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

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Good morning, everybody. Well, we've lived through a lot of history together. This pandemic, the worst health care crisis in the history of this nation in the last century. So much has happened here, so much unprecedented, and so many firsts. And this has been a crisis filled with historical firsts. We are being challenged in this moment like never before, but some of those firsts really speak to what New Yorkers have achieved together. Obviously, we've never had to do social distancing like this in our entire history. It's unheard of and yet, you know, you've excelled, you really have, at finding a way to do it. We've never had to make our own personal protective equipment, our own ventilators. We've never had to even think that way before and yet New Yorkers have stepped up, companies have come forward. It's been a remarkable and successful effort. We never had to imagine being unable to depend on our own federal government and needing our own New York City strategic reserve of PPEs and medical supplies and equipment. But now that's what we are building because we know we have to protect ourselves and we know we need the ability to produce our own supplies and equipment right here in New York City. These are all firsts and not necessarily firsts we ever would have wanted, but they are firsts that say so much about New Yorkers and our capacity to fight back and to adapt to any situation.

Now throughout this crisis, we've said the thing we've lacked from day one, the thing that would have been the difference maker in the beginning and still can be the difference maker if we got the help we needed from the federal government, would be testing, testing, testing. Testing is still the core to everything. While we're still waiting for all the help we need and deserve, another first – building our own test kits here in New York City. These test kits are the way we collect the samples from each New Yorker. And this is something we would have had to depend on supplies from not only all over the nation, all over the world previously, and now we're making them right here in New York City. So, our remarkable team at the city's Economic Development Corporation got together, and I said to them from the beginning, throw away the rule book, throw away the assumptions, even if we haven't built things here, find a way to make them right here in New York City. And to the credit of everyone at EDC, they took up that mission immediately. No holds barred, no hesitation. They had a can-do spirit. I want to thank everyone at EDC and all the companies, all the academic institutions, the hospitals, everyone they've partnered with in New York City and beyond to achieve these goals.

But from the beginning it came down. Where would they find the partners who could make this happen? How would they find the materials? How fast could they do it? And my clear demand of the Economic Development Corporation was, do everything, do it well, do it in an unprecedented manner, do it fast. And that's what they have been doing. So, a dream team has come together

from all over New York City to make things happen. In the case of test kits, this is the essence of what we need and this team that's come together is going to help so many New Yorkers and help save lives of the people of this city. Who are they? Well, when it comes to making the swabs and that is these things, here in their nice protective package. The swabs, that comes from Print Parts, a company in Manhattan. The transport medium, that is the fluid here, that comes from the team at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the Bronx. Worked to get that right because the transport medium holds the sample and makes sure it is safe and sanitary and can be accurately assessed. A company called CoLab in Brooklyn helped provide the design to put together the kits the right way. So, these pieces came together here in our city, things we would have depended on, companies from around the country and many cases outside the country to produce, are now produced here for our people. So, for the first time in our history, New York City is building and using its own test kits, homegrown New York City products, protecting New Yorkers.

Now as of this very day for the first time, the Made in New York City test kits are in use at Health + Hospitals community testing sites, and this is beginning today. By the end of the week, more than 60,000 of these test kits will have been delivered and be in use. And then we're ramping up from there. The production process is speeding up every week. So last week, 28,000 kits produced this week, 33,000. In the week of May 25th, 50,000. The week of May, excuse me, the week of June 1st over 60,000 of these test kits will be produced each week in New York City. That is more than the original projection of what could be produced weekly. And we'll keep going as far as we have to go to make sure that every New Yorker who needs a test gets one. And remember, this is not just about the test kits that are being produced right now for all of you to use now. This is about building capacity in New York City to produce whatever we need in the future to fight this pandemic and anything else that's thrown at us. This is about building the capacity to produce right here and to protect ourselves.

Now we have to do it because we learned we could not depend on the federal government. We had to do it because we saw the entire international market fall apart before our very eyes. And it was shocking honestly in the beginning of March to see supplies that we had depended on previously suddenly evaporate. We had to do it to make sure that we could have our own reliable supply and nothing is more reliable than what you build right here in the five boroughs. So, as I said yesterday, we're now at 20,000 tests per day capacity in terms of our labs and our ability to test out in communities. That's going to grow steadily and having the test kits to go with it keeps building this whole plan out. I talked about yesterday, the fact we're adding sites for testing. We're adding members of our new tracer corps. All of the pieces, the test kits, the test sites, the labs, the tracers, all of these pieces are coming together to give us a huge robust test and trace program we need to push back this disease and move forward in this city.

Now, constant growth from this point on, so more testing sites. We have the kits. Now, we need more sites. Two more Health + Hospitals test sites open today in communities in the city. One in Washington Heights, one in Midwood. That brings us to 25 total Health + Hospitals sites on top of that five One Medical sites. That's the private provider working with Local 1199 SEIU. And as I announced yesterday, 123 CityMD urgent care sites now all providing testing to New Yorkers. Added up, over 150 test sites now in this city. Remember just a few weeks ago we didn't have grassroots testing. We were fighting just to keep our hospitals going. Now over 150 sites and that will keep growing steadily. To find a place where you can get tested, go online,

nyc.gov/covidtest. Everything I referred to here, these kits, again this is the diagnostic testing, diagnostic testing, or otherwise referred to as PCR testing. This is to tell you if right now you have the coronavirus, the other kind of testing is important too, the antibody testing, which helps you understand if you've been exposed previously to the coronavirus and obviously proves your ability to fight your way through it.

So, in the coming weeks, two big initiatives that are starting now and they'll build out – 140,000 antibody tests will be provided to first responders and health care workers, and then 140,000 for everyday New Yorkers on top of that, combined well over a quarter-million antibody tests. This morning our antibody testing program for our first responders and health care workers began and it will run for about four weeks. This is in coordination with the federal government and I want to thank everyone at the Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control who came to us with this proposal. We worked together in partnership. They are covering all the appropriate costs. So, this is something that's being provided for free to first responders and health care workers and not being charged to the City of New York either. So that's a very good thing. Again, every individual gets the results, that's good. But on top of it, it will help us understand what's happening with the disease more broadly. So, it's part of a bigger study to help us learn how to fight this disease better. So, 140,000 of our heroes will get tested. It's voluntary, it's up to each of you, first responders, health care workers. If you want it, it's there for you. Now it will start with FDNY, with EMTs, paramedics, firefighters, the whole FDNY family. Anyone is welcome to participate. Testers will go to your work sites. Same with the OCME staff, Medical Examiner's Office. Those will be the first agencies reached. You can sign up to get your test right away and then we're going to reach more and more of our first responders and health care agencies over the coming weeks. To sign up, you go to [firstserosurveynyc.com](https://firstserosurveynyc.com) – yes, it's a mouthful. Firstsero – S-E-R-O – [surveynyc.com](https://surveynyc.com) or text TESTNYC to 783-78. So, we're really happy that that's up and running. That's going to give a lot of good information to individuals who have served us so well and also help us all to fight this disease.

Now, turning to a topic we've been talking about for the last couple of weeks, and it is a very sober and painful topic because it involves a threat to our children, and I say every time I speak as a parent, I understand what all parents and family members feel when they feel their children may be threatened. This reality, we are taking very, very seriously. Now what we've been calling it, and the Health Department defined it with a simple phrase, it's not a short phrase, but it captures what we've seen – pediatric multi-system inflammatory syndrome, PMIS, that's what we have called it and that's what our health team has been working every day to understand. Working with pediatricians, hospitals, health care providers all over the city. Now, the Centers for Disease Control, federally, has released some key updates. I want to share them with you now.

First of all, important what they are calling this new reality. CDC is now calling it multi-system inflammatory syndrome in children – MIS-C. So, we will from this point on refer to it also as MIS-C for consistency with the federal government. The CDC has confirmed a link to COVID-19. So, this is important. We've assumed it, but they have done additional research to 100 percent confirm it and they've released a standard national definition so that the whole country, doctors, scientists all over the country can share information, common definition, and we can all work

together to understand how to fight this back. Now, again, we'll call it MIS-C. We'll work with the CDC, we'll work with the State, we'll work with other jurisdictions around the country. Everyone's sharing information to figure out what to do to fight this. The Health Department is now taking the CDC's definition and applying it back over the last few weeks to see what it tells us about the cases that we have seen so far and we want to give additional guidance to parents and family members because there's some additional information that will help you identify symptoms and act quickly. And I always say it, early detection matters, crucially, alerting a health care provider if your child needs to get to a health care facility quickly. These things have to happen with real speed to make sure children are safe.

So, it begins with – since it is linked to COVID-19 you've got the immediate point that everything else we do to fight the coronavirus we need to do to fight MIS-C. So, that means the hygiene, the washing hands, the hand sanitizer, the coughing into your elbow when you cough or sneeze, all the basics, using the face covering, staying home to maximum extent possible, social distancing. All of this helps make sure our children are not exposed to this disease. And that's the best way to avoid this challenge because it keeps COVID out of the equation. Now, the symptoms – we've talked about several of them, but I want to add because the CDC research and definition has added additional symptoms to the equation. Persistent fever, irritability or sluggishness, abdominal pain, diarrhea and vomiting, rash, conjunctivitis, which is shown as red or pink eyes, enlarged lymph node gland in the neck, red cracked lips or red tongue, and swollen hands and feet. So, that's a lot to be aware of. Any of those symptoms you see in your child, call your health care provider, check in immediately. If you see multiple symptoms, especially important to get to your doctor, your health care provider immediately. If you don't have one, call 3-1-1 and you will be connected to a Health + Hospitals clinician immediately.

Now, right now, the number of children affected – the previous definition we use was 145. Under that definition, we've confirmed 145 kids affected, 67 of those cases tested positive for COVID-19 or had antibodies. And we did lose one child – and, again, our goal is to never lose another. We'll have updated numbers with this new definition, the MISC definition, shortly. But the bottom line is, the additional news, the additional information from the CDC allows us to hone our approach more. But the same bottom line, look for these symptoms in your child, act quickly if you see them. If they get to health care quickly, children can be brought through this safely. And that's what we all need to do together.

Okay. So, that's the part of my presentation that, really, again – that hits me like every parent, like everyone who has children in their life. So, I'll come down off of that and we'll move to topics that are a little more mundane, to say the least, but things that still matter to everyday New Yorkers and our quality of life and what we deal with every day during this crisis. So, one of the things that's been truly different neighborhood by neighborhood in this city is that alternate side parking has been suspended for the past two months, one of the longest suspensions in the history of the city. And it worked because it helped people stay inside and not have to deal with the hassle of moving their car, but in more and more areas we start to see litter accumulating as more and more people have been out and obviously a long time has passed. So, we want to do for one week a clean sweep – we want to do for one week a cleanup of all neighborhoods in the city. That done right allows us to then cancel to inside again for a period of time and hopefully for a long period of time so long as we see that our streets and sidewalks remain clean. So, as of

today, alternate side parking is back into effect just for this week, from today through Saturday, May 23rd. There is an exception this week where it's suspended on Thursday for Ascension Day. So, basically, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and then Friday, Saturday, and then it goes off again. The next period of time will be two weeks from Sunday, May 24th to Sunday, June 7th, no alternate side parking. We've decided that in advance, so you can bank on that. We'll keep reevaluating then in the beginning of June, see where we stand. Hopefully, everyone, work with us, please remember how important it is to not litter as per usual, but if we can keep everything clean, we can keep canceling alternate side in the future for long periods of time. But, right now, alternate side back in effect today through Saturday with the exception of Thursday off for Ascension Day.

Okay. We're go into our daily indicators now. And, again, we've had – overall trend, fantastic, but a lot of days are mixed bags. We've got a mixed bag day today. It's a good day on one indicator, mixed on the others. We still keep making progress overall, but I want to inspire everyone, go deeper. The faster we can get through these indicators, the more thoroughly we can consolidate our success, the more chance of starting to relax restrictions. So, we've all got to stick with it here. So, indicator one daily number of people admitted to hospitals for suspected COVID-19, that is down. And this is a great one – down from 77 to 48 – that's amazing. Now, under 50 people admitted to the hospital in a day for COVID-19, that's a really wonderful sign. But the number of people in ICUs across our public hospitals for suspected COVID-19, that went up just a little from 469 to 475 – so, it's not a huge increase, and I keep that in mind, but it's still an increase, we need to keep going down. And then the percentage of people tested positive for COVID-19, unchanged – 11 percent. Again, overall good news, because of the overall direction. Great news on the number of people going into the hospitals, but we need to create that steady progress to get to the next stage.

A few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, we will turn to our colleagues in the media and please remind me of the name and outlet of each reporter.

**Moderator:** Hi, all. Just a reminder, we have President and CEO of Health + Hospitals, Dr. Katz, President and CEO of the EDC James Patchett, and Senior Advisor Dr. Varma on the phone. With that, I will start with Steve from Westwood One News.

**Question:** Good morning, Mr. Mayor. Hope you had a beautiful weekend when you were able to [inaudible] away from work for a moment. I suppose you had some downtime, I hope you did.

**Mayor:** Thank you, Steve. I appreciate that.

**Question:** I suppose you don't have much downtime at all, but even a few minutes helps us oppose, right?

**Mayor:** Exactly, we'll take whatever we can get.

**Question:** Exactly. So, I have two questions. One is about non-essential and the decision-making process for when it might be possible for them to return to work. You have companies like Google, Facebook and others extending their work from home for their employees until the end of the year. It seems like you've been looking at this issue on a month to month basis, but it's always helpful and appreciated when people have an idea of when things will change so they can plan for it over the long-term. So, what coronavirus indicators are you looking at and what goals do you want to see reached before you consider allowing non-essential workers to return to the workplace? And will you perhaps follow Google and Facebook's lead and tell City employees who can perform their duties from home to continue working from home through the summer or maybe even later? That's an important decision since so much of the private sector will follow the City's lead. And then my second question, the New York Stock Exchange officials said when they reopened the trading floor, they're going to encourage all returning workers not to take mass transit. How concerning is that? Do you support such an idea given that it would likely create a considerable traffic issues if many private sector corporations issue similar directives and should it fall upon those employers to provide some sort of alternative like commuter vans and private buses?

**Mayor:** Great questions, Steve. Okay, so let me try the simplest big picture. Right now, we just went over our daily indicators. The State has its seven indicators, three New York City, seven New York State. To get to the point of even the first opening up, the first set of restrictions relaxed, we need to hit all three of the City indicators – that means 10 to 14 days of steady progress in all three – and we need to hit all seven of the State indicators. And we have to be confident – just to make it just a little more rigorous, we have to be confident that we'll be able to hold at that level. My job is to be really blunt and honest with New Yorkers, that when I think we can handle the first elements of relaxing restrictions and hold that position and then move forward to the next point where we can relax more restrictions, that's the time to do it when you believe not only have you hit the indicators, but that you can make up work and avoid that boomerang. The last thing in the world we want is, hey, take off some restrictions and immediately have a problem, put the restrictions back on. Or even in some places they've gone and had to add more tougher restrictions. So, we're constantly trying to get it right. And I believe it's a cardinal rule that our goal is to get it right the first time. We're not going to have a perfectly straight line, Steve, where everything always goes exactly the direction we want – that would be kind of superhuman. But we cannot have a boomerang. We cannot have something where we have to shut down again. So, we're going to be really smart and careful about it to get it right. And I guarantee you, if we can hit that note right, it'll save us so much time and energy, going forward, to not have to start and then stop and then start again. So, that's the underlying a viewpoint. Very simply that says, well, first of all, there's no way we're getting to the City and State indicators before June at this rate. So, June is the first opportunity – first half of June is the first opportunity to relax anything. The States talked about some of the vision of how that relaxing would look. I'll be filling in those blanks in the next week or two before we get to a point of any decision so New Yorkers have more and more sense of what that first few steps might look like. For now, definitely we have to think about most non-essential workers, of course, are going to keep either working from home or not doing the work they've done until we get to a point that's safer. So, the basic dynamics we have now are going to hold. If there's some

loosening up, it'll be in some key areas, but we're not opening up the flood gates at once. We've seen other places do that and they paid dearly for it. So, this'll be in stages.

City employees who right now are working remotely, most of them will continue to for the foreseeable future. But, again, we will lay all this out in stages as we are ready. I think everything's going to be interrelated to the reality on the ground. I think the – obviously, we all want to know will there be a vaccine and when, or will there be elements of treatment that start to work consistently – that's going to change the whole equation. But based on what need know now, we would be careful and slow and maximize remote work for the foreseeable future. As to any company that urged its employees not to use mass transit. Well, some of that isn't surprising to me and some of that people will do on their own until they feel safer. But, you're right, we have to be careful for the opposite problem – if everyone starts turning into cars that will create a whole new problem. It is a legitimate point that companies should think about, ways of creating alternatives to get people around in the meantime. I think that's a very productive thought. But I think we're all yearning for really, really, really clear answers and we'd all like to be able to see exactly what's going to happen. I think we have to be patient about the fact that we're going to learn day-by-day what's real and when the answers are there and they're verifiable, that's when I'll offer them to people. Big picture, I want to get us safely through this summer, some opening up as we go along. And then September, crucial – opening schools, I want to see if we can get it open the whole way the way they are typically. And that's a real natural point to start opening up more if all goes well because that's when everyone normally would come back from the summer and sort of go into high gear. So, I hope that gives you a flavor of it, but it's going to be day by day, week by week.

**Moderator:** Next we have Alejandra from AM New York.

**Question:** Hi, Mr. Mayor, can you hear me?

**Mayor:** Yes, Alejandra. How are you doing?

**Question:** Good, good. How are you doing? I just had a question – over the weekend, you said that if need be the City would put up fences along beaches to help prevent overcrowding. Can you talk a little bit about what that would actually look like? What those fences would look like? How practical that might be? I mean, there's a lot of lot of beach front in this city.

**Mayor:** Yeah. Well, people will start to see the initial work – I mean, it's going to begin today – to put the fencing in position. I don't want to activate it – I don't want to implement it unless we need to, but we have to have it ready. So, what I can tell you is, my goal – what I keep saying to people is – folks from the surrounding communities near our beaches – and that's a lot of people, hundreds of thousands of people in this city – if you want to walk on the beach, you know, fine. Enjoy that. But no swimming, no lifeguards, no parties, no barbecues, no sports – it's just open space that you can walk on take it in and then get back home. But if we see people start to turn it into something, like what happens to a traditional summer wood beaches, we'll give a few warnings, for sure, to the people of this city and to the people of the communities near to beaches that, you know, if we don't see the right thing, we'll have to be stricter. So, the fencing will be in position and ready, but it won't be put up initially. If it did have to be put up, it would simply cut

off all the entry points to the beaches. I don't want to do that. That's not something I want to see happen, but this is about health and safety. Everything's about health and safety first. So, if we need to put up fencing, we will. But I'm giving people every chance to still enjoy what they can about the beach without going to the point that we have to take tougher measures.

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

**Question:** Good morning, everyone. My question is – I'd asked it last week, I just wanted to check in on an update because I think a lot of people are asking about it. Just more information and data – I know Dr. Barbot isn't on the call again – hope she's okay – but I'm curious if you could – if the Department of Health and the City will release the deaths per ZIP code. I know that's been a piece of information that you said that we shouldn't receive. So, I wanted to get an update on that, and, you know, if Dr. Barbot will come back on the call. Thank you.

**Mayor:** Thank you. Deaths per ZIP code, that is coming out very soon. We'll get you the exact day, but definitely coming out soon. And, again, we do the daily lineup according to what we need for that day. So, we put out a lineup of folks who can respond to the issues and that's what we'll do every day. And been handed a note – the deaths by ZIP code, again, sorry to be talking about such a sad topic, but we are at this point trying to make sure there's transparency, obviously, even including about painful things – that will come out this afternoon.

**Moderator:** Next we have Marcia from CBS.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, good morning. How are you doing?

**Mayor:** I'm doing well Marcia, how are you?

**Question:** Thank you. So my questions today have to do with the city's food program. We've received a number of complaints from people who say sometimes the food arrives rotten, moldy, not properly sealed. Sometimes the deliveries are sporadic and one couple said that their last delivery included and I want to quote “six bags of onions, potato chips and cookies” and that was it. I wonder if you think that's acceptable and if they think that there should be tighter controls?

**Mayor:** Unquestionably, Marcia, I'm counting my blessings in the middle of this crisis and it is a blessing anytime you or any member of the media points out something that needs to be fixed on behalf of the people of the city. So thank you. No, of course not – onion rings and cookies are not nutrition. We may all enjoy them, but that ain't nutrition. So I want to get all the details to my team, please. Whatever you have of where that's happened, we'll go and fix it. Anything that's not quality food that could mean, you know, not nutritious, and that could be not a food that's up to date. You know, it's unacceptable. We're putting a huge amount of time, energy and resources into getting this right. So if any vendor, any company is giving us food that's not the right quality, we're going to go after them. If anybody in our administration isn't making sure there's high quality food, they have a problem with me. We're going to work on this and fix this.

Overwhelmingly, Marcia, I've heard from community leaders, elected officials, clergy, how much they appreciate the food program, how much they've heard from their constituents, that



they are benefiting from the food program, particularly the deliveries to the door of folks who can't get out, seniors and folks with disabilities, and folks who really need those direct deliveries. So overwhelmingly I want to say I think it has been a success and I give credit to our Food Czar Kathryn Garcia and her whole team and all the agencies that have been involved. But if anybody anywhere has fallen down on the job we want to know about and we want to fix it right away.

**Moderator:** Next we have James from PIX 11.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, can you hear me okay?

**Mayor:** Yes. James, how you doing?

**Question:** I'm doing okay. Thank you. I hope you're well, and the week is getting off to as good a start as possible.

**Mayor:** Possible. That is the right word for it.

**Question:** Look, the COVID tracking center saying that in some jurisdictions nationwide there are more tests than there are people signing up to take them. I'm curious what those numbers look like here in New York City? Do we know what the demand is versus the supply and how is that being tracked here?

**Mayor:** It's a great question, James. Remember that for a long time we had nowhere near even the beginning of a testing supply to be able to reach people. So we sent a very conservative message for a long, long time there for a long time. There was no testing. Remember it goes back to January 24th when I first asked the federal government to give us the local ability to test and to provide us testing on a large scale. And we've still never gotten it. That's January 24th till now. We're coming up on, you know, the four-month anniversary of that, it's unbelievable.

But when we finally got some testing, we were very conservative about it because the supply was so limited. It was focused on the folks whose lives were in immediate danger and the hospitals, it was focused on protecting healthcare providers, focused on protecting first responders, those folks who continue to protect all of us and only in the last few weeks that we've been able to go out to communities and start to do community testing. But remember the initial focus was on older folks, much older folks, and folks with preexisting conditions in particularly those who have both. What we said in the last few days is we're opening up those criteria further. We want to reach a whole lot more people, particularly folks, anyone symptomatic we want to reach – anyone who's been around others that are symptomatic or tested positive because we're finally getting the kind of capacity we need, but not because, you know, we got help where we expected to get it from in Washington, because we created our own and because the labs have been helping us to get more and more capacity.

So every time we increase the amount of available testing, it gets taken up quickly. There's a little bit of lag in the beginning as people get used to it and learn the places and all. But it quickly, when people understand there's a testing site available, it's free and that they're allowed to go there, you know, they fit the categories, people take it up. So I think we're going to see a

whole lot of take up on this. I think New Yorkers are hungry to get these answers and obviously understand that when people get tested, it's part of the bigger strategy of beating back this disease. So I like what I'm seeing and I'm confident as we have more and more and let people know it's for them and it's free that more and more people will come.

**Moderator:** Next, we have Henry from Bloomberg.

**Question:** Hello, Mr. Mayor, hope you're doing well. My question has to do with the city's compliance with the state's metrics. I'm looking at the 16th, May 16th, the city was in compliance or had achieved three of seven of the metrics. So I'm wondering whether this indicates whether the city is really kind of stuck in a position where it's not really moving forward. I mean, where do you see progress here in terms of the city meeting the state's metrics?

**Mayor:** Well, I'm looking at him now, Henry. Look, we clearly are making progress. There are several we've met as you said, and on the others there has been clear progress. For example, on the number of available hospital beds and number of ICU beds. Those are two areas where we need to go farther, but we're getting close to those goals. And I think there's a point in the first half of June when we'll meet those.

The number of contact tracers we've made very clear. We expect to hit that goal in the beginning of June. Obviously other parts of the state are working hard to catch up on their own version of that goal. We're confident we're going to get there given the number of contact tracers we're bringing on regularly. So you can't guarantee anything in life, but if you're watching the trend lines, Henry, both on our city indicators and the state indicators, both will align in the first half of June. But again, we've got to then make decisions on exactly which restrictions to loosen up, exactly how, and we have to be confident that when we're doing it, we can hold the line. We do not want to reduce restrictions and suddenly see an upsurge that puts us right back in a situation where we have to close down. So there's a real subtle balance that needs to be struck. But if the question is do we believe we'll meet all seven state indicators? Yes. When? First half of June.

**Moderator:** Next we have Juliet from 1010 WINS.

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

**Mayor:** I'm doing well, Juliet. How are you?

**Question:** I'm fine, thank you so much. So two questions, back to the beaches. I'm sure you're expecting people to turn out, even though you're talking about just people in the neighborhood to come, but what are the specific crowd control plans for people arriving to the beach? Will the fences definitely be up? Will it be police barricades to that effect? Will there be limits to who can get to the beach or on the boardwalk? And the second question is the city budget includes anticipated raises for teachers, police, et cetera. Given the cost of battling this virus, are you considering a freeze on proposed pay increases?

**Mayor:** Okay, so on the beaches first, so the fencing again available, but we don't want to use it if we don't have to. When you put up the fencing, you're talking about cutting off access to the

sand across the board. Don't want to do that if we don't have to do it. Fencing will be there if we need to implement it. But my goal is to see us not have to implement it. Remember, Juliet, this is how we start, you know, normally beach season begins on Memorial Day. So in a week and what's quite clear is we're not in a position to start now. We just talked about the state indicators, the city indicators by every objective measure. We're not there yet. That does not rule out that later in the beach season we might do well enough and show enough progress to do something different, still with some real restrictions, and you've seen the state restrictions on beaches everywhere. There's a whole lot of things that will not be allowed at any beach in the state. But you know, we're holding out the hope that at some point we could open up and we're training the lifeguards and we'll be ready, but we have to be ready to go up or down the scale depending on what's happening. So the fencing will be there, but it won't be implemented at first. We're hoping everyone just listens to the rules, follows the rules, no swimming, no sports, no gatherings, no parties. Just common sense observed social distancing. If you walk on the beach, do it for a limited period of time. Get back home like everyone else.

In terms of enforcement, NYPD will be out, Parks Department will be out. Obviously first and foremost, help make everyone remember, don't go in the water, not supposed to go in the water. It's a dangerous situation to ever go in the water when there's not life guards present. So there'll be a constant reminder of that everyone tries to get in the water, they'll be taken right out of the water. So we want to keep people moving. We want to make sure nothing gets too crowded, don't want to see the boardwalks crowded. Just classic social distancing. I guess I shouldn't say classic because it's something we've only dealt with for a few months, but it feels like it's been a long time. We understand the basic concept of social distancing and crowding and the NYPD will always work to avoid crowds and gatherings. So they'll be out and Parks enforcement will be out, but we're not putting up police barriers or any of that stuff initially because the message to people is it's not beach season, meaning we're in a different reality – we're in a pandemic, we're in a global health crisis. It's not beach season like normal. So don't go to the beach. If you live in the surrounding communities and you're used to just going for a walk on the beach, that's one thing. But don't travel to the beach because we don't want to create that dynamic where people do non-essential travel on subways, on buses, which is normally how so many people get to the beach. We're not doing that. Let's keep it simple. But Juliet, we will, if we need more enforcement, we'll put it there. If we need to take tougher measures, we'll well, and if conversely it goes really well and people listen to the rules, we'll keep things more open. And then maybe let's pray. We got to the point later on where we can open up things more and maybe even have part of the beach season again.

On the city budget, we've got a stark choice ahead, Juliet. Our goal always is to help working people. This is what I came here to do. I don't want to take away from working people. I want to protect people's livelihoods. I want to protect their income. And if I get the help that we all deserve from the federal government, we'll be able to do that. This city's been the epicenter. I mean, I don't know what people, some people are thinking of Washington. This is the epicenter of the crisis for the whole nation. We also are one of the key places in all of America for sparking and building the entire American economy for the good of all. And if we're back on our feet and if we're unable to provide basic services and we can't get the job done, there's not going to be recovery here. And I think in that case it will hinder recovery everywhere else. So all comes down to the stimulus. If the stimulus is the right kind of stimulus. If it's done in time for

our budget in June we're going to move full speed ahead to provide all the services we provide, have the personnel we need, provide people with the incomes they deserve. If there is no stimulus in time or it's nowhere near the amount we need, then a whole series of really tough decisions will have to be made across the board effecting all agencies and all personnel in a variety of ways. So we're not there yet. But in that instance, everything won't be on the table. But let's, let's accent the positive. Let's go fight for the stimulus to be the right thing, the thing it should be. And that's what'll allow us to support our workforce and support a strong recovery here.

**Moderator:** Next we have Julia from the Post.

**Question:** Good morning, Mr. Mayor and everyone on the call. Two questions. The first Mr. Mayor, I'd like to get your reaction to an article on today's cover about out-of-state nurses who were brought in to help the city run the adult daycare center on Roosevelt Island. They told us patients had horrific bedsores, unchanged diapers, or even feces smeared on the walls. So your reaction to that and then a second a little bit unusual question, but I know you went to high school with Patrick Ewing. I wonder if you watched the Last Dance series and what you thought about it. If not, what have you been watching as an escape?

**Mayor:** I did go to high school with Patrick Ewing. He was two years behind me in high school and I used to think I was tall until the day I was walking down the hallway in high school and Patrick Ewing walked by for the first time. And definitely my ego has never recovered since. He's an amazing player and amazing person. The – I have not seen that series though. So what Charlene and I do is we tend to latch onto one show and see it through. And we for a few, I don't know, six months or a year ago, we went through the Wire, which we had watched originally. We went through it again the whole five seasons. We went through Treme, the whole, I think it's four or five seasons. Then I've been public about this fact. I don't have to always be high-minded. We did Empire, we watched all of Empire, not always the most high-minded show, but in many ways a very intriguing show. And now we are watching Billions, which we never watched when it first came out. So we're going through that from the beginning and incredibly well acted and well-written show. So that's where we've – part of the day we get to take our mind off as something.

On this very serious. And, and you know this very, when you think about the situation at Coler, and I have not read the article Julia, but I've had it summarized to me. I think about the human reality, which is any senior who's in any facility, these are our elders, these are our family members, these are people who deserve the maximum respect and the best care. Now it's important to note and we'll get you all this background. Coler is a very well respected institution. It's been recognized nationally as a quality senior facility. Recent inspections were favorable. There's a lot of very positive things historically we've known about Coler. If something went wrong in the middle of this crisis, I want to get to the bottom of it. So we're going to investigate what happened here. And you know, I've talked to Dr. Katz, we are shoulder to shoulder and we want to know exactly what happened. So H+H is going to do its own investigation with the State is investigating. We're going to absolutely work with them. We want to get down to the bottom of what happened here. Anybody with information should come forward. So it's important that these nurses come forward to our investigators and the States. I'm glad they talked to you

because we want all the truth to come out, but we need them to talk to our authorities and the States authorities.

And if it's proven that anything like that happened, that's unacceptable. Yes, it was in the middle from my understanding, the timing, the worst moment of the COVID crisis. Our systems were overwhelmed, there's a lot of staff out. Things were in real, real tough shape for everyone in every facility to handle health care. But still, if something happened that shouldn't have happened, there has to be consequences. It has to be dealt with. So we will do that for sure. But again, this facility historically, I mean as recently October, Newsweek ranked the Coler senior nursing facility as the fifth best in New York State and the most recent state inspection was November and was positive. So you know, if something went wrong, we want to know exactly what it was. We want to find the exact individuals who are responsible and then there of course will be consequences and much more immediately, we have to make sure that everything now, the care there is the best it can and should be for every person there and that there's nothing like that happening anymore.

**Moderator:** Last two for today, next is Andrew from NBC.

**Question:** Good morning everybody. Happy Monday. Mayor, I wanted to ask about schools. Last week, you and Mike Mulgrew didn't seem to be on the same page about the timeline for making a plan for the fall. He said that the teachers need to know within two to three weeks whether the plan is full reopening, hybrid reopening, or online learning. So I'm wondering are you closer to making a decision or a recommendation on schools and also have schools been complicated by the emergence of this child inflammatory syndrome?

**Mayor:** Yes, of course, we need to know a lot more about this syndrome and what it means as we make our decision about schools. Unquestionably, Andrew, again, I'm speaking as a parent and also as someone who believes the most important role I play is to protect people's health and safety, and particularly our families, our children. I'm very, very concerned. So yes, that information will absolutely be factored into any decision we make. The question of the timing, we communicate, our team communicates with Mike Mulgrew and the team at the UFT and also the administrators union CSA all the time and we'll keep communicating with them. I haven't heard anyone state a particular timeline in what is obviously an ever changing environment. So we'll have that conversation, but I say very clearly, the best way to make a decision of this magnitude is when we have all the facts and when we know what it's going to take to ramp up, we will define that timeline, the chancellor will define that timeline.

Now I think where everyone's on the same page is health and safety first. Plan A is unquestionably open the schools as normal because that's what it's in the interest of our kids and our families, but we have to make sure kids are safe, family members are safe, educators are safe, staff is safe, we have to make sure that we are confident of that. For any reason we're not confident in that, then there's a plan B, a plan C, a plan D, you can do all sorts of things from alternating days, staggered schedules, you can just stick with the pure online learning, which is nowhere near what we'd like it to be ideally, but still has been a very, very admirable effort in reaching so many kids. But it's May for God's sakes, this is a decision on something that's you

know, it's less than four months away, but not much less than four months away, and we will make the decision at the right time.

**Moderator:** Last for today, we have Dave Evans from ABC-7.

**Question:** Hey Mayor, I wanted to ask you if I could just your overall view of this weekend, how things went and how things might change going forward? The things that jump out at me about social distancing from the weekend, Domino Park seemed to go pretty well, those circles, they were interesting. I think we counted more than six people in some of the circles. Then also I think that restaurant in Chinatown that was serving takeout and drinks people seem to congregate outside, without masks, but those things jump out at me. But I just wanted to see your overall view of how things went since we did have such a nice weekend and moving forward and things are going to be changing with police enforcement or, you know, social distancing ambassador enforcement.

**Mayor:** Sure. Great question Dave, and I appreciate it. So sure, try and pull it all together. First of all, the educational efforts, the exhortation, the reminders from the ambassadors, which now number well over 2,000 city employees, the community organizations, the faith organizations, there's more and more we'll be announcing as we go along, but there's going to be just thousands and thousands of people out in an organized fashion giving out free face coverings, reminding people the right thing to do. You know, a lot of times people just need the reminder. The story here this weekend and every weekend as the vast majority of New Yorkers are doing the right thing, it's been unbelievable. Vast majority of New Yorkers go out for a period of time, get back home. They're staying home because they're hearing the message it's the right thing to do, Dave, is the right thing for everyone else. But also people are staying home to protect themselves and their families. A vast majority of people are practicing social distancing. It's not always easy, but they're doing it really well. Vast majority of people are wearing face coverings, I want to see better, I want to see more of them, and that's why we're going to give out millions and millions of face coverings. Look, I think it's fair to say we've got some individuals who still haven't gotten the message and it's a very small number in the scheme of things of a city of 8.6 million people.

But for those who haven't gotten the message, then that's where enforcement comes in. So for businesses, we heard yesterday some businesses are maybe trying to cheat and do eat-in dining. We're going to crack down on that immediately if we see it. They're asking for serious fines, and if we see it repeatedly, they're asking to be shut down, won't hesitate for a moment on that. The Sheriff's Office, Department of Buildings, and NYPD, FDNY, we have a lot of enforcement we can bring to bear on that, but that we have not seen anything but some stray reports so far. The issue with the bars, Dave, it's just common sense here. You know, don't congregate. What did I say about the NYPD? The NYPD is not going to give summonses on face coverings. It will give out free face coverings. It will give reminders. It won't give summonses, won't give summonses of a few people are too close together or remind them to create space. But if you've got gatherings, anytime you see gatherings, it's real simple, NYPD, Sheriff, any enforcement entity is going to come up and say immediately disperse and that they don't disperse. Then summons begin. So for all those folks in the bars, like just don't even think about it. You want to go drink, get your drink, go home, but do not allow gatherings to occur because it's not safe. It's just not safe. And you're going to, you know, you want to restart this virus growth in this city, you want

to make everyone less healthy, do you want to have us all locked up for longer? You know, anytime people are doing that, that's what they're contributing to unfortunately. So let's just get it right. This virus won't go on forever, for a period of time, but if we're going to beat it, we have to be tough and we have to be disciplined. That's what most people are doing.

And the circles, look, Dave, the circles in Domino Park, it's an experiment to see if it's the kind of thing will work, generally what we saw is the efforts to reduce the number of people going into some tight spaces, had some real success, the first time we're trying it. But you know, we're going to keep experimenting to get it right and I want to thank all the folks who are out there, Parks Department, NYPD, all the ambassadors are out there very, very diligently out there and helping people. I was with a great group of Parks Department and DEP and DOT workers in Flushing Meadow Park on Saturday and we were giving out face coverings and you know, they're really into it. They're really into protecting people's health and doing something good for them, and the folks we came across, you know, we're grateful to get free face covering. So we're going to do a whole lot of that and I think it's going to add up. And just to all members of the media, anytime you've got a report of a place where there's gatherings that are not being addressed or a restaurant that's trying to serve food in or anything like that, please let us know and we will go pay them a very immediate visit to address the problem.

Okay, everyone, to conclude, look, you know over the years you've heard the very wonderful phrase made in New York and there's things we're known for and things we're famous for and things we make that people admire all over the world. But there's a whole lot of things we didn't make because we didn't think we had to for years. You know, there was no reason to make certain medical supplies and medical equipment that was made somewhere else and we could get it when we needed it. But the world changed and it changed very, very suddenly, and the things that we thought we could depend on weren't there anymore. What did New Yorkers do? Our backs were against the wall, could have crumbled under the pressure, we could have said, oh geez, there's nothing we know how to do? What are we going to do? We don't know how to make that.

Instead, New Yorkers did the exact opposite. New York companies stepped up, New York experts, inventors, scientists, people stepped up and they found a way. And this is the best of New York City. We always find the way, always find a way to make something happen. And that is an indomitable spirit. It's actually a very beautiful thing. And there's a reason why this place is filled with talented people and people with so much drive and energy, people like that have been born and raised here for generations, and this place has attracted people with those skills and talents from around the world for generations. You add that all together. There's no place that could better fight back this pandemic than this city and you're proving it every day. But I really want to just tip my cap to all the people who said, we're going to do something here no matter what. We're going to build something, whether we know how to do it or not, we're going to figure it out. And lo and behold, they did. And now the medical supplies and medical equipment being built right here in this city is protecting your life, life of the members of your family, protecting our first responders, protecting our health care heroes. It's actually a very, very moving and beautiful story. This is how we win.

Thank you, everybody.

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