection. This has been confirmed constantly by the medical community. You get some protection. How do we say we're going to leave hundreds of thousands of people with no protection at all, and focus those doses only on people who already have gotten some protection when we know that we can get them to the second dose, we can ensure that the supply is there, we can make sure when they get that second dose, we know it will be effective, but in the meantime, we can help so many more people.

The idea of away, people who need help, who need to be protected, it makes no sense to me. So, I've talked to a number of people in the Biden administration, I think there's a lot of understanding that with the absence of supply, Henry – and this is the single most important point, we would not be having this conversation if we have ample supply. We're in a war time dynamic. We don't have enough supply. People are suffering, people are scared, and they are vulnerable. We don't have the ideal we wish we had. If you don't have the ideal, you make adjustments according to reality. Reality is we need to free up those second doses and protect people. That's the bottom line. Go ahead.

**Question:** Okay. I do have a second question, but I would just say that if the supply is the problem and you're giving up second doses, you're creating a supply problem for the second [inaudible] –

**Mayor:** Henry, I know you have another question, but I got we've – I've said it a bunch of times, I really have. We have specific evidence of growing supply up ahead. The actions the Biden administration has taken already, which have led to supply increases tangibly, factually, the fact that the Biden administration is taking foundational efforts to speed up supply overall, the fact that Johnson & Johnson is coming. These are actual things we know that mean the situation in March is going to be better than the situation in February. That's my whole point. If we had no information about what the supply would be in March, different discussion. We know there will be more supply. How are we withholding doses from people now, when we know that some relief is coming up ahead, it just doesn't make sense. Go ahead, Henry.

**Question:** All right. Thank you for that. My second question is really kind of questioning the prioritization of vaccination locations by historical discrimination and disparities of medical treatment. There's sort of a growing consensus among some public health officials that you should really target these vaccination centers at the places where there's the most incidents of COVID. For example, Yankee Stadium would be an appropriate place because the Bronx has the highest rate of infection of all the boroughs per hundred thousand. But to center in on locations on the basis of historical discrimination, rather than places such as maybe Breezy Point or other ZIP codes, where the infection rate is so much higher than average, why not locate these centers at – the analogy would be a fire, go into the fire, try to get as close to the center, the hotspot of the fire to put out the fire rather than, you know, picking and choosing the places where the fire is not necessarily the hottest? Go for the places – go for the hot spots.

**Mayor:** Henry, I appreciate – your questions are always heartfelt and honest. I just disagree with the analogy because the fire – we've seen where the fire is and unfortunately, the way we understand where the fire is worst is, where have we seen people die. I just have to make it as plain as that – and I'll turn to Dr. Katz and Dr. Chokshi. But the history of this horrible virus and what has done to our people is what governed over the prioritization. So, 60 percent of our vaccination sites are in the places where people suffered the most. And when we saw – I said this the other day, when we first saw that disparity data from the Department of Health back in the spring, I remember that day very, very clearly. And I just had a chill go up my spine because it was almost the exact same map we had known for decades as the map of health disparities, the map of poverty, it was exactly the same almost to the letter.

And what it meant was that folks who had not gotten enough health care in their lives cause in this country, health care goes to those who have the most money, not to everyone equally, folks who had not gotten enough health care were particularly vulnerable. Immigrants who had not gotten health care, where they came from in many cases, were vulnerable. Multi-generational families, and that often meant families with more limited resources, two and three generations together in a home, families that were doubled up and tripled up, which correlated strongly to who didn't have a lot of money, which unfortunately also correlated strongly to race. This is where we saw this disease run rampant. And so, in determining the priority of vaccination, the question was, how do we save the most lives? How do we save the most lives? And that's what all of the data that went into the prioritization really focused on. Where do the vaccinations help

us the most to save lives and stop the spread of this disease? Dr. Katz and Dr. Chokshi, why don't you weigh in? Dr. Katz –

**President Katz:** I think you've said it well. We want to be able to vaccinate to save lives. We look forward very much to the day that there is enough vaccine that we can follow, as you had set us out, Mr. Mayor, for a million doses in a single month. If we could do that, we could really make a huge difference. We have the infrastructure to make that happen. We want to, for every neighborhood, figure out what are the barriers in that neighborhood. We know that good public health is always based on cultural understandings, figuring out what are the key leaders in that community who are listened to, and figuring out what the right languages, what the right media is. And as Dr. Chokshi has said, we're committed to using all of the avenues to get people vaccinated. Thank you.

**Mayor:** Thank you. Dr. Chokshi –

**Commissioner Chokshi:** Yes, I agree, what you said, Mr. Mayor, as well as Dr. Katz. And, Henry, you know, the way in which we've thought about that prioritization is really to look at health and social factors that create a disproportionate impact from COVID-19. And as the Mayor has said, unfortunately, we have the evidence from 2020 to understand where, and –

**Mayor:** We got most of it.

**Commissioner Chokshi:** [Inaudible] –

**Mayor:** Okay. Yeah, Dave, we're losing your transmission, but we got the central point. And thank you very, very much. And again, Dr. Dave Chokshi, we wish you a very speedy recovery. Everyone, as we conclude today, look, it's all about equity and fairness in everything we do. This is how we create a better city. This is how we build a recovery that will be strong and lasting. Whether you're talking about making sure that everyone gets vaccinated, or whether you're talking about bringing police and community together for the safety of everyone, this is the city we have to create. And I'm very optimistic that 2021 is going to be a transformative year. There is so much energy right now focused on getting it right, learning lessons, including really tough lessons, talking about things we didn't always talk about the right way, or we didn't talk about honestly enough. But we are talking about it now. We're making more changes than ever before. And this is going to be looked back on – 2020 is going to be looked back on as a year where big and lasting changes happened and that transformation really did occur and people saw that it can happen. That's what excites me about this year ahead. Thank you, everybody.

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