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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good morning, everybody. Well, we, as New Yorkers – we know we're all connected to each other. We pride ourselves in being a place that really feels a deep sense, an amazing sense of connection to people not only in our own neighborhood, our own city, but all over the world. That's been one of the great blessings of New York City. But in the pandemic, it's also clear that being connected to each other all over the country, all over the world, creates a real challenge. We know that as New Yorkers we've worked together to overcome this virus, to fight it back. We also know we have to be really careful and vigilant to protect ourselves, to protect our loved ones, to protect our city going forward. And so that question of being interconnected comes into play in a big way. In this city there's been a clear understanding of how important it is to wear masks, practice social distancing, take those smart precautions. We know in a lot of the rest of the country and a lot of the rest of the world, that hasn't been the case. And we see skyrocketing levels of coronavirus in so many other places. So, now comes a big challenge ahead – the season of the year when people travel the most. And it's a time we cherish. The holiday season is such a special time for all of us. It's going to be very different this year. We all know that. And yet we're going to feel that pull to want to be with our family, want to be with our loved ones. We're going to feel that pull to do what we would do in a normal year, but it's not a normal year. So, the holidays would normally be a time to go see people in other places. But this year we have to think differently. This year, when we, ironically and painfully, we want to see family the most, we want to see loved ones and friends the most, we're feeling that lack of connection, but this is the year where we have to do things differently because we do see the level of infection rising all over the country, all over the world. We have a real threat of a second wave here in New York City, and we've been fighting it back, but we can't take it lightly. So, most importantly, I want to recommend to all New Yorkers, it's not business as usual. I hate to say it, but I have to urge all New Yorkers, do not travel out of state for the holidays. Do not travel to a state with a high infection rate, do not travel to a country with a high infection rate. Realize that by doing that, unfortunately, you could be putting yourself and your family in danger and also the risk of bringing the disease back here.

Everyone's going to make their own decision. And I know there are painful choices, especially if you haven't seen family in a long time, and you're worried about older relatives in other places, I get it. There's going to be tough choices to make, and everyone has to make their own choice. But my recommendation based on the information I've received from our health care leadership is to avoid travel this holiday season, to stay safe, to keep us all safe. And for those who do travel, recognize how important it is to get tested and recognize there's a very strict quarantine in New York State. And if you go elsewhere, you will have to observe a two-week quarantine coming back. There's a few states that's not true for, but only a few states. The vast majority of

American states now are on the New York State quarantine list. Obviously, we see what's happening in a lot of the countries in the world. If you travel, the overwhelming likelihood is you need to quarantine for two weeks upon return. And we've got to take that seriously. Now, that's what I'm urging all New Yorkers to consider. And it's tough and it's painful. But hopefully what we know about this virus is, it is only for a brief period of time, more and more good news coming, it looks like, about a vaccine soon. This hopefully will be the only holiday season that gets affected by this horrible disease. But that's my advice to everyday New Yorkers.

But now let me urge the federal government to act as well because what's been shocking is the inaction of the federal government throughout this crisis. But here's an opportunity right now for the federal government to finally get it right – growing coronavirus crisis around the country and around the world, holiday season coming, lots of travel planned. Guess what? This is a moment for the federal government to take a decisive act and actually make sure that if people do travel, they are safe. This is a moment for the federal government to create a mandate that anyone who gets on an airplane has had a negative coronavirus test within the previous 72 hours. A simple, common sense standard. You have to have proof of a negative result to get on an airplane. This is so smart for everyone who travels to protect each other as travelers. It's so smart to reduce the potential spread of the disease from place to place. I remind you, you can expect airplanes to be very full going into the holidays. A number of airlines are now talking about, they want people in the middle seats to make the most money possible. You've got people all the time in Washington talking about bailing out the airline industry. Guess what? It's not about the airline industry. It's about your health, your family's health, this city's health and safety, the country. That's where we should be thinking about. A federal mandate that says no one gets to go on that airplane unless they can prove they've had a recent negative test result will keep us all safe. So, this is what we will be fighting for. And this is for both international and domestic flights, because we see challenges from many, many places. Further, we need to build upon some really great efforts that have started to have testing available right in the airports for folks coming off planes in New York City at LaGuardia and JFK. Those projects have started. It's a great initiative. We want to go farther. We want to make it easy and clear that anyone coming off a plane should immediately get tested as well. We know testing has made all the difference. Why don't we use that tool that we know works to protect people who travel and protect all of us? I know New Yorkers believe in being tough and rigorous in fighting this disease. This is the kind of thing that would help us so much.

All right, now, talk about our health and safety. We have another challenge. We focus constantly on the coronavirus. We can't take our eye off the ball when there are other problems developing, and one of the painful side effects of the coronavirus has been that the blood supply for New York City has been reduced greatly. There just aren't the blood drives that used to happen in companies and government offices, and civic groups around the city used to do these blood drives and make sure that there was a blood supply to protect New Yorkers in hospitals, protect people having operations. The blood supply has continued to go down in this crisis. So, it is so important that New Yorkers step up. We've asked a lot of you throughout this crisis, but I'm going to ask again, anyone who can donate blood, we need you to do it now. And I always hear from New Yorkers saying how can I help, what can I do to help this city, what can I do to contribute? Here's a way – for those who can, here's a way to help by donating blood. So, to fight back this shortage, we turn to our friends at the New York Blood Center who are always there

for the people in this city. And all they're doing is asking you to lend a hand, or more accurately an arm, and provide that blood that will make such a difference that literally could save a life. So, to make a blood donation, they have locations all over the city and extended hours, the New York Blood Center, reach them nybc.org. It can make such a difference. It can be literally a lifesaver.

Okay, let's go over our daily indicators. Number one, daily number of people admitted to New York City hospitals for a suspected COVID-19. That threshold is 200 patients. Today's report is 60 patients with a confirmed positivity for COVID, level of 21.6 percent. Number two, new reported cases on a seven-day average, threshold is 550 cases. Today's report, 528 cases. And number three, the percentage of people testing positive citywide for COVID-19, threshold is five percent. Today's report, 2.48 percent. And that's obviously a number we're watching carefully. That's a number that would obviously cause us all concern, but then let's look at the more essential number, the seven-day rolling average, that comes in at 1.66 percent. That is very much the range we've been in in the last few weeks. That's a number that is fairly stable. We want to keep it that way and then push it back down. A few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

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

Moderator: Good morning, all. I will now begin our Q-and-A. As a reminder, we're joined today by Executive Director of the Test and Trace Corps Dr. Ted Long; Laura Wood, the Senior Counsel for Democracy NYC, and Senior Advisor Dr. Jay Varma. The first question today goes to Juliet from 1010 WINS.

Question: Hey, good morning, all. Good morning, Mr. Mayor, how are you doing?

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

Question: I'm fine. Thank you. So, I know you were asked about this yesterday, but the numbers are again up. The new reported cases, seven-day average, 550 to 528. Yesterday, I think it was 501. And then the percentage testing positive, you just said is a cause for concern. So, what is the concern now, you're seeing these numbers rise and what do you do moving forward?

Mayor: Juliet, we take it all real seriously, and that's why we talk about every day. The goal here – and I am absolutely convinced we can meet this goal – is to stop a second wave from happening here in New York City. We've got to stop a second wave, and we sounded the alarm weeks ago when we saw the upticks in Brooklyn and Queens. I called for the restrictions, we worked with the State, we did those restrictions. Those have had a big effect. You've seen those numbers go down in those Brooklyn and Queens neighborhoods. We have more to do, but that plan has been working. There's also been a lot more testing lately. That's a very good thing, but it's not shocking that brings out more positive cases by definition. We're going to watch these numbers really carefully, but, again, that seven-day rolling average is the truer number. So far that has stayed pretty stable. Thank God hospitalizations remained relatively low. Thank God the

number of deaths remains very low, but we have to be vigilant. And, Juliet, that's why I'm talking about the tough reality of the holidays that we can't let all of our progress slip away because lots of people travel here and lots of us travel elsewhere and that spreads the disease rapidly. We've got to be really clear that we're coming up on another decisive moment with Thanksgiving and Christmas, and we have to make the tough decisions to keep everyone safe. Go ahead, Juliet.

Question: Okay. Thank you. A different question – last week, you mentioned a plan to possibly bring back 25 percent of the City workforce by year's end. So, is this part of an economic recovery plan, when will you announce specifics about that, does this include furloughs, wage freezes, layoffs, all of the above?

Mayor: Okay. A lot of different pieces there. The most important piece is the health and safety question, Juliet. Clearly, for so many reasons, we'd like to get more of our City workforce back to their offices, but we have to do that carefully. Still, hopefully, we can do that, at least partially, later in the year. But it first depends on what's happening with the health situation in the city, what these indicators are telling us. We can't make that decision yet. We have to see how things end up resolving in Brooklyn and Queens. We got to watch these indicators to make sure that we're not seeing the spread from other areas. We'll look at that over the next few weeks and make a decision to see what we can do this year. But the central question here is about keeping the city healthy and safe. And that's the best foundation for our economic future as well.

Moderator: The next is Henry from Bloomberg.

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

Mayor: Good, Henry. How you been?

Question: Good. I had a couple of days off, so I'm pretty good.

Mayor: All right.

Question: Let me ask you this on the schools, the attendance in the schools, and the impact that may have on instruction. I know you've said, you know, that it's still a starting up period and people aren't sure what they're doing, but there's been pushback by parents about limiting the time they have to opt-in. And teachers are saying, if parents do opt-in the staffing isn't there to handle both the blended remote and the in-class instruction. So, how is the City going to handle any eventuality, the low attendance or an influx of new attendance, which would put added stress on the teachers?

Mayor: Henry, I think the first common sense answer is that if you've got the world right now divided up between in-person learning, blended remote learning, and then full-time remote learning, if you adjust the numbers, you can adjust the personnel accordingly. It's not static. The most important thing is that every family that wants their child in school deserves that opportunity. We've always said we would give them another opportunity. That's going to happen now between November 2nd and November 15th. But we really need to start settling things and making final decisions about how things are going to be laid out, the final levels of staffing,

etcetera. So, parents now have gotten to see the school year in action. They've gotten to see how safe it is. It's time to make some decisions. Look, if the situation changes very substantially, we'll certainly consider if we need other opportunities in the future. But right now, we've given parents the information they need. It is time for people to decide. And then we'll adjust the staffing accordingly. Obviously, if more kids are in school you can put less time and energy into some of these remote elements and focus more on in-school. We'll get the staffing aligned the way we need it. But the most important thing is to give parents a chance to decide if they want to come back in. It's time for that. And remember any parent at any point who decides they want to go all remote, they retain that right. That choice is always there. They can convert their child to all remote at any point, but we just got to know once and for all, how many parents want their kids in school so we can move forward. Go ahead.

Question: Okay, the rate or the number of new cases continues to rise as you just reported, how secure is the hospital capacity in the city?

Mayor: I'll start and see if Dr. Varma or Dr. Long want to add, we feel good right now. The – thank God, as I said, the level of hospitalizations remains low and not just the hospitalizations, but the amount of COVID among those hospitalizations. We really learned a lot the hard way dealing with an unprecedented crisis in March. So we know now how we can expand capacity if we need to within our hospital buildings, but so far, you know, and let's be very vigilant, as I say this, will all need to be vigilant about this, but so far we're seeing very little impact in terms of additional hospitalizations. Dr. Varma, Dr. Long, you want to add?

Senior Advisor Jay Varma: Sure, yeah, just to emphasize what the Mayor has said, we always remain incredibly cautious about how to interpret changes of these. We know that it can surprise us. What we've seen so far has been an increase in cases, which is concerning and that we're taking action on, but our increases in hospitalization have not been as dramatic as they could have been. There have only been slight increases over time which is to be expected. So in terms of hospital capacity, we have also been working very actively to make sure that all of the lessons learned from the first devastating wave of this epidemic or applied now. We've learned a lot about how to manage bed capacity, about how to manage staffing, and very importantly, how to actually treat this disease more effectively. So we remain optimistic that if there is unfortunately an increase in hospitalizations, that we will have the resources and staffing to do that. But its something we remain extremely vigilant to watch and take care for, especially given the situation throughout the U S and Europe.

Mayor: Dr. Long, you want to add?

Executive Director Ted Long, Test and Trace Corps.: Yeah, I think sir, you covered all of the important points. I would add two things. One is then we have an indicator we share every day, so that we're completely transparent with exactly where we are with hospitalization. So you're knowing in real time exactly what we know and two, as a doctor that was on the front lines in our public hospital system, during the surge in April, we're planning 10 steps ahead and we will not go back to the way it was. We were planning everything very far in advance this time.

Mayor: Thank you, Go ahead.

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

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor. First question is about the police and the budget. I was curious why from a budgetary standpoint, you think it makes sense to hire an additional 900 police officers?

Mayor: Dana, you know, at the time of the budget in June where a decision had been made because of the coronavirus and so many other factors, policy decisions, et cetera, that we did not have an April police academy class as we normally would have had, we did not have a July class as we normally would have had, that there would be an October class and there was a projection then of what it would be under normal terms, but then we have not had a normal situation. We've had a very high level of retirements. We're accounting for that and adjusting that number accordingly. Police force will still be substantially smaller than it was a year ago. But we do have to keep the numbers stable within this new reality and we do have to account for all those retirements. Go ahead.

Question: Thanks. And then on another question – on another topic, now that research is showing schools are not a major place of transmission, particularly elementary schools, are you given any thought to increasing the three percent threshold for closing schools citywide?

Mayor: It's a fair question, Dana. I think the answer is not yet. We are going to look at that though, meaning the question of how to treat our schools going forward given the fact that they have been so successful in limiting this disease and we are seeing that in many, many places around the world. The reason we've been successful is by adapting this gold standard of the mask wearing, the cleaning, you know, the distancing, everything that we've been doing. So we do need to really be mindful of what's worked and, and lean into that success, but we also have to keep looking at the data and what it tells us and talking with all the stakeholders. So I'd say for now that that standard will stay stable, but we are going to keep looking at the school situation because it has been a really a bright spot and is telling us a lot.

Moderator: The next is Jake from Gothamist.

Question: Hey, good morning, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: How are you doing Jake?

Question: I'm doing okay. Earlier this week, do you promise that “any NYPD officer pushing any political agenda while on duty will face consequences”, I'm wondering if this is true, why haven't any of the NYPD officers in lobbied against criminal justice reforms faced any consequences? These officers attend community meetings, told New Yorkers to pursue a political agenda – excuse me – political agenda that includes rolling back bail reform. Your own Police Commissioner repeatedly told New Yorkers to close the revolving door created by reforms. So do you see lobbying against criminal justice reforms as apolitical?

Mayor: Jake, we've said so many times, I believe the bail reform and so many other criminal justice reforms were necessary. I supported them strongly. I said at the time there was some

things I think needed to be adjusted and addressed, and that's been the position of my Police Commissioners as well. When you're talking about a serious, substantive issue and what's going to keep people safe was the work of all of us to talk about these issues and what we need. What we're referring to with the actions we saw a few days ago, that that is partisan politics, that is clearly outside the bounds. There was an immediate suspension because that's not acceptable. That's a very different matter than leadership of the police department talking about substantive policy issues as part of their role. Go ahead.

Question: I mean, a precinct commander telling the community meeting that they should call up their elected officials to change a recently passed state law. I mean, that would be a political agenda, no? How is that – can [inaudible] –

Mayor: We can – I'll tell you my opinion and the lawyers can obviously give us the pure interpretation of what has been the standard, but if you take your thesis here to its conclusion, I can think of any number of press conferences where I've been asked, the Commissioner has been asked, other police officials have been asked about any number of policy matters and are answering you guys and having the same conversation with the public on policy matters. That's just not the same thing as political activity or partisan activity. I really think they're very different things. So we'll show you how the standards are expressed in the law and the rules of the department. But what's clear to me is we will not accept anyone in uniform engaging in partisan political activity, and obviously the Commissioner acted very quickly in the case from a few days ago.

Moderator: The next is Kala from PIX.

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor, I don't know if you can answer this question for me because the Chancellor's not on the phone, but can you talk about the grading system that's being incorporated this year? I know the Press Office released some data on kids that would not be failing, and it would just say course in progress, but we had a lot of viewer questions on that and what that means for their children. Does that mean that no children will be held back this year?

Mayor: Kala, what it means is that kids have to complete their coursework, but we understand it's been a really tumultuous time and kids and families are dealing with all sorts of challenges. So the goal here is of course, kids finish all their coursework on time, the normal way, but we're giving flexibility here to make sure that if there is extra time needed, there's still time to get it done. Schools are going to be held accountable. Superintendents are going to be held accountable for creating systems that any kids who have not done their work, get it done in a timely fashion. If they don't get it done after a certain period of time, unfortunately, they don't get any credit for that class, but it's a different standard for a pandemic than what we would hold normally. Go ahead.

Question: Part of the problem with getting the work done is that connectivity issue, as we've seen, there are thousands of kids who still need iPads and connectivity. I know we touched on this yesterday, and you said that you were getting Wi-Fi in all homeless shelters, the Legal Aid Society pointed out that there is no plan in place, or they haven't seen one yet. Can you elaborate on your plan to get that done and a timetable of when that will be done?

Mayor: Thank you for the question. There is a plan in place. We'll certainly go over it publicly. The idea here is to go through every shelter where there's kids. Obviously we have shelters that are adults only that doesn't count, but shelters where there are kids, get Wi-Fi in place. Some shelters that's going to be easier than others, depending on the physical reality. I want to make sure the kids have options immediately so they can study wherever they need to. So we'll lay out the plan and what it's going to take, what we're going to do short term, what it's going to take to get every single shelter done. That's a commitment we make. Our IT department, DoITT, is leading the way working with our Department of Social Services, and we will make sure every shelter has services. It's as simple as that.

Moderator: The next is Katie Honan from the Wall Street Journal.

Question: Hey, good morning. I wanted to ask a question about teachers staffing and given that there will be like an open enrollment period for more students to have in-person learning, but the teacher accommodations for remote teaching run through the end of the year. What is the city and the DOE going to do if there is a discrepancy in that time period? And I know you haven't released the teacher shortage numbers, but I don't know if that will ever kind of be made public.

Mayor: I guess the point here is we expect now, since parents really have gotten a good look at what's going on in the schools, they obviously are hearing how safe they are, how few cases we're seeing in schools, extraordinary success, it's time for parents to decide what works for them, and if they would prefer all remote, that's great. If they prefer blended, that's great. If they want, you know, to go into blended now and try it, they still retain the right at any point to say, you know, after all I want to go to remote, they can do that, and they can do that at any point. So there's a lot of choice, but we need a truer measure of what parents want. This is why we're creating this one open enrollment period, if you will, and then we'll make the staffing adjustments around it. Clearly we have the ability to address the staffing issue. It's been happening all along. We'll just make the adjustments, but we need a truer number to be able to do that. Go ahead.

Question: So, right, but if there aren't enough teachers, I guess that's the question – you know, with this, there are teachers who are having remote accommodation. So, if there's a sudden, huge influx of students requesting all in-person schooling, and however many thousands of teachers are still remote. I mean, what is – will there be more hiring? Will there be additional bonuses for substitutes like that has been happening in October? Is there a plan for that?

Mayor: We will make the adjustments based on what we see. Remember, there's the open enrollment period, and then there's time before it actually takes effect, because schools have to prepare to receive those kids. So, kids wouldn't come in until the end of November, beginning of December. So, there's time to make adjustments. Again, if, for example, let's say a lot fewer kids are doing time at home, you'll shift resources in the school over to in-person learning. There's lots of ways to go about it and we'll make the adjustments. We don't have the exact numbers in front of us, because we have to see what parents want. But I am convinced from our experience in September, October, that we can make these adjustments. We are doing this with great confidence that we can make the adjustments needed depending on what parents decide.

Moderator: We talked for two more for today. The next is Bob Hennelly from the Chief Leader.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Hey, Bob. How are you doing?

Question: Good. Thank you. Later today, the MTA and TWU are planning a press conference where they're going to roll out what appears to be an innovation, which would workplace testing, which is telling you that public health advocates have been praying for. [Inaudible] your contemplating returning the civil servants back to the city at some point, is this something that you guys think should be explored in light of the importance of testing so far in the City's successful, the State's successful effort to keeping this contained?

Mayor: Bob, here's what I'd say – right now, I think a broad focus on testing is working for us, and we want to keep that going, just constantly telling people get tested, get tested regularly, it's free, it's nearby, it's easy. We're going to keep that message, of course, going to our public workforce. And we're still not at the point, as you heard, where we have a specific timeline to bring back more public workers, but whoever you are, where ever you are, we want you to tested. I think, Bob, the big part of the equation that'll be interesting here is – one, matching up workplaces with local clinics and just easy testing connections like that and encouraging the maximum testing. Two, is when we get rapid testing in a more reliable and consistent fashion. I think that opens up a world of possibilities, but we're still not there yet. So, one way or another testing is certainly going to be a part of how we will address having more workers coming back. But I think it really depends on what happens with the availability of rapid testing and which approach we will take. Go ahead.

Question: As a follow-up, in terms of – you have many, many agencies, you're employing well over 300,000 people, is there a central clearing house within your administration to coordinate the way that these different agencies go about this process? And could we hear from your subject matter experts about what are some of their prerequisites they think would be necessary to start the process, like key data points that that might inform the entire process?

Mayor: I'll start and then turn to them, Bob. I'd say that the obvious clearing houses, DCAS – our Department of Citywide Administrative Services, and Commissioner Lisette Camilo, and her team have really done a lot of the work when it comes to standards we want to hold across all city agencies. And they did a lot of crucial work and helping us fight back the coronavirus, getting PPE, all sorts of crucial work early on. So, that's a natural place to turn. On the question of how we're going to make these decisions, we're going to be very vigilant. We have to be careful that we keep a second wave at bay. We're doing that right now. We're not going to take chances with that. We're going to watch carefully what's happened around the country. This is why I'm really focusing on people limiting travel, and, if they do travel, honoring the quarantine, because that's one of the big X-factors now is this travel piece with the holidays coming. So, we're going to be very cautious in our decision-making. I'd like to see more people back in their offices, but only when we are certain it's safe. Dr. Varma, do you want to add?

Senior Advisor Varma: Yeah, I mean, I guess I would just amplify the message that you've just delivered, which is that there is always this tension in public health with this disease, which is that we only have very blunt tools to control it that involves individual measures, testing and tracing, and then community restriction. But, of course, those also come at a consequence. They come at a consequence to people social and emotional wise and clearly to their individual and the City's financial health. So, we are looking at the situation around the country and around Europe with incredible alarm. And we are, you know, always cautious about what we do here, because we know how still we're connected despite all of these restrictions. So, the decision's going to have to be made, as the Mayor said, based on us really looking and evaluating the data and trying to understand how strong our defenses are and will continue to be. And then, of course, balancing that with the need for people to feel a return in some way to the activities that are important not just to them, but to the city as a whole.

Mayor: Thank you.

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

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor. I'm just wondering as far as the red zones in Brooklyn that are still under the shutdowns, I know it's the Governor making the call, but I think we're due for an update maybe tomorrow. Just wondering what your prediction is at this point, would you think that restrictions are ready to be lifted or are they going to be in place for a while longer still?

Mayor: Yeah. Look, Erin, I'll say, first of all, you're right, the Governor is going to make that decision, the State's going to make that decision. We respect that. I'd say based on the numbers that we've heard from the State and what we're seeing ourselves, they're all tracking in a good direction by and large. I don't know with all of the red zone areas will be treated the same. I just don't know how the State is thinking about that. Again, we're – you know, when this is over, this immediate phase, we're going to go back to the focus on ZIP codes and differentiate by ZIP code. But if you're looking at that whole red zone, certainly some of the areas that made a lot of progress, I'm hopeful, we'll have some good news there. Others may take a little bit longer. But certainly, what we originally thought was going to be true with this whole trajectory with Brooklyn and Queens, that it was going to be ultimately somewhere in the two-to-four-week total range, that appears to be holding true. And I'm very hopeful over this week, next week that we can get all those areas out of those restrictions. Go ahead.

Question: Alright, thanks. And then, with regards to the holiday travel, I'm wondering, are there any specific plans to, you know, increase enforcement of the quarantine? And also, I think you usually travel to see family over the holidays. I'm wondering what your plans are this year.

Mayor: Thank you for the question. Let me just do – I'm going to answer those, but I want to do one point off the previous question you asked. A very important story here, and a good story, that in the areas of Brooklyn and Queens where we were seeing a problem, there was a lot of appeal to the community to get tested. And what we have found – I want to thank all the community leaders in Brooklyn, Queens – all the community organizations really, really supported this

testing effort. We've seen a huge uptick in the last few days. We saw it originally in Williamsburg, and I want to thank all the leaders there. But then, we've seen it spread really consistently to other neighborhoods in Brooklyn and Queens. So, much higher levels of testing are playing a profound role here in helping us figure out the best way to address this crisis and overcome it. So, I want to thank everyone involved for that. On your second questions there, Erin – first of all, me, personally, it's painful – you know, we really – and this is why I say it to all New Yorkers, but I'm feeling it myself – we cherish traveling at the holidays and seeing our family, it's been such a big part of our lives, but right now we have no plans to do so. You know, it would be beautiful if things changed between now and, say, Christmas, but, right now, with the reality we're facing, I can't see traveling to family and other places. I can't see it working for anybody. You know, it's sad. It's very sad. So, it's something I'm sort of girding myself for. I really, really love it and I really care about it, but I've got to tell you – I'm sort of telling myself what I'm going to tell everyone else – this may be the one year in our life where we have to change all of our patterns, change everything we normally would do, our customs, and just take a deep breath, and know that next year will be better. On the quarantine, absolutely you're going to see a lot more enforcement. We have to, Erin, we really have to – I think people have gotten the message that quarantine matters, but I think they need to get the message that if they violate quarantine, there will be consequences. So, we're going to be amplifying that and doing more and more enforcement. There's no time of the year like the holidays in terms of travel, and, unfortunately, that's coming exactly at the point where the disease is kicking up and we can't take that lightly. We have to be really, really aggressive in addressing that.

Okay. Everyone, as we conclude today – look, we are so used to the beauty of the holiday season in this city. New York City is magical during the holidays. Millions of people come here to be a part of it in a normal year. And we all travel around to see family around the country, around the world. It's a beautiful time of year. This just isn't our reality this year. We've got to think differently. For everyone's protection, we've got to think differently. So, we're used to everything happening here and everyone coming here, but let's think of it differently this year. We can still be the center of things, but we're going to have to be the center of things together, just ourselves, with the people you love who are right here, with the people who are your friends, your family right here. The best thing would be to keep it local, stay nearby, keep it safe. It is not easy. None of this has been easy, but New Yorkers have shown a lot of toughness and that toughness has saved lives. And let's do the smart thing this holiday season. Let's stay nearby and let's protect each other. Thank you, everybody.

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