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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Well, good morning, everybody. Few days ago, something very beautiful – very simple, very beautiful happened. A letter was passed along through one of our food delivery providers. These are these folks out every day making sure New Yorkers who are hungry have food in the middle of this crisis, helping people, many cases who never thought they'd ever have to ask for food. And want to start by appreciating, thanking all the folks out there every single day who are bringing food to people in need. What a beautiful act of kindness, and compassion in the midst of this challenge. So, a letter gets passed along to one of them from a woman named Sylvia in Sheepshead Bay. I should let you know that Sylvia is 97 years old chronologically. She's a great grandmother of 13, and she receives senior kosher meals through our food program. And in the letter she sent, there is a poem of gratitude. I want to share it with you for it's simple beauty. It says, "Had to write you about your food. For a 97-year-young was in the mood to thank you for all your days preparing food in different ways. Thank you. Thank you. I praise you all. Be gone virus, do not stall". So wonderful that Sylvia was moved to thank all the great people who put together those meals, and delivered them, and to think about what they do and how much it matters to every-day New Yorkers. I love her poetic ability, and the way she puts it all together so nicely, but it's important to think about a second meaning I see in Sylvia's poem, and it's the fact of Sylvia's life – she's 97. She's writing a poem full of gratitude in the midst of this crisis. If she's 97, do the math, she was born just a few years after the pandemic of 1918. So, Sylvia is someone who grew up in the aftermath of a crisis. The only crisis, in fact, we can compare to what we're going through now. And she grew up and she grew strong, and with a strong and good heart, and she's still with us here today. I think there's an incredible affirmation of life in her very existence, but even more so in her willingness to thank others for all they are doing.

So, think about the people who count on these meals, because that's what we have to do every single day when we think about why we are doing this work. Don't think of just numbers, and don't think about some abstract idea of helping our fellow human beings, think of the people in need. Think of a 97-year-old who made it this far, but needs that food to keep going, and how much we have to honor and love and appreciate our elders as I talked about yesterday. Think about the working people, hardworking people, middle class people, people who were doing everything right and suddenly their job wasn't there anymore, and they don't have that paycheck, and they don't have enough money to feed their family. Think about parents. Number-one thought in the morning, last thought at night is how they protect their kids. Think about the pain they feel when they don't know if there's going to be a meal for their child. That's why we do the work we do to help each and every one of them, and everyone liked them to make sure they never have to wonder where their next meal is coming from. And I want it to be clear with the

simplest, clearest sense of mission when it comes to the question of food is simply this. We will let no New Yorker go hungry, period. It's not acceptable no matter what we're up against that anyone would be hungry in this city. So, we brought together an incredible group of people to provide food on a vast scale. And what they are doing means so much to people, not just in terms of the food they deliver, the sustenance, but also the hope that comes with it, because it means someone cares. Someone's looking out for you. I want everyone to know, the City has your back in this crisis. We are looking out for you, and a lot of good people every day are making it their business to get you what you need.

So, what we set out to do was feed everyone. Enormous mission, feed them quality food, feed them safely, make sure everyone was safe in the process, the folks who prepare the food, the folks who deliver the food, the folks who are receiving the food. And it's a huge endeavor, and every day we're trying to make it better, but what has happened in just the last few weeks, this was all put together in a matter of weeks is quite remarkable and something New Yorkers should be proud of as another example of the spirit, the energy, the entrepreneurship, the creativity that exists in this amazing place. I'm going to turn in a moment to our food czar, Kathryn Garcia, to give you a quick report on where we stand, but let me give you this important fact. Since the middle of March when this crisis went into higher gear, we have distributed, the city of New York has distributed 32 million meals to New Yorkers who needed food, and this effort is growing every day. By next week, over a million meals will be delivered per day. Delivered to people directly per day. Over half a million grab and go meals will be handed out per day at our Department of Education food sites. 500 sites across the city.

So, it's a vast, vast scale and we're trying to get it right every day, and we're trying to improve it every day. And when something's not right, we have to fix it. And this is a moment where I want to express my thanks to not just the elected officials, the community leaders who have raised concerns or told us where there is a need that needed to be filled or offered a suggestion, but I want to thank our colleagues in the media. We get together every day or six days a week, I should say. And a lot of times our colleagues in the media pointed out specific problems that have helped us make the food program better, address a problem, make the program better, realize something that needs to be fixed. That's one of the great virtues of the free press, is the ability to see things and hold government accountable. So, I want to thank four members of the media who have really focused on this issue – Juliet Papa of 1010 WINS; Sydney Kashiwagi of the Staten Island Advance; Marcia Kramer, CBS New York; and Julia Marsh of the New York Post. They've all raised really helpful, important concerns and we followed through on each of them, and we will keep following through on each concern is raised, because we need to get this right. So, now I'm going to turn to our food czar with great thanks for her effort and the team she's put together. And Commissioner Garcia has answered the call many times when the city needed something special and something important done, and I can't think of anything more important than making sure New Yorkers have food every day. So, Commissioner Kathryn Garcia, take it away.

Commissioner Kathryn Garcia, Department of Sanitation: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. As you said, this is an enormous operation. It's really nothing like anything that's been done in this city or I would say probably across the world. And the team is really driven by what you talked about, about serving New Yorkers and understanding that every person that we're delivering to is

someone's grandma, is someone's parent, is someone's child. So, we have accomplished a lot in the last two months, but for me, good enough is not good enough. We want to continue to strive to make our program better, and we want to hold ourselves, and our food providers to the highest expectations. We want to make sure that every meal is healthy, and meets and exceeds the minimum requirements for protein, for vegetables, for grains, doesn't contain too many calories, or too much sodium, that it's arriving on time, and is delivered directly to your door. If you order kosher, halal, vegetarian, or other specialized food, you should get it. That's what you need to eat. We don't want anything to go to waste, and if we can't deliver a food that you will eat, then we have not solved the problem. Just to be clear, here's what I will not tolerate in this program – any expired food, meals that don't meet our nutritional guidelines, late or miss delivery, and different meals than you ordered. It's very important that you are getting something that you will eat. And this is emergency food, but it still must meet key standards. And this is especially true for our seniors, and we take this extremely seriously. When we're talking to our vendors, one of the key questions is, would you serve this to your grandma? If the answer to that is no, then we should not be working with you.

We really want to make sure that we are getting them the food they need, and we will hold people accountable. If there is a problem, we will fix it, and make sure that it doesn't happen again. And as the mayor mentioned, members of the media have brought things to our attention. Electeds have brought things to our attention, community-based organizers have brought things to our attention, and we have made changes to ensure they we're getting healthy food to people. We've fired vendors who have not met our standards, and we will continue to hold them accountable going forward. Currently, we're working with about 30 food providers, restaurants, caterers, farms, consortium's, and we're actively seeking more, both nonprofits as well as private restaurants and caterers so that we can deliver more food to New Yorkers from their neighborhoods. And that we can activate sections of the economy that have been closed in a safe way. But we take these issues very, very seriously. If you do not think that you're getting what you expected, you should call 3-1-1 immediately, or if you want to use the computer, go to nyc.gov/getfoodhelp so that we can correct it. The public should know, if you need food, we will provide food to you. We will get you food. And I'm so proud to be doing this work in this time, as is every single person on the team. So, I want to turn it back to you, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Thank you so much, Commissioner. And, Commissioner, again, congratulations to you and your team. I know you, I know so many of the people you're serving with – every complaint is taken seriously, every concern is taken seriously. And there's a spirit of wanting to get it exactly right each time. So, reminder to everyone that it's important to let us know if there is a problem so we can fix it. Now, as to that team, it really is an amazing team effort. And so, in the spirit of thanks, let's remember, everyone, the Commissioner, the agency has been playing a big role in this at Sanitation. Obviously, the folks at Department of Education, all those folks working in the kitchens and that those food sites, 500 sites around the city. Our colleagues Department for the Aging who long ago were providing meals to seniors things like meals on wheels and have been building and building since then, reusing senior centers and new ways to make sure that they can help get food out to seniors who need it. The folks at Emergency Management who have helped to coordinate so much of this, the folks who drive our taxis, drive yellow cabs, green cabs of folks who were drive Uber's and Lyfts, all the folks in the for-hire vehicle industry who have signed up well over 10,000 people, drivers signed up to be part of this

to help get food to those in need. And, of course, everyone at the Taxi and Limousine Commission who's helped to put together this, an unprecedented delivery effort. Parks Department – you wouldn't think a Parks Department this – they were some of the first to put together food distribution centers. So, an amazing team effort and folks who are doing it as a labor of love. Now, anyone who needs a meal, a reminder, if you need to find out where you can get a meal at the community-based sites you can go to nyc.gov/getfood. If you needed a delivery, you can call 3-1-1. But the bottom line is we will not let any New Yorker go hungry. So, if you need food, go online or pick up that phone and we will get it to you.

Okay. Now, why do we talk about food so much? Because we're dealing with an unprecedented crisis because of what's happened with the coronavirus. I've said, before the coronavirus, we thought somewhere around a million, over a million people in this city were food insecure and needed food more at some point in the year. Now, we think that number is 2 million or more, so almost a doubling. That's why we have made food such a central part of what we do in response to this crisis and I want to reaffirm four things that we're focused on. Four things that guide everything, your health, your safety, making sure we can help you get food on your table and keep a roof over your head. These are the basics, these are the things that people care about the most, these are the things that parents think about in terms of taking care of their families. This is what we're focused on all the time and we can't just think about what's happening today, we have to think about next week and the week after and the month after and the month after that. To keep people safe, to keep them healthy, to make sure there's food, make sure there's shelter we have to be thinking about today and playing the long game of working ahead to always make sure we're taking the actions that will keep people safe.

Now, that's happening against an ever-changing reality with this disease. Look, we're going to talk today and in the next few days about the progress we're seeing in terms of fighting back this disease and so much of it is because of the work you are all doing, but that means we're going to take some steps towards getting back to normal. We'll do it carefully, we'll do it cautiously, but we're still starting to take some steps and that's going to make people act differently. Obviously, warmer weather, there's a lot of things that are going to start to change people's lives and behavior and a lot of that is good. That means we're moving the right direction, but it also means that a lot of the patterns of life will start to restore and we have to recognize the implications of that. So, in this crisis, one of the things that was so obvious on the issue of safety, clearly during the heart of this COVID crisis, we saw an extraordinary drop in crime and no one ever wanted the coronavirus here, but at least something happened with crime that was in the right direction. We saw less crime, but we know as things get even begin to get back to normal and as the weather gets warmer, we have to guard against any increase in crime. So, we are trying to make sure that everything we do, that we're focused on safety again today and what's going to happen in the weeks and months ahead. For that reason, we are going to use the strategy we have used the last summers effectively to keep crime down and that's called Summer All Out. It's an NYPD operation where officers who work in office settings in different specialized areas of the department go out to neighborhoods and work at the grassroots level. It's been very successful, very effective, we're going to do it again now. Why? Because over the years we learned that business as usual wasn't working, there were too many years going back decades where there was an assumption in this town that the summer was going to get more violent. And that was just the way it is, and we sort of had to accept it. And I got to tell you the police commissioners I've

had the honor of choosing and serving with, never saw it that way. Bill Bratton, Jimmy O'Neill, Dermot Shea, they never saw an inevitability to summer being a time of greater violence. They pinpointed the very, very small number of individuals in this city who caused violence and it's a few thousand people. And they said, look, if we keep a focus on those few thousand people and keep a focus on the places that need the most help, we can keep crime in check, and you've seen it over these last summers. You've seen why New York City became the safest big City in America because it was smart strategic policing and there was neighborhood policing which was all about deepening the bond between police and community, getting a flow of information, working with the community, a whole different approach that's had a big, big impact. So we used Summer All Out as a way to expand the number of officers who could be out in communities working with a neighborhood policing philosophy that's been done over five summers and we saw the real impact on reducing violence, particularly gun violence and protecting the families of our city.

So, Summer All Out this year will involve about 300 officers, be 300 officers across 10 commands and you can see them on your screen. These are communities that have been hardest hit by gun violence, we want to make sure gun violence does not reassert as this crisis starts to wane, let us pray. And the officers are very visible presence in the community, they get to know the community. Again, those neighborhood policing principles make all the difference in the world because they help us do a lot more and we're going to do that again this summer with summer all out.

Okay. Now let's talk about a really important effort that's been gone now for about two weeks and, again, we're going to use strategies that have worked in the past and keep using them because we've learned what works and we understand we have to apply those strategies and that this crisis doesn't change that. We also are learning new strategies and when it comes to homelessness, we have seen something extraordinary happen because of the innovation of shutting the subways for a few hours late at night to get them really clean, really safe for our central workers, but also to disrupt the historic pattern of homeless folks just staying on the subways and not connecting with services and shelter and we have been working together with the state, with the MTA, NYPD homeless services, everyone working together, lots of outreach workers who spend their lives helping homeless folks and helping them in off the streets. We have two full weeks now of results and I want to go over them. The first week, 201 unique individuals, meaning we cross check to make sure that it wasn't just the same people each day, but how many total people were affected by the outreach effort. 201 accepted placement of shelter for some of time and every time someone who's permanently street homeless goes into shelter even for a night, it's a step in the right direction. It's a beginning of convincing them to come in and accept a better reality that we can give them to keep them healthy and keep them safe. 102 of those individuals were still in shelter by the end of that first week, meaning that we were maximizing our chance to keep them in shelter and help them on the pathway to a new and better life. The second week, 181 unique individuals accepted placement and shelter for some period of time. 113 we're still in shelter by the end of week two. So these numbers, they may seem to some like a small number in the context of New York City, but when you remember that the total number of people living on the streets and subways is estimated by the federal government at about 3,500 to 4,000 people on any given day in New York City. When you see a hundred people in a week come in to shelter and stay there, that's actually a major step towards

reducing permanent homelessness once and for all and ending it once and for all. So, we'll put these numbers together and over the past two weeks, over 1,400 unique individuals have accepted help, 378 accepted placement and shelter 211 remain in shelter, 301 accepted hospital care. Thank you to all our partners, thank you to our outreach workers. This is a huge step in the right direction.

Now, let's talk a little more about where we're going, and I'll get to our daily indicators in a moment. But what's clear is we're making some real progress. I've talked to you about the fact that in the first half of June, there's a strong likelihood that things are going to change for the better because we're making consistent progress. So, every day we have some of the best minds in each part of this city's life and economy coming together in our advisory councils, sector by sector, talking about what it's going to take to have a successful restart, talking about how we can bring our economy back, bring back people's livelihoods, do it safely, and then start building towards a better and stronger city up ahead. Last night, I met with a group of folks who are going to have a huge impact on the future of the city, our advisory council on construction, real estate and infrastructure. So many people who will be central to the restart of our economy and whose work is crucial to the future of the city beyond the coronavirus, because this is a city more than any in the entire country that has so much work to do on infrastructure, so much work to do on building for our future. And that's important, and that was one of the big topics last night – to see in this painful moment the opportunity for transformation as well, that a whole lot of work needs to be done. A whole lot of people need work, a whole lot of work needs to be done, and if we're going to bring back the city better and stronger, a lot of that will be construction on the infrastructure work that has been long overdue. So, there was an energy in this call to think anew about where we need to go and how everyone can pull together to do it and how that can employ a huge number of people and restore livelihoods. There's a lot of realism about the safety challenges, a lot of realism about the hesitation some companies may have in terms of how they restart, but what was clear in this call was – and it's been true at every group I've met with, every industry, every part of the city – is there's a very dynamic group of people ready to lead the way. And even if some are going to take a wait and see attitude, there's lots of pioneers; there's lots of folks ready to restart and do it the right way and show others it can be done. So, it was a very inspiring gathering. Another important point, these are folks who have tremendous national networks in the real estate world, the construction world, the infrastructure world. They're going to apply those relationships to help us get what we need in New York City, which is that stimulus bill from the federal government. Everyone on the call understood, if we get the kind of stimulus that New York City deserves, the kind of stimulus the House of Representatives passed last week - we can actually get back on our feet. We can actually start building stronger; we can put a lot of people to work. By the way, we're talking about a stimulus just to make us whole again to make up for the vast lost revenue we've experienced, but think about the word stimulus. It's actually not just supposed to get you back to square one. It's supposed to help you move forward; it's supposed to stimulate greater levels of activity. That's what these folks were talking about; all they're ready to build that will benefit New York City and they're going to help us get the stimulus done so we can do that.

Okay, now again, I'm always going to be a voice of caution about doing a restart the right way, about taking smart steps, knowing what we should do, knowing what we shouldn't do, watching carefully to see if the steps we take work. But that said, clearly things are moving in a good

direction, so we have to start acknowledging in a good way the moves that we need to make to prepare for that improvement, and some of it is already visible; we obviously see people out more, we see more traffic. We have to start to make adjustments accordingly. One example, I'm going to give you refers to a lifeline for this city; for folks who depend on the Staten Island Ferry it couldn't be more important in their lives. It's the way they get to their livelihoods; it's the way they connect with so many other important things in their life. Staten Islanders depend on the Staten Island Ferry in a very, very powerful way. Now, in the beginning of this crisis, ridership of course went down radically – a 90 percent drop in ridership on the ferry. So, we reduced service accordingly and the most we saw in a typical rush hour trip was 400-500 passengers, but now we actually see ridership starting to go up. We're seeing up to 600 passengers already and think it's going to keep rising, so we need to get ahead of that. And again, this signals something good is happening. We want to be there in time to respond to that good trend and make sure Staten Islanders have what they need. So, starting today, we're increasing the frequency of ferry trips during rush hour for Staten Islanders. We had brought service down to an hourly trip during rush hour because ridership had dropped off so much. We're now going to run every 30 minutes from 5:00 AM to 9:00 AM and every 30 minutes from 3:30 PM to 7:30 PM so a step forward in terms of increasing rush hour service on the Staten Island ferry and giving people more space as a result. You know, obviously this is both about serving Staten Islanders in terms of their work routines and their days, but it's also about keeping people safe; we want to make sure that those ferries don't become crowded, so adding additional service will let us do that. And some good news this week as well on top of that for the Staten Island ferry, we have just heard from the United States Department of Transportation that we're getting a \$21 million grant for the ferry and that is going to help us as we start to ramp back up service to pay for a lot of the costs associated with restarting, growing the service, and the additional cleaning we want to do to make sure that all Staten Islanders know that ferry is clean and healthy at all times.

Okay, now I constantly come back to appreciating the folks who have helped us through this crisis. The many, many good people who have stepped up when New Yorkers needed them. And when you think about what has worked, the reason we're even getting to talk about restart, the reason we're even getting to talk about people coming back and riding the Staten Island Ferry is because New Yorkers did the right thing with shelter in place, with social distancing, face coverings. But you had a lot of help and you particularly had a lot of help from our friends at the Parks Department who led the way in terms of educating people, motivating people, showing people what social distancing looked like and how to do it, giving out face coverings. The Parks Department, this has been one of their finest hours. So I want us to realize this is not what they assumed they'd be doing, but they have adapted to this mission brilliantly and our parks have meant so much to us in this crisis because our lives have gotten much more local and much more limited and our parks have been the oasis for so many of us. Parks workers not only kept the parks going, not only gave out the face coverings and helped us to make sure we were socially distancing; they help put together field hospitals, they helped to run those food distribution sites. As I mentioned, they gave out untold numbers of face coverings all over parks and beyond. So we want to thank them. So today is, "Go Green for Parkies Day," and as you see on your screen, the Empire State Building will go green and here's an example, everyone going green [inaudible]. I want to show you the stylish, they have very good stylish equipment, clothing, whatever you want to say, caps - they have it all the Parks Department. But we all need to take a moment to appreciate our colleagues at the Parks Department. So when you're out there, say

thank you to them, say thank you to all the different kinds of parks workers you meet – the folks in forestry, maintenance, operation, parks enforcement, patrol officers, the parks ambassadors who are out there with the education and the face coverings, the urban park rangers, all the park staff. They've really gone above and beyond. I want to express my thanks and I want to ask all New Yorkers to express your thanks as well.

So, our parks workers have stepped up and they've been amazing and so many New Yorkers have stepped up and so many New Yorkers have said, I've heard it and I know all of you have heard it, they want to do more; they want to find a way to contribute, they want to help. And I believe them because people have done amazing things. So here is another important way to help - donate blood. We need New Yorkers who can give blood to give blood, it's a very important moment in history because we're dealing with this crisis. It's disrupted all the normal blood donation drives that happen each year. We want people who can do it. On the screen you see how you do that; you go to NYBC.org and make an appointment, or you call (800) 933-2566 the New York Blood Center – make an appointment. I'm going to give blood today along with Chirlane. We know it's important, so we're going to do it; I'm asking you to do that as well. And literally you could help save the life of a fellow New Yorker by giving blood at this crucial moment.

Okay, let's talk about our daily indicators. It's a pretty good day. Again, I want us to get to great days, but it's definitely a good day because two indicators down and one up by just a little. So, indicator one, daily number of people admitted to hospitals for suspected COVID-19 – that is down from 63 to 60. And number two, daily number of people in ICUs across Health + Hospitals for suspected COVID-19 – that is down from 483 to 477. The only one that's up, again only up by one point, is the percent of people tested positive for COVID-19 – up from 8 percent to 9 percent. Now, I want to put this in perspective for a moment and we're going to have a lot more to say in these next days about how we're approaching that first half of June and I want to signal it as clear as a bell - all roads are leading to the first half of June. The City indicators, the State indicators, we're seeing very clear progress; we have to sustain the progress. We all want to get there so we all have to be a part of it, but when you look at the three indicators the city has been using, it's important to recognize the progress. We once a week we look at the big trends, but I want to give you another measure of it that, that first indicator, which again is so much farther down than it was - daily number of people admitted to hospitals for suspected COVID-19. Here's something amazing; for more than a week we have been around or even below the annual average for folks admitted to hospitals for this broad kind of disease. This is very powerful. It means that when you think about where we are now, not where we were a week, two, three, four weeks ago, but where we are now because of your amazing work, we've brought this down far enough that it actually resembles a typical year for this broad category of diseases. So that's a very important fact and that's now been going on for more than a week. On that third indicator, the percent of people testing positive citywide, again, you see a little fluctuation; you saw a little bit of fluctuation today. We've had several days in single digits, which we obviously didn't see before, but here's another big picture reality – the last 10 days have all been below 15 percent. So even though we see some fluctuation on the big picture, something very important has happened. We've gotten down below 15 percent for 10 days and stayed there consistently. So, again, this is remarkable progress. I'm going to go into more and more detail starting tomorrow and the days ahead about how we are taking this information and now using it to prepare for the steps we'll

take in June and what we're looking for as we make our final decisions on restart and then how to sustain a safe restart. And again, we're talking about small smart steps. It will take a series of steps over time to get back to anything like normal. But something very good is happening because of your hard work and everyone in this town should feel good about that.

Okay. A few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

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

Moderator: We'll now begin our Q&A. As a reminder, we're also joined today by Foods Czar and Commissioner Kathryn Garcia, Social Services Chair Steve Banks, and NYPD Chief of Patrol Fausto Pichardo, and Senior Advisor Jay Varma. First question today goes to Brigid from WNYC.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Hey, Brigid. How you doing?

Question: I'm doing okay, thanks. You know, the indicators are hopeful and they, you know, give me some optimism about what the next days and weeks may be like. But it's also so striking given this new analysis from the New York Times today that shows how many more thousands of lives could have been saved if more control measures had been implemented even a week earlier. And so, as we start to talk about shifting to looking at reopening, I'm wondering how your team takes into account this analysis and, sort of, how you plot carefully about moving forward. And then, secondly, we're approaching Memorial Day weekend that we know beaches are going to be closed to swimming. It seems like though there's still some figuring out about the rules about how to limit people on the beaches and other public spaces. We saw some new signs going up here in Rockaway. I also saw that Parks Commissioner Mitchell Silver will be teaching an online masterclass to an Australian outlet about how to manage and support safe use of public space during COVID-19. I'm just wondering what you know about that and if he's going to join you for a briefing before the weekend to share his thinking with New Yorkers.

Mayor: So, thank you, Brigid. Look, the fact is I think it's very important that we would go slowly and carefully with the beaches and I think we're in the right place right now to say there won't be swimming, there won't be lifeguards on duty, there won't be gatherings, there won't be sports. We're going to be very cautious both because of what could happen on the beaches themselves – and we don't want to spread this disease, so we don't want people gathering on the beaches. Brigid, I'm sure you saw the images from Florida and California, you know, in the height of the crisis, people going back to the beaches, literally like nothing had happened at all and how horribly dangerous that was. And we also are very, very cognizant that the other piece of the equation is the public transit piece, which, you know, we're going to all be trying to understand that piece of the equation more deeply going forward – what role can public transit play as we're coming out of this crisis and what limits need to be in place in terms of health and

safety? But what we know for sure is we do not want large numbers of people going on mass transit right now, and that's the only way the vast majority of New Yorkers who go to the beach get to the beach. So, I'm very confident that going slowly and carefully with the beaches is the right thing to do. I agree with you that Memorial Day weekend itself will pose a particular challenge and the NYPD and the Parks Department will be taking any number of measures. There'll be plenty of personnel out – obviously, a lot of education. We're going to make sure people understand the ground rules and we'll enforce them. And if there's too many people at any point, any place, we're going to do what we've said we're going to do – we will keep both spreading people out, but if we have to send people off the beach, off the boardwalk, if we have to reduce the number of people, we'll do that. So, that's the game plan. We'll certainly have more briefings on that going forward and you'll be hearing from both the Parks Department and the NYPD.

On the way forward and what we're going to learn from what happened before, I will tell you for sure we're going to take a cautious, careful approach. I'm absolutely moved by how much progress we've made because New Yorkers are all participating and that's why we see this amazing improvement. But we're going to take each step very carefully, very cautiously. And, I think, look, we all need more information about this disease and we still don't have all the information we need. We all – you know, all of us, this city deserves to have so much more support in testing, but we're making as much of it as we can even without the federal support. We're going to keep learning, keep gleaning information from everything we can, both locally, nationally, internationally. But I guarantee you our approach will be one that's cautious and careful and health and safety-focused. And, you know, we're going to look at everything we can in terms of new research that tells us about what happened previously, it can inform our next steps, because my absolute focus now is how do we keep people safe right now and how do we make the right moves going forward and how do we avoid that boomerang. So, anything, any new research that helps us understand how to make those steps the right way we're going to learn from that absolutely. But the thing we will not do is rush this process. We have to feel that people's health and safety is secure to take each step.

Moderator: Next question goes to Erin from Politico.

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor. I had a question on a similar topic. So, this research out of Columbia University finds that fewer than 4,300 people would have died in the New York Metro area compared to 21,800 who actually did if, you know, lockdown measures have been put in place a week earlier. So, when you hear those kinds of findings, does it make you wish that you had acted earlier towards some of the shutdown measures?

Mayor: Erin, I have not read the whole report, but when I've – the summary I've seen, look, I wish we had known so much more in January, February, beginning of March. I wish we had the testing that would have told us what was going on. I mean, right now, we're not sure when this disease started to be present in the city. We thought it was March and now more and more it looks like it was February, even late January and we just didn't have the testing to be able to give us the full picture. So, it's very painful to think about if we had had the testing we needed everything we could have done differently or if we had known then the things we know now what we would have been able to do for people. It's horrible. And so, you know, this is one of

these situations I look back and I think about the kind of information that's now clear versus what we were seeing at the time on – March 1st was the first case in this city, literally the first case, and it was not until March 14th that we had the first death in this city. And we were fighting in those two weeks to see if we could contain this without any ability to see how deeply it had spread because we didn't have the testing. And, you know, immediately after that first death, it was the next day that I indicated and call for the schools to close. That night, we closed down the bars and restaurants. Two days later, I called for shelter in place. As we got information, we acted on it, all of us. But, of course, it's painful and, of course, I look at that and I say I wish we had known more, because we would have been able to do more. It's as simple as that.

Moderator: Next question is Yoav from the City.

Question: Hi, everyone. I had two questions. I wanted to ask about blood donations. What's the status of the ability of gay men to donate blood? I know there's some federal restrictions on that. Is the City doing anything to, I guess, see if those can be remedied – the restrictions? And on – sorry, I was running around – on the ability of –

Mayor: Yoav, you need to work out a little more, man.

[Laughter]

Question: On the issue of – Dr. Varma was asked yesterday about perhaps loosening restrictions early or for people who test positive for antibodies and he mentioned a few concerns about that, including legal concerns and also the fact that the medical science isn't quite there yet, but it is a City preparing some kind of plan that might allow that to happen in the event that the science validates it might be a safe way to, you know, restart the economy?

Mayor: Yeah, very good question. I appreciate that, Yoav. So, on the blood donations, I think this entire area – I want to come to your specific question, but I want New Yorkers to know – so, blood donations are run by the New York Blood Center, a nonprofit organization, and historically not run by the City of New York. There wasn't a need for it to be run by the City of New York or regulated – we don't have a regulatory function with the blood center, but it has operated very, very well for decades. But this crisis has shown us something we'd never seen before, because the very foundation of the blood supply was, you know, corporate blood drives, civic organization blood drive, City agency blood drives, all of that's been disrupted. So, we're going to figure out a new system to work with the blood center going forward to monitor the blood supply so that we can do everything possible to get people to donate blood in these times of need. Hopefully, you know, relatively soon we'll get back to the point where we can do blood drives on a bigger scale, but this is a real issue. So, I'll turn to Dr. Varma on that in a moment. In terms of federal restrictions, anything that attempts to exclude people improperly, of course, we're going to fight against it. But I want to affirm that because the blood center is a nonprofit organization not regulated by the city, the role we could play is of course advocating at the federal level, but we don't get to make the decisions unfortunately. But Dr. Varma will speak to that in a second. On the second piece, Yoav, again, this is one of these things in life where you try and give people just sort of the blunt truth. So, the antibody testing tells you something, by definition. If it's a good, accurate test and you know you were exposed this disease and you're

taking the test. If you're taking the test, you're still alive, so you fought back the disease. It means at some point the disease was part of your life and you overcame it. And that's powerful, because it suggests if you were exposed again that you could overcome it again. We don't know – I've had this conversation with our health care leadership many times – we don't know if someone implicitly cannot contract the disease. It doesn't seem to be a lot of incidents of people getting it again after they've been exposed, but we don't know that as a firm fact. And we do not want to say to people if you test positive antibody, you don't need to take precautions anymore. You certainly do need to take precautions. You still need to – if you're supposed to be using PPEs in your work, you've got to keep doing it. Everyone's got to keep socially distancing. Everyone's got to keep using face coverings. So, I don't think it will ever be seen, at least based on what we're seeing now, as a sort of cure all, if you will. But if new research validates the meaning of these tests or validates that in fact you cannot contract the disease again after you have been exposed to it, we'll that will change everything. Or, if new research goes the other way and says people can contract again, that will change everything. The bottom line right now is, the antibody test tells you something, it is helpful for people, it's helpful for the big picture research wise, but it does not mean let your guard down at all. So, Dr. Varma, you want to comment on that and then speak to the blood donation question and the federal restrictions?

Senior Advisor Jay Varma: Thank you very much for the question. Starting with the blood donation restrictions, I think, as the Mayor has correctly pointed out, this is currently regulated by the federal government, the FDA, and it is managed by a non-governmental agency in New York, the New York Blood Center. New York City has long taken the position that policies on blood donation should be based on science and not based on stigma. I think in 2016, Commissioner Bassett at that time issued a public statement specifically calling on the FDA, I think in alliance with other City agencies, to remove that restriction. So, I think the New York City government position on this has been very clear, but it does require action by the federal government to change permanently. On the second issue. I don't know if I have anything in particular to add. I think as we discussed in in the call yesterday, I don't think the science is there clearly. And, as we've discussed, also potentially ethical and legal issues regarding the use of some type of immunity passport for return to work. I would say, just to add, the absolutely critical thing though is to screen for people who have active infection. And we are working very closely with a number of partners, governmental agencies here in the city, academic partners, industry, to try to look at ways that we can rapidly expand or continue to expand our capacity to test for active infection, including the use potentially of new technologies that are emerging. So, right now, our primary focus is not on certifying who might be clear to go back to work, but rather figuring out a method that can apply to everyone that would screen for active infections and make sure workplaces, transit, any other places that people might be in close proximity are as safe as possible.

Mayor: And last point, you know, because I appreciate the question very much on the federal role. I don't have any illusions about the federal government, but perhaps in this moment there will be a willingness in Washington to listen to the fact that there's a structural problem with our blood supply that needs to be addressed and it makes no sense to exclude people who should have every right to donate blood. So, I will reach out to the FDA commissioner, Commissioner Hahn, and speak to him about it. He's been, to his great credit, very quick to respond to the needs of New York City. And I will reiterate that for a long time we've been calling for this and that

this would be the right moment to address this concern, because we do not want to see anyone turned away who could be giving blood and helping their fellow New Yorker or their fellow American.

Moderator: Next is Gloria from NY1.

Question: Thank you. Mr. Mayor, I have two questions. The first is about some of what you said about food distribution, and as you noted, we've heard so much into reporting about lack of quality and meals not being a nutritious enough, but some of what we've also heard is that people, seniors who haven't been previously connected to these services before have a really hard time connecting, whether that's through 3-1-1 or because it might be more difficult for them to navigate certain technology. So, has anything changed on that and why not specifically work with senior centers who were already doing this job in the past? My second question is about the Governor's order yesterday regarding religious gatherings. What is your understanding of that order? Are you guys on the same page? And are you given the green light to religious institutions here in the city to begin allowing gatherings?

Mayor: Okay, let me speak to that and then I'll preface on food and turn to Kathryn to give you a fuller answer. So, look, we have been – the big story here now over three months is that the City and State have been very, very much on the same page. There's been a couple of times where there's been different perspectives, we've worked them through. But overwhelmingly, you know we – not only did everyone communicate all the time, but there's overwhelmingly a sense of common purpose, common strategic understanding. We're always going to be particularly cautious. That's not a shock. I'm going to be a voice of caution. We're the epicenter, we deal with realities that the rest of the State doesn't deal with, not only in terms of this crisis, but just because of the way New York City is built, you know, so many people in one place, et cetera. But overwhelmingly we're all on the same page. So, I fully understand why the Governor seeing the progress has been made and wanting to give people some relief, is trying to find the appropriate way to open up a little more space in people's lives, but clearly still keeping a whole host of smart restrictions in place. So, I can absolutely work with that.

Now what I'll say to New Yorkers is take this instruction literally to not take liberties with it. What the instruction is, is that up to 10 people can gather, whether it's for a religious observance or other purpose, socially distanced. If for any reason, at any point, people might not be distanced enough, they need to have their face coverings on and you do not go over 10 people and you did not let it degenerate into the kind of social gatherings we're all used to. And it's tough, I want to say, I'm not saying this with a lack of understanding that for all of us, this has been a strange adjustment, Gloria and it's not fun for everyone. You get together with your family to friends, everyone wants to be close. But if we let that start to get sloppy, the disease will spread again. We'll start to see a resurgence and all the good things we're talking about today, all the progress will start to be wiped away, and I don't know anyone who wants to play fast and loose with our ability to restart and start to get back to normal. So we can absolutely work with those instructions but we're going to be watching, and if people gather more than 10 people, I've said the NYPD is going to be focused on gatherings. If it's more than 10 people, the NYPD and other enforcement agencies will show up and tell people to move, if they don't move,

if they don't disperse, then it goes to summons. So I want people to take these rules very, very literally.

On the food question. So again, the – we certainly value the senior centers and the role they played historically. It had to change because everything had to be done remotely in this context. And you know, we're going to get through this and then we're going to bring back our senior centers and I think it's going to be an opportunity to even improve upon the work they do. But for now, I think the structure we have, which is the DOE food sites, the community food pantry, soup kitchens, the home delivery, I think that's the right structure for this situation. And if there were problems with 3-1-1, as you mentioned, there were real problems with 3-1-1 and I turned to Commissioner Jessie Tisch of DoITT, and I said, work the place over and refocus everything on COVID and refocus everything on fast response times and a user-friendly experience. I think we've made a lot of progress. Anytime people are not getting that, I need to know about it because we're doing our own quality control, but when our colleagues in the media or anyone else does the quality control, we want to know about it. But we're constantly working to make sure if someone brings up a problem to 3-1-1 that it gets acted on quickly. Commissioner, jump on.

Commissioner Garcia: Thank you and thank you, Gloria. So, on any time you are seeing something that you think is wrong, we want to hear about it. We want to fix it. As the Mayor said, we do believe that 3-1-1 has gotten significantly better, like seconds wait time, not minutes wait time, and that is really a tribute to Commissioner Tisch. We do want to make sure that we are incorporating the senior centers so we added them back into the mix. So you can go to a senior center and talk to them and they will enroll you in the food supply system and make sure you're getting the right food, i.e. you need kosher or you need halal, so that is being delivered to you and we are really starting to think through as we begin to open up what this will look like in a new future of how the senior centers fit. Do we need to dial up? Do we need to dial down the participation in sort of delivery? Right now it's really critical that we are doing something that is contactless, but that could change in a few months and we want to be flexible and agile as we move forward. But just to give you sort of the scale of what was happening before, it's estimated that approximately 20,000 seniors a week went to a senior center for a congregated meal. You know, part of that was social, part of that was because they needed food. This week we'll be serving 59,000 people who the senior centers provided us their names and their addresses to make sure they got delivery. So the scale is really significant.

Moderator: The next is Matt Chayes from Newsday.

Question: Hey, good morning. I'll two questions. But first, Mr. Mayor, you forgot to answer Brigid's about Mitch Silver, so you can answer hers at the end of mine I'd appreciate it. But onto mine. Your first indicator is people admitted to the hospital for it suspected COVID-19, given that flu can sometimes present initially like COVID-19 to what extent will you modify this indicator to account in the fall and winter for flu season? And second, this question isn't about governments or county executives, but people who live in New York. What's your message to city residents who are considering going to the beach out on Long Island? So I'm like, I'm asking you what you would say to a New Yorker who's thinking, you know what, I'm going to go to the Island because city beaches are closed.

Mayor: Matt, look, I first of all, I do believe that people make their own choices and I respect that. But here's what I say, I think we're in a moment of history where less is more. It's just smart to keep it simple. I'm not encouraging people to do a lot of traveling. The beaches all over the region are going to come with lots of restrictions. You know, if there's too many people that are just not going to let people on the beaches. So, if you go somewhere, you don't know if you're going to be able to even get on the beach. I think we're all learning to be hyper-local and there's you know, things about that that might make us a little sad for things we miss, but there's also a lot of great things about being very local and being very focused on our own communities and what's available. So, my advice to people is keep it simple, keep it local. Less is more, you know, you want to really follow these basic rules that are working because we've got to play the long game here, Matt. It's what I want, what we all want is to take real steps towards getting back to normal, and if we get too loose, we're going to undermine it. And every single individual's action matters. As I'd say, you know, stay as local as you can, keep it as simple as you can, stay in indoors as much as you can, and it's not forever. It's just for a season and then this too shall pass.

On the Mitch Silver, I thought I did say we'll certainly have Parks Department and police department updating before we get to Memorial Day. So, Mitch, Dermot, or other folks from PD, we'll make sure we get those updates out and get their voices into this because a lot of work has been done to prepare for the Memorial Day weekend. And on the indicator, I think you make a really important point and Matt, you must be reading my mind because there's a conversation we had in some detail yesterday here at City Hall about the fact that it's important to recognize what piece of these admissions is confirmed COVID versus suspected COVID and that we can do an after action days later. As you know, the test results are still not as fast as we'd like them to be, but we can go back and track and see how much is COVID versus anything else, and you're right, that becomes particularly important if and when flu starts to become more of an issue. So yes, we will be doing further definition going forward and you're kind of foreshadowing something. We're going to be talking a lot. We're going to be talking about the flu a lot in the months ahead because we really need to guard against a big flu season happening at the same time while COVID is still around. So, we're going to be doing a very, very aggressive campaign as we get to the end of the summer, beginning of the fall to get people vaccinated for the flu. But we'll have more to say on that as we get closer.

Moderator: Next is Dave Evans from ABC.

Question: Hi Mayor. Can you hear me?

Mayor: Yes, Dave, how you doing?

Question: I'm doing fine. Hey, I just wanted to ask you because yesterday the news that we saw a couple of the Ford car manufacturing plants, they had an outbreak and they had to shut down. I wanted to ask you, moving forward, as we do see some things start to open up, you know, next week 25 percent of the workers on the stock exchange will be there, you know, different restaurants, let's say we're in June, July. If there is an outbreak in New York, what is the response going to be? Is there a way that you're going to handle it? Just that area, just that business and

concentrate on that or do we all perhaps have to go back to square one and there would be another lockdown, like we are in now?

Mayor: An excellent question Dave, and very, very big and important question. That's a lot about of – you know, I look at this as over to the next week or two as we get into June, we're going to be having this conversation with all of you and with the people of this city to really get clear the parameters with which we're approaching this. The goal obviously is to never have to go back to the same level of restriction we've been in and God forbid go to even higher levels of restriction. So, this is – I'm a big believer that sort of we're slow but steady wins the race as they used to say, that if we are smart about this, we'll have some ups and downs. That's normal. There might be some temporary setbacks or some, as you say, setbacks in some places, but the game plan we're trying to put together here is one where you don't have the big setback. Where are, for example, what we're dealing with right now. We go forward into another phase or you know, the next phase after that and then have to retreat back to where we are now or worse. That's what I'm constantly pushing the entire team to work through to get to a restart that is sustainable and not sort of skiddish and moving back and forth all the time. So that's absolutely the goal.

Now you said something really important, Dave, you pointed out this sort of the local way of addressing the issue. I think to do a safe restart, it's going to take first, you know, really making sure each phase is working before we knew new to another phase. It's going to take really careful adaptation for the special realities in New York City. This is something we're in constant dialogue with the state on that we may need some additional measures that might not have been needed elsewhere, but as we go into that phase one, make sure we can do it safely and sustainably. And then that ability to focus intensely on those who are most vulnerable. We talked yesterday about nursing homes. We're going to be talking a lot about folks who are over 65, over 70, and folks with preexisting conditions and the precautions we're going to need them to keep taking, even as we start into the next phase. Folks who are most vulnerable, we really have to have an intense sense of the precautions they need to take throughout this restart. And the point you made about, for example, if a single factory or you know, a single facility has a problem, how we can deal with that and maximize the impact in containing things there rather than having to have something affect all of us. So, you definitely are on the right track there. Our goal is to figure out kind of a rapid response model that if we see an isolated problem, keep it isolated, so it doesn't disrupt the forward motion of the restart and that's what we hope to put together.

Moderator: The next is Shant from the Daily News

Question: Good morning, everyone. I wanted to ask both you Mr. Mayor and Commissioner Banks about the surge in applications for benefits administered by HRA. Could you say how many applications filed since mid-March have been completed? And if you don't have the data handy, be great if you can say, even in rough terms. Also, what is the City doing to handle the increased demand? For instance, will you make new hires or reallocate staff? Thank you.

Mayor: Thank you, Shant. Excellent question, and it parallels obviously the reality with food. So many people are hurting, and you know, among the many good things HRA does is the Food Stamps and SNAP benefits, but also other forms of benefits, and there are so many people hurting right now. We want to help everyone. We can and we want to do it to the maximum

extent possible remotely, and I know that's been the whole approach that Steve and his team has taken and Grace Bonilla, the HRA Administrator and her team. So Steve, I don't know if you have the statistics in front of you or if you can give us a sense of what kind of surge you're seeing and, and what adjustments you're making, and I'll only say one more thing, Shant, that obviously when it comes to food, Kathryn can attest. I have said to her, whatever personnel you need, whatever money you need, you're going to get to feed people while equally folks who need those benefits to keep going, you know, to pay the rent, to get medicines, to keep their lives together, we're going to do whatever it takes to help HRA get them to people. So, Steve, you want to speak to that?

Commissioner Steven Banks, Department of Social Services: Yes, I will, and thank you for the question, Shant, and we'll follow up with you on the specifics, but as I testified at our budget hearing on Monday, we've had three times as many applications for Food Stamps and twice as many applications for cash assistance, unprecedented levels that nobody could have predicted. In order to address that, we have reassigned 1,300 members of our staff to address this on precedent demand, and we're working through those applications. We've gotten a range of waivers from the state to expedite the processing of those applications, and we've also gotten assistance, for example, from Metro Plus in terms of some staff being reassigned to help us with those benefits. But as the Mayor said it's an unprecedented situation, we've worked with Kathryn Garcia's staff to make food immediately available to people, and the re-purposing or the reassignment of 1,300 staff is really aimed at addressing this extraordinary increase in requests for help from us, and we'll keep up with this effort and we'll follow up with you on the specifics.

Moderator: The next is Andrew Siff from NBC.

Question: Hello. Can everyone hear me?

Mayor: Yeah, Andrew, how are you doing?

Question: I'm okay, Mayor. Thank you. Hope you're doing well. My question is about the Staten Island Ferry increase. You said that you had noticed a higher ridership or the boats getting a little bit more crowded. I'm wondering why would that be, given that the restrictions on non-essential businesses have not been lifted in New York City. Who are these folks? Are they tourists? Are they New Yorkers who are going back to work anyway against advice? And does this also match metrics and data at the bridges that vehicle traffic is up as well? Are you concerned that essentially people are lifting the lockdown themselves?

Mayor: Well, Andrew, it's a good question, but I would be careful not to read too much in yet. First of all, I don't see any tourists around. I haven't heard any reports of any major number of tourists in town. If there some [inaudible] that I certainly want to know about it, but I think my strong impression is that people understand that we're going through a lot still and we're fighting our way back, and this is not a time for tourism. I think you've got essential workers clearly who need to move around. You've got folks who need to get medical care. I gave the example today of blood drives. You know, that's something that we want people going out for that. I gave the example yesterday, the vaccinations of children. We want people going out for that. So, I do think, in fact, you know – think about that for a minute, Andrew, parents understandably felt

worried – vaccination of a child clearly was something allowable about, a lot of people were just too worried to go out. We're now reminding parents that not getting those vaccinations could cause real problems. We need you to go out and get those for your kids.

I think what's happening is that folks are naturally, you know, growing into what is allowed and that even many things that were allowed people were not doing out of real concern. So now I don't for a moment want to negate the point you're raising is, are some people potentially taking liberties? We got to watch for that all the time, unquestionably, and we've got to be worried about that, and you know, there's been a lot of enforcement, we heard a couple of reports recently of you know, restaurants and bars trying to let people dine-in. We won't allow that obviously. So I think some of what you're pointing to may be happening and we will absolutely deal with that when we see that. But I think my gut says most of it is people still working within the rules, but being a little less conservative than they were.

Remember, we're talking about previous, you know, 90 percent drop in ridership on the Staten Island Ferry. So, it was down to 400 to 500 passengers on a peak trip, and now it's gone up to 600. That's not a massive change, but it's enough change to make sure that there's more service and more frequency, but we need to watch for what you're talking about. We need to watch to make sure that people stay within the rules for their own safety, for everyone's safety.

Moderator: We have time for two more today. The next is Louis from New York [inaudible].

Question: Hello? Can you hear me?

Mayor: Yes. How are you doing?

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor. I hope you're doing well today. We've gotten our antibody test the other day and I'm sure you'll be happy to know that the line stretched all the way up the lot. With that in mind, early this week, Governor Cuomo had a diagnostic PCR test administered on live TV. Now—

Mayor: Louis? Are you there?

Question: On the state's health department site. Hello?

Mayor: We missed you after you said the Governor – yeah. Louis, you said the Governor had the test administered. Then we lost your feeds. Pick it up from there.

Question: I apologize. Now I see that the easier and safer swab and spit test, which you first talked about at the end of April, is mentioned now on the state's health department site. Now I know of people who are still turned off at the scene. The Governor had that long swab, stuck up his nose. So, question, have you folks considered having a demonstration of this easier test? I'm sure it would go a long way in calming folks' concerns and worries. Maybe yourself or somebody else can demonstrate it just as the Governor has?

Mayor: I think that's a good idea, and I think it was important the Governor was trying to show people that this test is something that people can get more and more. But I agree that the self-swab test is even a step further in the right direction and it's smart for us to show people how it works because more and more labs are now accepting that test. It's definitely the – where we're going to trend going forward. It is faster, it is easier. It causes less chance of the patient coughing or sneezing. So not every lab is taking it and we still need to have some test kits of the other kind so we can maximize our options. But more and more it will be the self-swab test. So I think your point is a good one and we will arrange a demonstration to show people that it's a pretty easy, quick thing.

Moderator: Last question for today goes to Julia from the Post.

Question: Hey, good morning Mr. Mayor and thank you for the recognition. I appreciate that, and for reading the lovely poem from Sylvia in Sheepshead Bay. When you say we're looking at a possible a restart in the first half of June, can you give us any more clarity on whether you think that's, you know, early June – mid June, about when that would be and what would a Phase One reopening in New York City entail? What sort of industries, et cetera?

Mayor: Okay. So Julia, in terms of the types of industries, it's the Phase One that the state has laid out that's obviously implementing in some other places, construction, beyond that, which is already allowable, wholesale trade, different types of manufacturing. You know, it's the same standards the state is applying. Again, we have to talk through with the state if there's any particular features of the approach here that we need to implement together. We need to think about ramifications in terms of people getting around and congregating. You know, there's things we've got to work through that are particularly challenging in the city, but that is the set of categories. Timing, Julia, you know, I'm saying first half of June, I'm obviously giving a little bit of range there, but I mean literally the first half of June, so somewhere between June 1st and June 15th. I'm basing it around everything we know today, today I will put an asterix that you won't be surprised on saying, you know, this disease has thrown us a lot of curve balls, so we're not going to rest on laurels or assume we have a crystal ball here where we're basing it on the trend, which has been pretty damn consistent. And what I mentioned that these, we've had these stretches of time now on two of the indicators where we've had a prolonged stretch of time, you know, at a lower threshold. That's a really important sign. So basically it comes down to, will it be the first week of June or the second week of June that we could move into Phase One, the state's Phase One, possibly with some modifications for the reality in New York City, and we will be giving you more and more information in the final days of May as we lead up to it, and we hone the date, but certainly for folks in those fields I know they're watching and they know that it's time to start planning for their ability to reopen. But with, and I've talked to a lot of people, Juliet in, as I said, groups folks on construction last night and folks in different industries who would be part of that wholesale category, definitely of course, manufacturing a lot of the manufacturing folks who have played such a crucial role in helping us build PPEs and equipment here in the city. Everyone's about safety. Everyone's talking about how to can do it in a way that will be safe, that will not spread the disease, that will be a safe for their workers, that will be smart, that will be careful and figuring out what their responsibilities are. Tremendous sense of responsibility I'm getting from the people that I'm talking to. But yeah, it's going to be first week or second week of June if we continue on the pace we are on now. But it's going to be limited

because that's what Phase One is and it's going to be with lots of clear standards and precautions of how to make it work and do it safely.

So, let me conclude there and talk about the topic I started with today. Yes, and thank you Julia for acknowledging Sylvia's poem. It really is beautiful and thank you Sylvia, because that's what a joy. I'll tell you sometimes there are some things in this job that are very moving and very beautiful. So, it'd be able to share Sylvia's poem with all of you is one of the good things I get to do. But look at the sheer magnitude of what's happening here. This number, it's hard to even imagine. 32 million meals have been provided to New Yorkers who needed food for free since the middle of March. 32 million meals, and this is just the beginning. This city will not let our people down. We just won't, we're not going to let our people go hungry. We are going to be there for all New Yorkers, and I have to tell you, it's been amazing to watch just the pure nobility of the folks who have gotten involved in this effort and want to feed their fellow New Yorker. I've been out to the Campaign Against Hunger in Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn, the amazing work that that group does in the community and the folks that I met with, of and by and for their own community, feeding people who live, you know, on their block and down the street from them and worship in the same churches. You know, the sense of we are our brother and sister's keeper. It's clear in soup kitchens and food pantries all over New York City. It's clear. I've spent time with some of the Department of Education food service workers who have been there from day one. They went from running the kitchens for our kids to immediately having to convert to feeding all New Yorkers, and they did it now instantly and with tremendous resolve, and of course this extraordinary delivery operation that Commissioner Garcia and her team has put together working with all the agencies I mentioned. This is unheard of to be delivering meals on this scale, but everyone involved, not just the city employees, all of the folks driving the cars, everyone wants to see people get the food they need.

So, it's a crisis and a painful time, and a lot of people have felt very alone. But on this topic, you should not feel alone. You should never feel that you have to suffer if you don't have food, we are here for you. There's literally human beings right now packaging the food that is meant for you and it will get to you and it will be for free, and people will make sure that you get what you need, and that is a great example of the fact that we are all in this together and that's something that makes me very proud of New York City. Thank you, everybody.

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