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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY ON COVID-19

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good afternoon, everyone. We've got a lot to go over here and we're all feeling very heavy hearts as we deal with such an extraordinary challenge and we think about the New Yorkers that we've lost and we think about what's ahead and I'm going to go over a number of things now that update you. Understanding the challenge but also understanding that New Yorkers will get through this together and it's hard to explain that balance sometimes that we're dealing with something absolutely profoundly different than anything we've dealt with before, extraordinarily difficult and invisible and confusing, but we will get through this together. That is something that comes back to just the pure strength of this place and our people. But in the meantime, we will go through a really tough, tough journey and it all comes back to, as always, needing to work with the federal government in particular to get the help we need.

And I'll give you some updates starting there. There was confusion yesterday obviously when President Trump mentioned the concept of quarantine. I think a lot of us were confused, thought it was something that would be in so many ways counterproductive and obviously unfair to so many people. What ended up happening was a CDC travel advisory, something much different – not a lockdown, something much more consistent with what we've been actually saying and doing in the city and state already, which is telling people to stay home unless they have an essential reason to go somewhere. So, again, that threat of a quarantine turned into a very different CDC travel advisory working with the federal government, working with the governors of the tri state areas. Now, I spoke to the president this morning and in truth, I did not want to discuss with him the travel advisory that had been settled in a way that, again, I think we can live with.

What I wanted to talk to him about was ventilators. What I wanted to talk to him about was medical personnel and I went over with him again, the reality in New York City, the fact that we have until next Sunday, April 5th, to get the reinforcements we need, particularly when it comes to ventilators. In fact, I asked the federal administration to get us additional ventilators even earlier. My request to them is to get 400 more ventilators in by April 1st because we've seen such movement with this disease, we have to be ready for all eventualities. So, my hope is that we'll see some of the results we've seen previously in the last few days. And again, there's a lot we could talk about what the federal government has and hasn't done over the last two months, but in the last week we have seen some real support and I want to see it again with the 400 ventilators we'd like to get in immediately.

Then we have a lot more we're going to need by Sunday, April 5th and beyond. And certainly, the medical personnel, which I talked to the president about repeatedly and to the defense

secretary and the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff. I think the best way for us to get a lot of that medical personnel is from the military. Everyone's been receptive. I'm waiting for specific results. But again, I will keep hoping that these very specific requests and very specific conversations will yield what New Yorkers need so that we can be safe. The fact is we remain the epicenter of this crisis nationally. A day will come when I will be able to no longer use that word and we all look forward to that word. But right now, we are the epicenter and the numbers are staggering. And again, they all represent real people, real families.

As of this morning, we were at 32,308 total cases, a stunning number. And we have lost, and this is so painful, 678 of our fellow New Yorkers. That means in the last 24 hours from this morning to Saturday morning, we lost 161 more people in this city. People of all walks of life, every kind of New Yorker. And it's so painful for everyone that we're going through this and we have to fight back with everything we've got. I want to tell you some of the stories because it's important to understand the lives of the people we've lost, and many of them were devoted to all of us and helping all of us in protecting and serving their fellow New Yorkers. And I have to say every loss, every death is painful. I feel a particular sense of loss when it's one of our public servants. So, I want to name some of them and talk about them very briefly.

At Health + Hospitals – and Dr. Katz is here, I know he feels the same pain as we discuss the loss of some of his colleagues – we lost at Health + Hospitals, Freda Ocran. She was a psych educator at Jacobi, previously the head nurse of the psych unit, and a mom supporting her family, but also supporting her mom who lives in Africa. So, what a horrible loss for that family, that hospital, and our city. Another story of tremendous commitment to Theresa Lococo, a pediatric nurse at Kings County Hospital, serving families and children. Amazingly, she was in her 48th year of employment in our hospital system, protecting her fellow New Yorkers – 48 years, serving us, and she gave her life helping others.

We've heard of terrible losses from the MTA. Our colleagues at the MTA, we grieve with you and we're so sorry for what you're experiencing. Of course, we all heard the story of Garrett Goble, 36 years old only, had only been working at MTA for six years, out there helping to keep the city run in this crisis of fire on the train put his life in danger. And what did he do? He worked to get everyone else to safety first and then got off the train and passed away immediately after, leaves behind two young sons in his family. So sad. And someone who, again, was right there at the moment, his last moments of his life, protecting others, serving others, saving others. Also, from New York City Transit, Peter Petrassi, 21 years as a conductor. And a beautiful tribute to him was posted by his nephew, Dylan, calling him the most loving, enthusiastic man, always putting others before himself.

You see this really painful pattern here of people who just cared so much about others and we're losing such good people. Also, Oliver Cyrus, a bus operator, 21 years at the MTA, based at the Manhattanville Bus Depot, a quiet and humble man, loved by his coworkers. We have lost to Oliver as well. And then you heard, painful loss at the NYPD. A man that worked at One Police Plaza, I mentioned yesterday – or Friday, I should say. We've now lost Detective Cedric Dixon, 23-year veteran of the NYPD, he worked in the 3-2 Precinct in Harlem. Not only a great detective, but someone that everyone who knew him knew would always be there to help other people. An electronics and tech genius who always could fix things for other people. A horrible

loss for the NYPD and the city. And from the NYPD as well, Giacomina Barr-Brown, an administration assistant in the Bronx, 49 Precinct roll call office, seven years in the NYPD and the kind of person her colleagues said she lit up the room with her smile, also always there for other people. And the FDNY – we rely on the FDNY in so many ways they've lost James Villecco, auto mechanic. He's been with Fleet Services since 2014 and this is the kind of unsung hero who doesn't get the credit he deserves. This is the kind of man who keeps us safe because he kept the ambulances in good repair so they could get there to help all of us. We grieve with his family in Staten Island.

Finally, NYC & Company, they do such important work promoting New York City to the world and helping bring in all those tourists, all that investment that helps this city keep moving forward. NYC & Company has lost Hubert “Rally” Nurse. He was there for 30 years working to promote New York and share New York with the world. And now we've lost him and all of us, all of New York grieves with his family. These are examples – and it's just so painful to say that's just a small, small fraction of those we've lost. As I said, these are the people we've lost who are our colleagues in public service. And as you heard, every one of them, an amazing story of sacrifice and concern and love for their fellow New Yorker.

So, we see this crisis growing and for weeks and weeks we've been talking about getting ready for this and we have to get ready for even more. And it's not just the incredible toll this has taken on our health care system. As you've heard in recent days the number of cases is growing, it's also having – putting a huge burden on our emergency system. I can't thank enough everyone at EMS, they're doing amazing work under the toughest circumstances. Our EMTs, our paramedics, all the officers, everyone who is doing such important work at EMS. We thank you and we feel for you because I know that the number of calls to 9-1-1 have been skyrocketing, it's putting a huge, huge demand on EMS. Let's be clear, Commissioner Nigro will be available to speak to this later on in the question and answer. This is unprecedented.

We've never seen our EMS system get this many calls, ever. But what Commissioner Nigro is doing with his team and our Deputy Mayor for Operations, Laura Anglin, is we're making a series of very fast, intense moves to ensure that more personnel will be available for the EMS. We're going to shift personnel onto the work of EMS. We're going to come up with more ambulance shifts, additional vehicles, whatever it takes to keep serving New Yorkers who are in emergencies. We're also going to make sure that folks who don't have a pressing emergency, because we all know for years and years, folks have called 9-1-1 and most of those are true emergencies and some of them are not. Anyone who's calling and needs something else, doesn't need an ambulance but needs a different kind of help we're going to find a way to get that to them too so ambulances are never going to a place that they don't need to be. But what we have to do first and foremost is put on more personnel, more ambulances, more shifts. And we are doing that immediately so we can serve the true emergencies and there's a lot of them to make sure that New Yorkers get the help they need.

Obviously, there's been a lot of attention on the situation in our hospitals in general and in particular at Elmhurst Hospital in Queens. I'm just going to give you a few quick points. Dr. Mitch Katz, here with me, will talk about Elmhurst and Health + Hospitals more specifically. But look, the bottom line is the incredibly valiant team at Elmhurst has gone through so much in the

last few weeks. That's an extraordinarily effective hospital. Real professionals who have found a way to keep saving so many lives while dealing with such pain at the same time and real loss. And you can imagine how hard it is for people whose whole life is saving lives to see that sometimes there is no way to save a life, but they have been doing amazing, amazing work to save so many others. We've been sending constant reinforcement. So, 169 clinicians have been sent in recent days to Elmhurst.

That means physicians, registered nurses, nurse practitioners and physician assistants. 100 nurses this weekend alone. In addition, within the hospital, clinicians have been moved from outpatient activities to ICU activities. Staff from the central office of Health + Hospitals are moving in, taking on roles in terms of ICU and emergency department. We are going to keep moving personnel and getting more personnel constantly to help Elmhurst and every other hospital that needs it. This is going to be an extraordinarily tough next few weeks, but we will keep sending more and more reinforcements. And again, we have to get the good people who are there doing such tough work, we have to get them a break, we have to [inaudible] them. And this is why I want to see medical personnel come in, not just from New York City, but from all over the country, including those military and medical personnel. Because we have to give these extraordinary heroes a break at places like Elmhurst.

Also, ventilators – we have added 55 ventilators to Elmhurst over the past two weeks and we will keep adding whatever number of ventilators they need. So, this will be a nonstop effort. Across Health + Hospitals, the whole system, the 11 hospitals, 500 contract nurses have been added already, 500 more coming this week. So, we are just going to constantly, constantly reinforce. Now I want to turn to supplies and the distribution of supplies. And I've already said our first milestone is this coming Sunday, April 5th, we must shore up to get ahead of the challenges. We will start to face that following week. So, this is a race against time. We have gotten some real help. As I said, the ventilators that came in from the federal government – some are coming in from other sources. That's helpful. Incredibly helpful. We need it all. We are thankful for it all.

Yesterday we sent 1,400 ventilators out to our hospitals, to all types of hospitals. That is a huge step forward, but that number we need overall is still 15,000. So, we've made a big dent between different sources to get toward that 15,000. We have a long, long way to go. We still need to see the federal government do a lot more and more quickly. We need the Defense Production Act utilized to the maximum. We need to see a distribution system that's fast and intense. And again, I think the military must be involved. And, again, my specific request to the federal government is 400 more ventilators by April 1st to get us ready for later in the week when we expect the upturn to really intensify and we need those ventilators to be in place and ready.

In terms of personal protective equipment, PPEs, a very moving moment yesterday when the United Nations provided 250,000, a quarter million surgical masks, to the people in New York City, to our health care workers, our first responders. The United Nations, we are their home and they did something very good for their hometown with a quarter million surgical masks and we've asked them, any and all help they can provide going forward we will need it. And those masks are getting out to our hospitals right away.

Dr. Katz will speak to the overall situation, but my message to all the doctors, the nurses, the hospital staff starting with all our colleagues at Health + Hospitals, our public hospitals, but to all of those out there, the voluntary hospitals, the big hospital systems, the independent hospitals – we are all in this together. We're going to go and work to get you every conceivable supply you need and get it to you quick. We have to protect our health care workers and that's what we're working on every single day. And we can only – all of us who are not health care workers can only imagine what you all are going through. We have to be there for you and get you all the help including the additional personnel immediately. That's our job.

In terms of a health capacity. We're all really moved by the fact that the USNS Comfort is arriving tomorrow. I'm really looking forward to greeting the men and women, the medical professionals, the sailors, everyone who is making this possible. I want to thank our colleagues in government at the Economic Development Corporation who played a crucial role for the Comfort to dock and be able to add immense hospital capacity for the city instantly upon docking. Well, they had to be able to dock and they weren't going to be able to dock unless the dock was dredged to allow for a ship of this size.

The operation was supposed to take two weeks. The folks at EDC, working with the Army Corps of Engineers and the State Department of Environmental Conservation that got the job done in eight days. And so, the Comfort will be arriving tomorrow and will right away be making a difference in this city. And we are so, so grateful to the Navy, to the military that this new help will be arriving in our city. Also, very important, in Central Park, we're going to be using every place we need to use to help people. Mount Sinai Hospital, working with a relief organization named Samaritan's Purse, is creating a 68-bed field hospital. So, this is the kind of thing that you will see now as this crisis develops and deepens. The partnership with Central Park Conservancy, our Parks Department, and the Mayor's Office – we all worked together to get this done with Mount Sinai and Samaritan's Purse. Going up now in the East Meadow, should be operational by Tuesday.

Some other quick updates for you and then I'll turn to Dr. Katz and then we'll go to questions. There had been a concern about those incarcerated, update, in terms of our jail system. As of last night, over 650 inmates had been released, again, working carefully with the State of New York and the DAs and being very, very mindful of public safety while also being mindful of deep humanitarian concern. Over 650 released. I can update you and say that since this crisis began, our jail population is down by about 860, not just because of the releases, but because we've seen falling crime and, and lower arrests. Want to thank the DAs and the State for their collaboration and cooperation working all together. And the State I think made an important decision related to those on parole and working through the right approach there. I just want to commend the State for that.

There's been concerned about our juvenile detainees. A number of actions have been taken. Over the last two weeks, there's been a significant reduction in our juvenile detainee population, there's been a 67 percent reduction in one category, 53 percent reduction in another category. So, when you combine that, obviously we've been able to reduce very, very substantially – it was not a huge population to begin with. We'll get to the exact numbers, but more than half of those who had been detained over the last two weeks have been released, again, while always making sure

there is follow-up and monitoring to protect safety. Want to thank our Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services, want to thank the Law Department, the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, and the Administration for Children's Services for working together to ensure that was done properly and quickly.

Related to transportation – a couple of things. Staten Island Ferry, we had made a substantial reduction in service because ridership was down so intensely. We have seen ridership continue to drop, it is now down 86 percent from the same time period last year. As a result of the lower ridership and the need to conserve resources and a number of factors, we're going to be moving to hourly service on the Staten Island Ferry. That will be 24/7 but it will be hourly service. There's so few people using the ferry now compared to what we normally have that we had to make this move. It will go into effect at midnight tonight.

And then related to our subways. We've gotten some reports of crowded subway cars despite obviously a huge, huge reduction in subway usage. Obviously, there's been service reductions as well. We've had some times where there was a service problem and that led to – in other words service had been delayed and that led to some crowding. We are going to work together, the MTA and the NYPD, to go and do spot checks and immediately intervene if we see any subway cars that are crowded. Want to ask all New Yorkers again if I – that should not be something you see very often. And if you're on the subway, it means of course to begin with, you're an essential worker or you're doing something essential under the rules. There obviously should be a whole lot of New Yorkers who have no reason to take the subway at this point.

But if you do have an actually a central reason to be on the subway and you see a crowded car, we want it reported immediately to 3-1-1, so the NYPD and MTA can act on it. And if you're an individual in the subway and you see a crowded car, please avoid that car. Please go to a different part of the train or wait until another train comes. It's crucial that we avoid any crowded cars. Social distancing means everywhere, including in our subways. I'll finish up and then a couple of words in Spanish – on a very, very important topic, which is the direct relief that New York City needs from the federal government. I had several calls today and over the last few days with Senator Schumer who is not only our Senator, of course, but is the Democratic leader in the US Senate. I spoke as well this morning with Treasury Secretary Mnuchin.

The two important topics. The first is regarding the third stimulus just passed, ensuring that the resources devoted to New York City could be accessed immediately. That's \$1.4 billion so we can keep providing essential services to New Yorkers. I'm very satisfied based on the conversations with Senator Schumer and Secretary Mnuchin that we will have access to that money very quickly and under rules that will be very usable and flexible. So that's good news. But I immediately spoke to both about the need for the fourth stimulus, for action to be taken in the month of April by the Congress to provide real and immediate relief to New York City and New York State, given the vast new expenses that we are incurring to help people, to save people, to protect people. We must get additional support. We all know all parts of government are losing a huge amount of the revenue we depend on to provide services to people.

The Congress, the president have to act to keep New York City and New York State whole. It's the right thing to do morally. It's the right thing to do to protect people. And anyone who wants

to see a recovery – you're not going to have recovery if the nation's largest city and one of our largest states cannot do our work and are not going to be solvent, we need that support. So, I spoke to them about that and I feel, in addition to the conversation last week with a Speaker Pelosi, I feel hopeful that additional help will be coming.

Finally, just to say we're having a strange experience, all of us would go out in so many parts of the city and see something we've never seen before or only once in a while during a blizzard or some very exceptional event. We see a lot of empty streets, a lot of empty sidewalks. I'm sure it feels strange. It feels strange to me. I'm sure it feels strange to so many of you – remember that that's a sign that New Yorkers are taking the instruction seriously, that they are doing the right thing. The vast, vast majority of New Yorkers are doing the right thing. The vast, vast majority of New Yorkers are practicing social distancing, are really only going out when they absolutely need to and are staying in otherwise. And I really want to thank New Yorkers, all of you, for the way you're handling an incredibly tough crisis. Again, we will get through this together, it will not be easy, but we will get through this together – quickly in Spanish.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, I want to turn to the head of our Health + Hospital system. The men and women under his command have been doing extraordinary work and he has been doing extraordinary work keeping the largest public health system in America running in the midst of the biggest public health crisis we've had probably in a century in this country. I want to thank him for his leadership and his spirit and for the great work of the people that he, every day, commands. Dr. Mitch Katz, CEO of Health + Hospitals.

President and CEO Mitchell Katz, Health + Hospitals: Thank you, Mr. Mayor, for recognizing the amazing heroes that are working every day at Health + Hospitals as well as the private nonprofit hospitals throughout New York City. It is extremely difficult work. People know that the vast majority of people who are COVID positive, who get the virus do just fine. 80 percent of people don't need hospital care. Of the 20 percent who need care, only five percent of the total need ICU care. But imagine that the other way – you're a doctor or a nurse at the hospital and what you see is patient after patient coming in critically ill and your actions are determining whether that person has all of the medical care they need. And our staff are performing so well under very difficult conditions. Our emergency rooms are about twice as filled as usual. Our intensive care units are about three times as large as usual and still our staff often using new equipment, working with new colleagues who have never been in that hospital before. People are learning together. People are rising to the challenge. It's extremely difficult work, but they are doing it. I want to be clear that everyone who has needed a ventilator has gotten a ventilator, that people who need the protective equipment have gotten the protective equipment. But there is tremendous anxiety about the coming weeks and that's why we are so grateful to you, Mr. Mayor for advocating for our health care workers to make sure that they have the equipment that they need, both the equipment in the sense of ventilators to save lives as well as the equipment to protect them. We know that there's a lot of fear that that equipment is going to run out and we're so grateful to you for your advocacy efforts. Thank you.

Mayor: Thank you, Dr. Katz. Okay, we are going to go to questions and please let me hear the name and the outlet. Go ahead.

Moderator: Hi, just a quick note at the top. We'll ask everyone to limit themselves to just one question in an effort to get to as many outlets as possible. Also, just a reminder that we have Dr. Barbot, Police Commissioner Shea, Fire Department Commissioner Nigro on the phone today. With that, I will start with Todd from AM New York.

Question: Okay. Mr. Mayor, Dr. Barbot, I'm interested in finding out – with the growing loss of life from coronavirus, can you guys speak to what is being done to accommodate the influx of bodies of people we've lost? The relationship with the funeral homes and whether or not there's any risk to people handling the bodies, or even the loved ones passing on COVID-19 after people have died.

Mayor: Todd, it's a painful topic to say the least. Dr. Barbot can talk about the safety measures in place and the concerns if any precautions need to be taken. I want to say that, look, I'm [inaudible] keep, whenever this topic comes up, I'm going to keep it very broad and very brief. We have the ability to deal with this very, very tragic part of this reality. We have gotten a lot of support from the federal government to make sure we had what we need to deal with it all. I can tell you, I'm not going to go into detail and my colleagues can get you more detail after this press conference, but we have what we need to deal with an absolutely tragic situation. Our job is now to focus on what we need to do to save lives. Dr. Barbot, do you want to speak about how precautions are being taken?

Commissioner Oxiris Barbot, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: Yes, sir. Mr. Mayor, and I want to just to echo what you've said in terms of all of our efforts thus far, really being geared at reducing the spread of this virus and giving the health care system an opportunity to absorb the number of individuals that are unfortunately stricken with COVID-19. With regards to COVID-19 and people who have deceased because of it, there is no indication at this point we'll time based on my experience from other countries, based on the science that has been published, that there is any risk to individuals from this respiratory virus. I want to remind you that it's a virus that's spread by droplets and after someone is deceased, there is no risk. We at the Health Department are very focused on working with you know, homes and ensuring that as one of our essential services, our burial desk is working 24 hours a day to help meet the needs of families that have unfortunately lost someone to COVID-19.

Mayor: Okay. Go ahead.

Moderator: Next we have Shant from the Daily News.

Question: Yeah, thank you, Mayor. I was wondering if you could elaborate a little bit on what you want to see from the fourth stimulus. Do you have a dollar figure in mind and what kinds of things that funding would go toward?

Mayor: Yes, Shant, the – and this is a conversation – look – and I'm always grateful when our federal officials are responsive. Secretary Mnuchin was very responsive. Obviously, on the

legislative side, I've spoken to Speaker Pelosi and Senator Schumer, they've been extraordinarily responsive. There's no question in my mind at this point that a fourth stimulus bill is coming and coming relatively soon. I spoke to as a Senator Gillibrand about this as well and everyone's saying the same thing and that's a very encouraging sign. Our delegation, I spoke to the entire congressional delegation a few days ago. Obviously, Congressman Jeffries is very high ranking in the House leadership as well. Everyone is agreeing that another stimulus bill is coming soon. We have to ensure that that stimulus bill reflects what's happening now, not just in New York, but increasingly tragically all over the country. And you have noticed coronavirus doesn't discriminate, it is now in all 50 states – red states, blue states, big and small. The next stimulus needs to replace the lost revenue that cities and states have lost as a result of coronavirus. There is no other viable path to making up the kind of revenue we've lost: billions upon billions of dollars very quickly, more to come unfortunately. While we're trying to keep essential services going, and I want to remind everyone we're – anything that's about saving lives right now, money's no object. We're going to do everything and anything to shore up and strengthen our hospitals to support our first responders. Whatever it takes to save lives, that costs a lot of money and it is the right way to use money. But if you combine all the huge new expenditures with all the loss of revenue and we have to provide the basics every single day, we still have to fight crime and make sure the garbage is picked up and everything else that the city does. I think it should be literally replacing the lost revenue and funding the additional expenses that were incurred because of COVID-19. And that should be for all states, all cities. But this time instead of a bill that treats everyone, like there's no differences in the reality, this bill must reflect where the actual epicenter has been and ensure that New York City and New York State are truly whole, not just a token amount, but are truly whole.

Moderator: Next, we have Erin from Politico.

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor. You said on Friday that you were considering fines for social distance and violators and you were going to make a decision this weekend. What is the decision to stand on that? And relatedly, when you say NYPD is doing spot checks of subway cars, what are they checking for exactly? The MTA is determining the number of cars being run, right?

Mayor: But the point is, obviously, NYPD is in the subways, always. And the instruction, in addition to everything else that the NYPD does for safety in the subways, is to go out and look for any instance where there's a crowded train car and immediately clear it. So, when we say spot checks, it's not just watch and wave, you know. It means intervene, clear out that car, hold up that train, get people spread out immediately. Do not allow any crowding. And obviously the information is crucial to understand why it's happening and what adjustments MTA has to make.

On the use of fines, I believe, and we set it with the religious institutions – very small number, I want to emphasize there was a very, very small number of very small churches and synagogues that we were concerned about on Friday. Thankful this weekend, we did not see much of that activity. I think they got the message. I authorized fines and closing buildings if needed. I certainly do authorize the use of fines in parks and playgrounds if needed. Again, what we're going to do to begin as we've been doing is – and the weather has been such that I haven't been too many people out, but all of our enforcement officers haven been giving warnings, have been educating. There's been loudspeakers telling people the update, all that. Now it's as simple as

this: if someone is told by an officer, disperse, keep moving, you're not distanced and they don't follow the direct instruction from officer or they say they're doing it and then they'd come back right away, I'm comfortable at this point that they will be fined. My understanding is the fines are in the range of \$250 to \$500. That obviously be, you know, a violation of summons that would be provided. I don't want to see that happen. Erin, I want to just let all New Yorkers know that what we're trying to do is say: you've been warned and warned and warned again, now, if an officer comes up to you, if someone wearing an official city, a uniform official city identification comes up and says, move along, disperse, etcetera, if you ignore that order, they're going to say, if you ignore it, we're going to have to fine you. They're going to give people every chance to listen. And if anyone doesn't listen, then they deserve a fine at this point. And I don't want to fine people when so many folks are going through economic distress, but if they haven't gotten the message by now and they don't get the message when an enforcement officer's staring them in the face saying, I don't want to fine you, but if you don't change what you're doing, I'm going to have to, well, you know, that person then deserves the fine. So, we are going to proceed with that as part of how we intensify our enforcement.

Moderator: Next we have Sydney from Gothamist.

Question: Mr. Mayor, this is Sydney Pereira with Gothamist. I was just calling to see if you could elaborate on whether you're reevaluating closing parks and playgrounds or increasing the scrutiny on congregating and those types of open spaces?

Mayor: Sydney, here's where we are and there'll be obviously an ongoing conversation with the State and the City Council, but at this moment what I wanted, because we've had a little bit of an aberrant situation with the weather but it's very much connected to what I just said. If we see, and I know this from talking to our Police Commissioner who's with us, who's – constantly he and I are comparing notes on what he's seeing, his officers are seeing and obviously what Parks Department's seeing. Any place where we see any consistent violation of the new standards, we will simply do a series of direct things. If it is, for example, a soccer field, a tennis court, a basketball court, any place where we see people ignoring the rules, we'll just take the equipment out immediately. We've already started to do that with all three of those categories. And I think people will get the message very quickly. If you keep doing things that are inappropriate. There's just, we're taking it all out. You don't have to be able to do it anymore.

In terms of playgrounds, again, we have not seen much noncompliance. If we see any noncompliance, we'll begin by shutting that playground down. If we see broader noncompliance in the coming days at any point, I may give the order to shut all playgrounds. But what I am trying to do is do this a little bit in stages to see what we might be able to keep open, because I'm really feeling how much New Yorkers have been deprived in these last weeks and will be deprived for quite a while of so many of the things that we used to have. I'd like to keep something available for people. But I have to be pretty fast to say if I see and if our police see, if our enforcement agencies see a pattern of non-compliance anywhere, we will take action on those individual sites. If it becomes a bigger pattern, I mean literally over a matter of days we will be watching everything and acting in each situation, we see a bigger pattern, we will take an even bigger action.

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

Question: Hey, Mayor de Blasio, hope you're doing well. I wanted to thank the City's Health Department and your administration for releasing that map on Friday, but I'm curious if you could release the raw data because as the map stands now it's sort of meaningless to not know the raw numbers and it actually, like you said yourself on Friday, it actually might confuse people. Would you take into consideration releasing more of that information? Because I know that [inaudible] the city has it if they can produce that map? Thank you for considering.

Mayor: Thank you, Katie. Yes. And you heard correctly the map showed something but it's a little hard in some ways to get the true meaning out of it. And we are looking for measures that we think are more give you a fuller picture, give you better, more consistent information. The more we can determine will be actually consistent, accurate that we can put out. We do want to put out more. Dr. Barbot, obviously with the caveat that we understand the imperfection of that map, if you're willing to put out the raw data, that's fine with me, but you know more about the details than I do.

Commissioner Barbot: Yeah. Mr. Mayor, I appreciate your remarks and we're all committed to transparency here. And as we've seen before, a lot of this is evolving quickly and we want to be able to produce consistent maps that have reliable, accurate data on a daily basis. And so, we're definitely working hard at ensuring that the next tranche of data that we release, are data that can you give folks a more granular picture of what's happening at the city level.

Mayor: Okay, and we'll follow up. Our team will follow up with you, Katie, on the specifics.

Moderator: Next, we have Myles from NBC New York.

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor. Good afternoon to you. I'm looking to get some information regarding the Police Department. They yesterday said that they would do some kind of work from home, reasonable accommodation. I think that it came in [inaudible] more information on that.

Mayor: Dermot, are you with us?

Police Commissioner Dermot Shea: I am. Can you hear me?

Mayor: Yep.

Commissioner Shea: So, since this unprecedented time really kicked off three weeks to a month ago, we've been staggering our workforce, working from home. We have thousands of employees working from home as long as they could do those jobs and still operate at a high level with the Police Department delivering functions. We've given discretion to our frontline commanders in terms of accommodating people, particularly people over 50 years of age with vulnerabilities such as this disease seems to strike harder. So, I think that, that we've been consistent in that we're continuing to look out for the safety of our employees. We did put a message out, already have had some people contact us seeking in a combination. So, we're going

to work with not only then with the unions to make sure that our workforce is as safe as it possibly can be.

Mayor: Thank you.

Moderator: Next we have Craig from the Post.

Question: I'm wondering, Commissioner if you can update on the staffing levels in the NYPD and just with that, if we could – what is the timeframe once an officer is getting a confirming case that they're going back to work? What's the guidance there?

Commissioner Shea: So we can get back to you in terms of – from a medical district – has to do with whether you're tested positive or not, whether you have fever or not, whether you're going to have a fever and you're off medicine, not when the symptoms started. So, there's a series of different protocols that are medical professionals go through. I can tell you that in the last two days we began to have people for the first time that had tested COVID-positive, now returning to work, and we anticipate that that number now as we move forward is going to significantly grow, just as, as this situation matures. When we first started to see the sick numbers grow was roughly on March 12th. So, as you plan out from that day and you'd look at periods of whether it's two or three weeks after an individual goes sick, we know that those numbers are going to continually grow. We're looking at both sides of the spectrum quite frankly. What is the current sick rate as, as officers is still becoming infected and when is that beginning to apply? Tell as well as forecasting out two to three weeks and, and when did those, when is it going to be a person on the other side?

Where we stand as of this morning is – we have – we're closing in on 5,000 members currently out sick, and we have I would anticipate by tomorrow morning close to 900 test positive for COVID.

Mayor: Go ahead.

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

Mayor: Jeff. How you doing?

Question: Good. How are you? Can you elaborate on the number of lives lost over the past 24 hours? And I don't know if Dr. Barbot can maybe talk about the projections from that number. It seems to be increasing pretty rapidly, every day.

Mayor: Yeah. Jeff, you know, it's really, really painful and troubling and yes, it is growing. It's been growing. It keeps growing. And you know, when, I hate to say it again, but it's just true. April will be worse than March. And I fear that May could even be worse than April. Like we've got to get in our minds against all that rhetoric of, you know, everyone get back to work and we'll be done by Easter, that's just not true. We're going to be in for weeks of this. When exactly peaks and starts to go back down. I think, you know, different projections say different things, but the worst is definitely ahead of us and that's why we are, you know, intensely working to lay

in the kind of personnel supplies, equipment, everything to try and save the maximum number of lives. But even with that, we're going to see, you know, a really, really painful number of people lost in this crisis. Oxiris, do you want to speak to that?

Commissioner Barbot: Certainly. So that's far from the individuals who have passed as a result of COVID-19. The vast majority have been above the age of 75 and/or have had chronic underlying illnesses such as emphysema, diabetes, immunocompromised, et cetera. And with regards to the numbers that we are anticipating. You know, I think at this point, as we've said earlier, all of our efforts have been really directed at reducing the number of individuals who can track the illness and becomes severely affected by it. But the reality is that if we think about sort of a typical school season on a yearly basis, New York loses rough to be 1,000 to 2,000 people because of influenza. I think that we are on the scale having many more people pass because of COVID-19. And so, you know, right now it's challenging to give an accurate number in terms of projection because every day that New Yorkers adhere to the social distancing is another day that you buy to healthcare delivery system an opportunity to meet the needs of those that are affected by probate.

So, I think, you know, we're definitely on track for having more deaths than we would typically see in a flu season, and part of the challenge there is that it will happen in a shorter amount of time. And as the Mayor started off this press conference, you know these are unprecedented days and days that are going to be challenging for every New Yorker. And it's really a time for us to dig deep into how it is that we come together, though we may physically be distanced, you need to really dig deep and come together emotionally and spiritually and be there for one another.

Mayor: Amen.

Moderator: We'll take two more. Next up is Samantha, from 1010 WINS.

Question: Yes, hi. This question is both for the Mayor and the Police Commissioner. Has there been an increase in domestic violence calls with the lockdown? And for women or victims of domestic violence who may be afraid because the courts are closed and, you know, services may be limited, are there resources for them? Do have a message for those people who may need help?

Mayor: Samantha, I really appreciate the question. It's something we've been talking about that we're worried about, what happens in a crisis atmosphere like this and, you know, who may be vulnerable at a time like this. We have to make sure that anyone who might be a victim of domestic violence is protected even in a crisis like this. So, the NYPD, and the Commissioner will speak to it, I mean, they've done more and more over the years to try to disrupt the horrible, horrible situation with domestic violence and to follow through when they have any sign of that danger, including the recurrence from previous cases. So, that work will continue no matter what else is going on here. And we need to make sure if anyone feels in danger, and that's a priority, immediately to act on it. And they can reach out to the NYPD. And, you know, this again, the NYPD is prioritizing domestic violence always, but especially in this crisis. Dermot, you want to follow up on that?

Commissioner Shea: Mr. Mayor, you hit most of the points. I mean, the message is domestic violence is an extremely high priority for all members of the New York City Police Department, from the police officer level, to the domestic violence offices that we still have on hand that can aid in this issue and [inaudible] particular situation and the detectives as well. It remains a high priority for us. I think it's a very good question and that it is something that we're very mindful of. We have not seen it manifest in across-the-board increases yet, but it's certainly something that concerns us for the possibility. What we've seen is, generally, a reduction in crime, not just the domestic violence, but many crime types over this last roughly three-month – three-week period, excuse me. What we worry about in some types of crimes, particularly domestic violence, is it occurring and there's a lack of reporting. And that's certainly something that's on our mind. To try to combat that, we're reaching out to households where we know there has been domestic violence in the past and they're, kind of, trying to get ahead of things. But thus far, we have not seen a reported increase in domestic violence.

Moderator: Last one, we have Jarrett, from City Limits.

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor. Commissioner Nigro, this is a question for you, regarding the strains on the 9-1-1 system. Can you characterize what the impact of those has been? Are calls being rerouted [inaudible] come with neighboring towns [inaudible]? And related to that, have you changed or are you thinking of changing the types of calls, medical calls that fire companies themselves respond to?

Commissioner Nigro: Well, we're in an unprecedented time, of course. The last five days have been the five busiest days for the EMS in their entire history. And today, no doubt, we will be over 6,000 calls for the day, which is more than 50 percent higher than an average day. So, the impact that that has had is slowing our responses. Of course, our resources are not infinite. And so, 6,000 calls are difficult to respond to. It causes significant delays in the lower categories of calls, the less critical calls for help. And that's happening now. As far as the firefighters, firefighters are responding to the critical calls, the cardiac arrest, the choking, the major traumas along with EMS and paramedics, but the bulk of these medical calls is falling on the shoulders of EMTs and paramedics.

Mayor: Okay. And Dan, as we said, you know, we are going to make a number of adjustments very quickly. And this is this level of activity is unprecedented. Commissioner Nigro and I have spoken in detail, along with Deputy Mayor Anglin about any and all adjustments we need to make to get additional personnel into place, to move people to additional types of work, whatever it's going to take to make sure that those emergency calls all kind of get answered in real time. And whatever it will take to add shifts, we'll keep doing it. And noting that there's ways to make sure that those calls that might be handled a different way and don't need emergency support can be handled a different way. But I want everyone to understand, Jarrett – it's a very, very crucial question. I'm glad you asked it. We must remember, even in the midst of this terrifying challenge of COVID-19, we still have to fight crime every day, we still have to ensure that fires are fought, we still have to ensure that anyone who calls 9-1-1, having a heart attack or any other emergency gets emergency help. We will keep shifting resources, personnel, vehicles, whatever it takes to keep that going. This is another example of, you know, remembering that this crisis requires of us not only a massive health care response, but a massive

response to keep all the rest of life in the city going, and to protect human life and every other way, because human life is threatened by things beyond COVID-19 and we cannot let get down our guard on those other fronts. So, whatever Dan Nigro needs, he is going to get, so that we can keep the 9-1-1 system functioning strong and so New Yorkers can know when they place that call and they have a real emergency help come comment will come quickly.

With that, everyone, thank you. We will be back tomorrow with more updates. Thank you very much.

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