

Governor Phil Murphy

# TRANSCRIPT: March 16th, 2020 Coronavirus Briefing Media

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Governor Announces Extensive Social Distancing Measure...



**Governor Phil Murphy:** Sorry to be a few minutes behind. Lots going on, lots to talk about today. Good afternoon.

As usual we have our health and public safety leadership team with us to answer your questions. And I'm honored, as I always am, to be alongside this team beginning with the Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver, thank you so much; the Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Zakiya Smith Ellis; Adjutant General Jemal Beale, Health Commissioner who is familiar to everybody in the state at this point Judy Persichilli, Commissioner of Education Dr. Lamont Repollet, and Superintendent of the State Police Col. Pat Callahan; as well as the First Lady and others are on our team in this room, including the Director of the Office of Homeland Security Jared Maples.

We have received word that an additional 80 residents have tested positive for coronavirus, bringing our statewide total to 178. And as usual in these briefings, Judy will go through some of the details including the geographies of these cases. These numbers prove the necessity of our efforts to slow the spread of coronavirus and to aggressively move to a police of social distancing. By the way – thank you, and to your colleagues thank you. I was remiss in not saying so the other day.

Today, I am signing an executive order stating that effective Wednesday March 18, all New Jersey schools will be closed. And while this closure will be for at least two weeks, they will remain closed until such time as it is deemed by health officials to be safe for them to reopen to students and staff and for classes to resume.

 [resume](#)  
to top

And we don't know when that will be. We will not tie ourselves to an arbitrary date knowing full well that this emergency may not be abated by the time that date arrives. We will not put students, educators, staff and their families at risk. We will do this the right way, the responsible way.

The directive, and many have asked us about this, covers all public, private and parochial schools from pre-K to grade 12, and all colleges and universities will have to cease in-person instruction as well. Many districts and institutions of higher education had preemptively announced closures of at least two weeks. We all need to prepare for the likelihood that it will in fact be much longer. And in fact, CDC guidance points us all to that likelihood.

Again, I want to thank and reiterate my thanks to the educational leaders from around the state, up and down the state, who have worked with Commissioner Repollet and Secretary Smith Ellis and their teams, and with me and my team as we advance towards this inevitable decision. Their input was vital to ensuring we landed in the right place. We are confident that both the overall educational and individualized needs of students, including access to free and reduced meals, will be met during this closure.

However, I am keenly aware that closing schools is not the only step we must take to ensure that people aren't congregating in places where coronavirus can easily spread. As was said on the call this morning on the call I held with New York Governor Andrew Cuomo and Connecticut Governor Ned Lamont, we need to act regionally and cooperatively and decisively. The actions I am taking are mirrored in many respects across our three states. And in addition to that I spoke with Governor Wolfe not only over the weekend but a short while ago today of Pennsylvania, and I'm pleased to share that Pennsylvania will also be joining our regional efforts and taking similar steps to the ones I am announcing.

So, here goes some other steps. All nonessential and nonemergency travel in New Jersey is strongly discouraged between the hours of 8:00 PM and 5:00 PM daily, effective this evening at 8:00 PM until further notice. To be clear, and I think I may have contributed to this confusion over the weekend, this is not a curfew; but it is strongly recommended, and travel is strongly discouraged. If you don't need to be on the roads, you should not be on the roads. If alternatively you are a healthcare worker or other employee essential to our response, we still need you to get to work and to the vital jobs you are doing. And from the bottom of our hearts we thank you and recognize that you are the frontlines in this fight. But for those who do not need to be out, please, please, please just stay home.

Businesses, which play a direct role in our response efforts or are necessary for the public's health, safety and welfare, such as supermarkets and grocery stores, pharmacies, medical offices and gas stations, among a very limited list – those entities may remain open past 8:00 PM.

All casinos, racetracks, movie theaters, performing arts centers, nightclubs, gyms, and fitness centers and classes will also close entirely effective at 8:00 PM this evening until such time that it is deemed safe for their opening. Again, I repeat, casinos, racetracks, movie theaters, performing arts centers, nightclubs, gyms, and fitness centers and classes all will also close entirely effective at 8:00 PM tonight until such time as it is deemed safe for their reopening. The good news is, online gaming will continue. The bad news is, not much to wager on.

All other nonessential retail, recreational and entertainment businesses must close at 8:00 PM every day beginning this evening at 8:00 PM. And during business hours or daytime hours, businesses may remain open but only if they limit their occupancy to no more than 50 persons and adhere to social distancing guidelines. Again, I want to repeat this. All other nonessential retail, recreational and entertainment businesses must close by 8:00 PM every day beginning today and in addition, during daytime hours, those businesses may remain open if they limit their occupancy to no more than 50 persons and they adhere to the six foot and other social distancing guidelines.

All bars and restaurants are closed for eat-in services effective 8:00 PM this evening until further notice. After 8:00 PM and until further notice, these establishments may open for take-out and delivery orders only. The restrictions will be in place during daytime as well. Again, I repeat, just because I want to make sure there's no confusion: all bars and restaurants are closed for eat-in services in the entirety of New Jersey effective 8:00 PM this evening until further notice. After 8:00 PM not just this evening but other evenings and until further notice, these establishments may be open for takeout and delivery orders only and these restrictions will be in place during daytime hours as well.

As a general matter, all gatherings of 50 or more persons are cancelled effective 8:00 PM tonight with very limited exceptions. And frankly, if you asked me about an exception I'm not sure I've got a good answer for you. But any gatherings of 50 or more are cancelled effective tonight.

I think you may have seen this already, but I want to reiterate that the Motor Vehicle Commission has closed all offices and inspection stations for the next two weeks at least. As was previously announced, all licenses and non-driver IDs, registrations and inspections expiring by May 31st are extended for two months. We encourage everyone who can utilize the MVC's online capabilities to do so.

Additionally, and General Beale will discuss this, as of today I am mobilizing the New Jersey National Guard to assist in our efforts in any way necessary. And again, Brigadier General Beale will speak to this in a few moments.

We do not take any of these steps lightly. We know that each comes with its own set of impacts on residents and families, on communities and on local businesses. But at this moment our paramount concern must be to flatten the curve of new cases so we do not overload our healthcare system. We all must take seriously the need for social distancing that can help slow the spread of coronavirus. We need everyone frankly to stay home.

Let me be perfectly clear. It was very obvious from what we all saw over the weekend that not enough New Jerseyans are taking to heart the need for social distancing that is absolutely vital to our flatlining the curve and keeping ahead of this public health emergency. There is no reason that anyone should run the risk of infecting friends and loved ones or their community, especially those who may be most vulnerable to coronavirus.

I know, I'm a Murphy by the way – guilty as charged. I know people wanted to celebrate St. Patrick's Day but absolutely no one should even have been considering going out to a bar. Even if you feel completely healthy you could still be a carrier of coronavirus. There will be another St. Patrick's Day next year. Sitting this one out could mean the difference for you or someone you love to actually making it till then.

Our New Jersey family is too precious. We all must play our part to win this fight against coronavirus and emerge stronger than ever. This is not a time for selfishness. This is a time to think of those around you. Dr. Tan, welcome. To every New Jerseyan who has already taken personal responsibility to heart during this emergency, and there are millions of you, I thank you. And I urge you to continue doing what you're doing and to keep being a model for others who may need a wake-up call.

Folks, a couple of extemporaneous comments. We need to put... Just as I have said and will continue to say, this is no time to panic. It still is no time to panic. It's time for smart, intelligent, aggressive, proactive action. And just as that is true, it is equally as true this is not time for business as usual. The amount of anecdotes that we get, everything on one end from bars you literally can't get into over the weekend to not one single roll of toilet paper left in the entire state. We've got to bring radically, dramatically and immediately that behavior on both ends into a more equitable, more reasonable, more rational reality. We can't allow the business as usual culture to continue.

Clearly, as I said, this does not come without a price. It will come with a big economic price – we understand that. If we do not act the price will only be larger, both in humanity as well as economically.

So, there are some people out there that think this is fake news and our friends the Russians I'm sure are feeding that notion. This is not fake news. This is real. On behalf of all of us, if we don't have this right, if we're not accurate about this it's on me. This is real. Stop believing folks who say it isn't real.

Another bigger group of people who think that they're, that it's not going to affect them. They're the picture of good health. I would just say to you and each and every one of you out there, this is a challenge for each of us. Yes, to our young people and their parents, while in fact this is heavily skewed toward older members of our community – although Judy will give you the range of the ages of the new cases in a moment – you may be asymptomatic but carrying coronavirus. Think about that. You're cavalier, you're in a bar, you're in some big party in a house somewhere. You feel really good and really healthy. And then, the next day you're going to see Grandma and Grandpa, or your parents or a coach, or an uncle and aunt, or a teacher who may be more vulnerable, who may have an underlying health issue and you unwittingly are putting their lives at risk.

We have got to put an end to this business as usual. So, to the folks who think this isn't real, trust me – it's real. And it's on me if we prove this otherwise. And to those who think it can't affect them, I'm here to tell you it can. So, just as it is not time to panic but it is time to be smart, proactive, aggressive as we're being, it is equally not time for business as usual. I cannot overstate this.

Before I conclude, I had the opportunity to speak directly a short while ago with President Trump and Vice President Pence, and I had spoken to the Vice President on Friday evening. And again, we've been in regular contact with them personally and their offices. In this case an hour or two ago was the Governor's video conference that is normally held on Monday. The President, Vice President and I also discussed that New Jersey is one of 12 states that will be standing up testing sites in conjunction with the federal government, in specific FEMA. Col. Callahan will give additional details on this I think very positive development in a few minutes.

On our call today I pressed the President and Vice President and their teams for more personal protective equipment for our frontline public health workers, for more on-the-ground assistance ala the FEMA help in setting up for testing, and to prepare to support our businesses, our workers and our economy when we come out of this emergency, which we inevitably will do. We will continue to push for necessary supplies, particularly so-called PPE, personal protective equipment, so long as there is an emergent need for them. And there is.

Before I close, I must give our continued thanks to everyone out there whose work is helping our state stay safe and stay together. Public health workers, where would we be without you and your heroism; the janitorial and custodial workers, and the women and men working to keep our grocery stores open and stocked to name just a few. I also want to recognize the tremendous work of each of you in the media who are making sure that the people have the facts. And you're doing it because we're living it as well seven days a week. We tip our caps to everyone who's playing their role and seeing us through this unprecedented time.

As I've said before, we are all in this together. We have our jobs to do, beginning with and including yours truly. And assuming we all do our jobs, we take this seriously – we don't panic but we realize it's no longer time for business as usual, and we do both the little things and the big things. Assuming we do all that, I can say unequivocally we emerge from this stronger as one New Jersey family than ever before. And to all New Jerseyans, I wish you nothing but safety and good health. Let's do this together.

It is now my honor to turn things over, and again we'll have a series of speakers, to the rocking Lieutenant Governor of the great State of New Jersey Sheila Oliver.

**Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver:** Thank you, Governor Murphy. I just would like to let the citizens of New Jersey know as well as the media, to let people know that the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs will continue to have its network of service delivery to the population that we serve. There are going to be concerns about housing, there are going to be concerns about other community resources and sustainable resources to help families get through this.

We will be working with a network of nonprofit organizations all around the state, who have committed, Governor Murphy, to work with you and our administration in any capacity that they are needed. And I don't want people to think that government is just shutting down. We are shutting down places that make it safe for us, but for the people in the state who need the continued support of our government we are open for business for that.

You know that there are 565 municipalities in this state and the Division of Local Government Services will continue to provide technical assistance and support to those municipalities. We will also have our Code Inspectors available to those towns who have shut down their operations. As we begin to see this network of popup places where people can drive through and give their specimens, all of those facilities have to get a permit and approval. We will continue to operate and deliver those services as well, Governor.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Thank you, Sheila, for that and for all of your leadership. Just to reiterate a couple of things before I turn things over to our Health Commissioner Judy Persichilli, we announced our work from home policy for state workers yesterday. And as Sheila rightfully said, it's up to each department to get that right and to work out the specific plan, and I know all the Cabinet members are doing just that. That doesn't mean we're open for business and Sheila said it well. We are open for business doing everything we can to

move the state forward. But the notion of working from home is something that makes an enormous amount of sense in the social distancing, flattening the curve challenge that we're all under. And we can't ask the private sector to do something that we're not prepared to do, or local government or county government that we're not prepared to do ourselves. So, Sheila, thank you for everything you're doing.

As we turn to our extraordinary Commissioner of Health Judy Persichilli, obviously to go over some details on the 80 new cases, which we certainly don't take lightly; also to give us an update. We've been aggressive in trying to get out of the testing reality from moment one and that's something that I know she'll want to touch on. Please help me welcome our Commissioner of Health Judy Persichilli.

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Thank you, Governor. Good afternoon. As I mentioned several days ago life as we know it has changed. As Governor Murphy just outlined, today we are taking a series of unprecedented steps that we expect will make a real difference in preventing the spread of the novel coronavirus. Closing schools, colleges, restaurants, gyms and casinos are sound public policy actions in the face of a pandemic.

Counties that have been hardest hit are already enacting more restrictions to limit exposure to the virus. We understand and appreciate that these developments are causing fear and concern. These aggressive social distancing steps are not designed to scare you. They are intended to prevent further spread of COVID-19. We expect that the spread of the virus can be slowed if we act now and if we act together. Each of us must take personal responsibility for braking the cycle of this outbreak in our communities.

It is essential that we, as guardians of the public health and safety take all steps necessary to flatten the curve and minimize the risk to all residents of New Jersey. That will help stop the spread of disease. There is evidence to support this action. Seven weeks after Wuhan, China was locked down, the makeshift hospitals that were erected in the city have closed. About three-quarters of the 80,000 people who became sick with COVID-19 in mainland China have recovered from it. But these mitigation interventions can dramatically slow the spread, and if we all work together to follow the steps Governor Murphy has outlined today, we can prevent the spread.

However, we do know that this will cause significant disruption in your daily lives. We know that you're worried about being exposed, about the loss of income that may be associated with staying at home. And we know that you might feel isolated. We are by nature social individuals, especially in times of crisis. We get solace by gathering and being with one another. So, reach out, talk to your family and friends – especially the elderly or those with disabilities. Maintain as best you can a real sense of community. Check in daily with each other. Technology today supports more interaction than we have had in the past. Use Facetime or just a phone call to stay connected.

Keep some form of daily structure. That will lessen any anxiety and any depression you may feel. Stick to a routine such as having regular meal times, bed times and exercising. Just take care of yourselves.

One of the actions that people can take to ensure that they stay healthy during this crisis is to ensure that you and your family and your loved ones have a sufficient supply of healthy food and snacks. And of course, make sure you have your medications. Both Medicaid and the Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged and Disabled Program known as PAAD, the Senior Drug Assistance Program run by the Department of Human Services are allowing early refills and 90-day supply of maintenance drugs.

Our call center has received more than 7300 calls and the top issue that we're hearing about right now is the availability of testing. We held a teleconference with leaders of all 21 counties yesterday to address the need for testing and how to operationalize a testing site in each county. Assistant Commissioner Chris Neuwirth has developed guidance for standing up these testing clinics that includes information on logistics, supplies, security, recommendations for staffing and specimen collection. We are also receiving assistance from FEMA to set up two test sites in New Jersey. We're working in collaboration with all of the counties on these initiatives.

The hospitals are also developing test sites. For example, Holy Name Hospital has set up two tents outside their emergency department to test patients who have been screened by their physicians and assessed by their hospital's infectious disease teams. If they meet the criteria to be tested, those patients will be called in for testing.

Now, I'd like to give you an update on today's cases. Today, we're reporting 80 new cases for a total of 178 cases in New Jersey. Here's the breakdown: Bergen County 32 new cases, Burlington 1, Camden 1, Essex 9, Hudson, 8, Hunterdon 1, Mercer 5, Middlesex 5, Monmouth 2, Morris 2, Ocean 1, Passaic 3, Somerset 4, Union 4. As part of those 80 new cases, two are still under investigation and we're gathering more details. However, for the cases we have details, and for the total of our 178 cases, they range in age from 5 years to 93 years.

With the increase in cases many individuals are asking whether this is the surge that we have been anticipating or predicting. Although it's difficult to predict I suggest that we can expect several more weeks of significant activity and then hopefully things will stabilize if we all take a part in avoiding the spread. Again, we encourage you to take care of yourselves, your families and your loved ones. Thank you.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Judy, thank you. And I think we'll hear a little bit more as well on the testing front. Not only did you touch upon it but Pat will touch upon that in a few moments. I mentioned that effective today we were calling up the National Guard, and the list of potential roles the National Guard could play under the outstanding leadership of General Beale is a long one. And I can't sit here today and give you an exact recipe of what they will be doing, but I promise you they will be doing a lot. With that, I'd love to ask General Beale to say a few words.

**Adjutant General Jemal Beale:** Good afternoon. First and foremost, it's an honor and privilege to serve as the Adjutant General. Since 1636, the state militia has responded to the needs of the community during times of uncertainty. Today's modern Army and Air National Guard is the community-based organization that has a footprint in nearly every county within the state. Whether it's military operations overseas, to serve weather events like Hurricanes Katrina, Irene, Superstorm Sandy, the New Jersey National Guard is a vital part of your first responder cohort.

Over the next few days, weeks or months, we ask that you support our 8100 citizen airmen and soldiers as we move about through your community in support of the state's COVID-19 response. We will be working closely with the Office of Emergency Management to assist fellow residents as we change from our civilian attire and put on our uniforms to serve this state. We will simultaneously be supporting the veterans in our long-term care facilities as well as the veterans' community across the state.

Please know that we are monitoring the current situation and are monitoring best practices implemented nationally by our counterparts in other states. As the Governor alluded to, our most likely mission sets are focused on capability gaps. They are things like advise and assist, logistics, transportation, traffic control, security or bringing in our engineers to maybe bring a facility back online that's needed in some way, shape or form for COVID-19. Wish us luck and please wash your hands on a regular basis and also practice social distancing. Thank you.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Thank you, General. Several things before we turn to our educational representatives. You remind us wash hands with soap, cough or sneeze into your sleeve, don't touch your face which I'm guilty of – it's lessening, better than it was. And if you don't feel well, don't show up for work or school.

Separately, if you have questions Judy referenced it. I don't know if you actually gave the number out, did you? 1-800-222-1222, 1-800-222-1222, and 7000-something calls have gone in there; and then [www.nj.gov/health](http://www.nj.gov/health) (<http://www.nj.gov/health>) are good places to go.

General, to you and your extraordinary colleagues thank you for this. It's why you're here in times of crisis and emergency. Folks have asked us what roles could we see the National Guard playing. You referred to one of them. Let's assume, God forbid by the way, let's assume that we need to bring back a wing of a hospital that was closed to get more capacity, or convert a building for some self-quarantine reasons? Or probably more immediately to help us out with things like testing, particularly drive-through testing. Or I could see immediately, Lamont, helping with distribution of food to those kids who, as we mentioned so many times who have food insecurity, and the only place that they're getting their reliable hot meal in a given day is through their school.

So, for all of the above reasons and the many other potential roles you'll play, thank you. We'd love to spend a couple of minutes with each of our outstanding representatives of education. Let's begin with our Commissioner of Education Dr. Lamont Repollet. As I mentioned, we are closing all schools public and

private I guess effective at the end of the school day technically tomorrow. And we'd love to get Dr. Repollet to give us a little more color on that.

**Commissioner of Education Dr. Lamont Repollet:** Thank you, Governor Murphy, Lieutenant Governor Oliver. At the Department of Education we remain committed to Governor Murphy's whole of government approach to the continued outbreak of COVID-19. These efforts to aggressively mitigate the spread of the virus would not be possible without the Department of Health's expertise guiding us every step of the way in making informed and data-driven decisions in the best interests of public health. I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Commissioner Persichilli and her entire team for their constant collaboration with the Department of Education.

Today marks a new chapter for New Jersey's educators, students and families. In my decades of experience in education, I've never seen a challenge as complex and profound as to which we are facing today. An unprecedented challenge requires an unprecedented response, a response that reaches new heights for collaboration, support and innovation. And that is exactly the kind of response we have led at the Department.

As a community, we have taken a number of steps to prepare for school closure. Our preparation is grounded in an ever-evolving model that systemically assesses the needs of our districts and then creates and executes viable strategies to meet those needs.

In phase one, to assist school districts we have taken the following action: superintendents assemble to assess our districts' readiness in the event of widespread school closures and discussed their preparedness to deliver remote learning, school meals and other critical services. Some districts were more prepared than others, but since that meeting, the Department of Education and districts have rallied around each other to support the development of preparedness plans. As of today, approximately 90% of our schools are closed and adhering to the plans to move students to remote learning. These plans will help ensure continuity of instruction and other critical services, and food securities. We have collected emergency plans from over 650 school districts that detail how they will continue to provide education and support our students.

In phase two we took every action available to develop and execute strategies [inaudible]. The Department focused on ensuring the districts addressed food insecurity needs. In consultation with the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, the DOE assessed the need for nutrition supports and made every effort to expand the universe of sponsored, eligible for reimbursement for federal summer meal programs. We have directed all districts that they think might be eligible to apply for the New Jersey Department of Agriculture. Agriculture reports it's received 155 new applicants as of today. By current available flexibility, we hope additional options will become available from legislation moving through Congress as we speak.

The Department of Education is working closely with the Office of Emergency Management not develop a streamlined, efficient chain of communication from districts up to the local Emergency Management offices, to the County Emergency Management offices and Education offices; and finally up to the state level. The Department staff is working closely with local Emergency Management offices to ensure that we leverage all of their available resources to safely and securely deliver meals to our students.

What's the plan? The DOE presented OEM with plans from 21 counties representing all of the districts. The communication plan or flow – districts to local OEM and to County Executive/County Superintendents offices. The ECS to County OEM to New Jersey Department of Field Services, New Jersey Department of Education to the ROIC. OEM will place these preparedness plans by county where they will funnel information to the local OEM, to funnel out to districts in real time. OEM will forward the preparedness plans to their reps to forward out to their local OEMs to monitor whether the process is efficient and effective.

Review of food distribution model: to facilitate the completion of this work for those districts that still need assistance, the Department constructed a county local resource sheet that includes the County OEM contact, the major school food service management companies that operate in the county, and a sponsor of summer food programs as approved by the USDA. These resources provide all in one location contact information that can assist with the logistics of meal delivery, meal preparation and coordinating with community providers.

Today, the Department has shared with districts and counties county-by-county meal resources dashboards that provide districts with contact information. In the next week, our Office of School Preparedness and Emergency Plans will be observant and supporting districts throughout the state.

For phase three, we are committed to continually monitoring and responding to the long-term concerns surrounding the closure of our school districts. These concerns are varied, from questions from maintaining essential school business functions to continuing meals that meet various state and federal requirements, to critically recognizing and addressing the mental, social and emotional impact that a climate of isolation and anxiety can have on our staff and students.

These last few weeks highlighted the ability of the education community to rally together to address complex needs while consistently promoting the well-being of the entire school system. Together, we have prepared and the Department is here to provide ongoing support during the closure. This will include disseminating updated FAQs that address districts' evolving concerns.

We're committing ourselves to being as available as possible, to collaborate on developing, evaluating and executing strategies to meet the needs of our communities, share the resources and continue to pursue every possible opportunity made available from the federal government or our community organizations to deliver needed relief to our educational community. We are standing in partnership with all of you and eager to provide the support that we can. Thank you.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Lamont, thank you. One quick question, if a parent is watching right now, an educator, a child, is there one website they can go to, to get a bulk of what you've just gone through and sort of the way forward? Or should they be relying specifically on their local district and local school relationship?

**Commissioner of Education Dr. Lamont Repollet:** We have a communication plan. All information is provided via social media and also on our website, which is the Department of Education website.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Thank you, and thank you for your leadership on all this. I said hello to Dr. Christina Tan when she came in but I want to more formally acknowledge that she's here – our state's epidemiologist and has been doing extraordinary work. So, thank you.

I also want to say this. I mentioned when Sheila spoke that we announced our work from home verdict yesterday, directive yesterday. We're announcing a whole lot of stuff today. We're not intending to come out each day and take incremental steps. We are, however, doing everything we can as the facts present themselves to get out ahead of this as fast as we can and as best we can. I doubt we'll have any day where we have as many specific and particular steps that we're announcing today, including a big one – shutting our schools. But we reserve the right to revisit all these decisions and if we think we need to go another incremental step or five more incremental steps, we reserve that right and we will exercise that right.

Education goes from the very young to the young adults and beyond among us, and we're honored to have our Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Zakiya Smith Ellis with us. Zakiya, if you could walk us through the higher ed reality. Many thanks for being here and for everything you do.

**Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Zakiya Smith Ellis:** Thank you, Governor, and thank you to Commissioner Persichilli. Thank you for Commissioner Repollet. We have been working nonstop in collaboration with the Governor's Office, and your leadership has been phenomenal as we move through this unprecedented situation together.

We understand that this is a very unique situation and taking all precautions. We're asking all institutions to remain vigilant in protecting the health and safety of their students, faculty, staff and their entire campus communities. That includes moving to online instruction. This will help facilitate a safer environment for students, faculty and staff. As institutions do this, we urge them to ensure that there are appropriate and safe accommodations in place for students with disabilities and those who may not have access to internet services, as well as students who call their campus community home.

While many institutions have already made the decision to move instruction online, the Governor's executive order that he's signing today is designed to further mitigate the spread of COVID-19. A majority of our four-year public institutions are currently providing instruction online and many others have plans in the works to

move online in the coming days and weeks. Our office is collaborating with institutions and providing guidance to address any concerns.

Last week we announced some guidance for colleges and universities intended to direct them as they made decisions to extend Spring Break and move online, and through updated guidance we are sharing today – that will be released within the next 24 hours – we are urging institutions to limit in-person gatherings of students, faculty and staff, to discourage communal dining, and instead urging them to use grab-and-go meal options. Our guidance also includes considerations for classes with labs and clinical rotations, athletic programming, again, accommodations for students with disabilities and other aspects of remote instruction.

Maintaining the health and safety of all of our residents is of utmost importance and we want institutions to make careful considerations every day to protect their communities. We are keeping everyone updated as information becomes available and we have asked all institutions to send us their latest versions of their emergency operations plan. We'll be reviewing all those plans to ensure that they comply with the guidance that we provided last week.

Again, if any institution has experienced cases they should be in touch with their local health officials to help identify those individuals and next steps. As this situation unfolds, we will continue to work with the colleges and share updated guidance and information as it becomes available. Thank you.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Thank you, Zakiya, and I think this is worth repeating both for our college students as well as our younger folks, particularly our friends in high school. This isn't just one big Spring Break here. Not only are we telling you to stay home and stay out of crowds but there's a big dose of remote learning that we expect our students, whether they be K-12 or whether they be in higher education, to adhere to. And easier said than done I recognize, which is why we wanted to make sure we got this as right as we could before we announced it. So, thank you Zakiya, for everything; and Lamont, likewise.

Lamont used the letters OEM a lot – Office of Emergency Management which exists both at the state level as well as at the county level. And the person who sits on top of the Office of Emergency Management is the Superintendent of the State Police Col. Pat Callahan. I'd love Pat to offer a few words generally about some of the topics we've had including food security and delivery and our schools, but in specific, I mentioned this earlier and I was very gratified – although I think it's consistent with the amount of cases that we have, sadly – that the federal government, the White House in particular has asked FEMA to designate New Jersey as one of their 12 priority states. And Col. Callahan is the principal point of contact with that, and I think as you'll hear, I think we'll see the first steps, I hope not the last or the only but the first steps of FEMA in terms of boots on the ground in New Jersey will be in and around testing. And in specific on that front, we'd love to ask Pat to weigh in with some details.

**State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan:** Thank you, Governor and Lieutenant Governor, and everybody here and beyond that we are really shoulder to shoulder in this effort 24/7.

As a state that's been through multiple disasters in the last decade and even beyond, we have a phenomenal relationship with FMEA, and particularly FEMA Region 2 which is based out of New York City. Our ask about testing was almost answered immediately, as the Governor stated, that we're one of 12 states to get two PODs or Points of Distribution that FEMA will completely support. At this juncture the anticipated time of them being up and functional is still an unknown that we're working through but very soon. One is going to be in Bergen County at Bergen County Community College and the second one at this juncture is expected to be in Monmouth County, right off the Parkway at the PNC Arts Center – two strategic locations and I think two that will allow for easy in-and-out. They will be supplied, from the tents to the PPE to the testing kits, all of that is coming from FEMA. And those supplies at those points of distribution will be replenished weekly by FEMA.

I had a phone call with the Region 2 Administrator this morning, myself and our OEM staff, and again, that relationship – when we talk about the blue sky days, and again, as a multiple disaster state, as the former Recovery Bureau Chief and Major of OEM – that is almost a daily relationship that has to be in lockstep with each other. Beyond the PODs, Governor, as we talked this morning, FEMA is sending an Incident Management Assistant Team which will be at the SEOC starting tomorrow, and they will help us with planning, they will help

us with external affairs; they will help us in our requests for PPE for first responders and healthcare workers. They are a phenomenal, we call it an IMAT team and again, not a concept that's foreign to us given the amount of disasters that we've had.

On top of that, our relationships with the 21 County OEM coordinators is phenomenal, and I've had a few phone calls with them already. To Commissioner Repollet's point, that plan of having all of the emergency operations plans placed electronically in Dropboxes for the County OEM Coordinators to go into, for the local municipal coordinators to go into, because who knows their towns better than those folks' boots on the ground and those municipalities? So, that whole of government and whole community approach is certainly one that we espouse to because it works. And we've seen it over the last decade or so, and I'm just, I'm honored to be a part of the team.

And I'd be remiss if I didn't thank Commissioner Persichilli for her leadership. Troopers and nurses generally get along anyway. I'm married to an RN; my dad was a trooper, my mom's an RN. So, it's a pleasure, Commissioner. Thanks, Gov.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Thank you. Before we throw this open to questions, just two comments other than to say deep appreciation to the team at this table, to Jared and other members of our teams; Dan Kelly who runs our Emergency Services in our office. George Helmy, our Chief of Staff is with us. We're blessed with an extraordinary team and we enter this crisis with extraordinary assets including an incredible healthcare system, incredible law enforcement, number one educational system in America; a National Guard that's second to none. And those are just a few of the strengths with which we enter this crisis.

Two observations: as several of you have said over the course of today, even before we take these questions, "Boy, you're really ramping things up." I'm reminded of Sheriff Brody in *Jaws*, I'm dating myself, played by Roy Schneider. When he finally had a good look at the shark he turned around and said, "We're gonna need a bigger boat." And what you're hearing from us today is a bigger boat. We have seen the enemy and we do not want to be dragged by the enemy. We want to get out ahead of this. It is consequential, it is formidable and we are doing everything we can to get out ahead of it.

And then I want to, lastly before we take your questions, address three types of people: number one, those who have anxiety. I want you to know we get that. We understand it. We appreciate it. Our collective actions, our collective commitment is to lessen your anxiety. You have my word that that is our number one commitment, to be honest with you. And I'm not saying we'll get through this unscathed or without mistake, but we will get through this and we will do everything we can to lower your anxiety.

The second group I want to address are those who don't believe. I'm begging you, trust us, believe. This is real. And if it turns out it isn't, it's on me. Believe this and do what you need to do and do what you're being asked to do.

And the last group are folks who may not care even innocently, even benignly. They may think they're beyond this, that they're too healthy. I would ask those who don't care right now, care. Care deeply. Care personally. Take this seriously. And if we can lessen the anxiety, get folks who don't believe to believe and trust us, and get folks who don't care right now to understand this and care, and we all do our part – including yours truly and everybody with me – we will get through this. We will break the back of this. We will flatten the curve, we'll take the pressure off our healthcare system and we will emerge stronger as one family in New Jersey than ever before.

With that, we'll take some questions.

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#### Q&A Session:

**David Levinsky, Burlington County Times:** Governor, there's a lot of discussion about testing. We've heard different reports. One we heard, the Bergen County Community College facility was going to open today. Was that what the Colonel was referring to as a POD? There was another company that was supposed to start a drive-through testing situation in Secaucus. Do we know if that's up and running? And maybe, I don't know if anybody can, like how many tests a day are we going from currently to, with these new testing sites, how much of this is going to be in these two POD situations? A lot of people have a lot of concerns about testing.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Yep, let me give you a couple of general comments and then I'm going to ask Judy and Pat to each weigh in. Let me repeat something that we've repeated over the weekend and on Friday. Remember that the big volume of tests are now being done by private sector non-Department of Health entities, whether they be literally private sector or hospital systems. So, Judy will correct me but something like 80% plus of the positives, the increase that we reported today, came from outside the of the Department of Health. And just recognize that the good news is the scale is significant, the speed is significant but we have less insight into the actual specifics and the data of each of those tests. So, I just want to say that as a general matter.

Judy and Pat will get into this. These are and both. And by the way, I never and Judy never, we never committed to having anything up and running today. I think I said, as of last Friday by this coming Friday we would have a meaningful uptick in the amount of testing capacity, both the frontend intake of specimens as well as the backend which will overwhelmingly be private sector processing of those specimens.

It's and both. It's both what we've been pursuing on our own in the state, and we had all along intended to begin that in Bergen County. Judy's also... I can't even recall at this point because I know you said it to be privately earlier, you've been aggressively looking at the potential for in-home testing in addition to drive-through. And then, on top of that, over the weekend and then particularly this morning, based on the actions of the Federal Government on Friday with the State of Emergency, FEMA has come into play here, which we would not have been talking about, for instance, over the past several days. So, it's and both.

Any quick color, Judy, on top of that? And then Pat.

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** I'll talk about all of the above. The Bergen County Community College situation, we were working with County Executive Tedesco over the weekend to bring that up as quickly as we can. We've put together the technical guidance. We were getting the appropriate PPE for the individuals that would take the specimens, and then we got a call that FEMA would come in and do it and so of course we said fine. And we're working with FEMA because they will bring in the PPE and the specimen collection kits. And what's important about that is we're trying to preserve as much PPE as we can from our own stockpile, for particularly hospitals that need it. So, the FEMA POD will be at Bergen so there'll only be one. It'll be at Bergen. We'll get it up as soon as we can.

**David Levinsky, Burlington County Times:** Do we have any idea how many people a day have the capability of getting tested at this point right now?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** At one of those drive-throughs? So, at one of those drive-throughs, and by the way, I would bet you... I don't know when it will be. I don't want to marry myself to a day so forgive me for this. That might be the first one; it ain't gonna be the last one. I'll be surprised if we don't have a day when we're sitting here with you and we've got them in most if not all the counties in the state at some point. I think these are intended to be able to deal with a thousand or more, 1000 to 2000 I think even, a day at one venue.

**Commissioner of Health Persichilli:** One of the reference labs told us that they can handle up to 5000 tests a day. These are high-frequency labs; they can process a lot of tests. As far as setting up one of these testing sites, traffic control is a big issue; making sure that all the individuals are appropriately screened; making sure that they have a primary care physician or an ordering physician so that the test results can get back to them and into our system if it's positive. All of those situations have to be handled. Most of the testing sites right now, and we did a survey throughout the United States, most of them are handling 200 to 300, as high as 500 specimen collections a day. The average seems to be about 250.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Pat, can you add some color and then we'll move on to others?

**State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan:** The only thing I would add, and I think to the Commissioner's point about that assistance, that folks, it's not going to be like a fast-food situation; that there has to be those criteria in order to pull up and go through. So, if you imagine 1000 cars in line, I don't think that's going to happen here on a daily basis, David. But I think that assistance that you put out was key in how these are going to get set up.

**David Levinsky, Burlington County Times:** Do you still need a doctor to recommend though, yes?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** You need to be prequalified to go in, correct. Elise?

**Elise Young, Bloomberg:** On the video conference call with the Vice President and President, it's my understanding that they suggested to governors that you use your own supply chain to get PPE. What was your response to that? What was other governors' response to that?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Yeah, I didn't see it as a black and white, "You're on your own." It was, George Helmy will correct me, I think we put our first request in for PPE, Judy, it was two weeks ago at this point at least. We got a fraction of that and we're happy for it Thursday night into Friday. I spoke to the Vice President Friday night; I reiterated with the President and Vice President today we needed A.) more PPE, B.) boots on the ground via FEMA, and C.) we're going to need a lot of economic help, because these steps that we're taking, like most states are, is going to have a big economic impact. The answer as I heard it was, "We hear you, we're working on it. You should also be pursuing your own means," which I don't begrudge but for two things. One is that's expensive, and we're prepared to pay what we need to pay but there's not an unending amount of money here. So, the Feds will ultimately have to... We're going to have to find a way to be reimbursed even if we go out and buy it. That's the lesser of the two issues. The more important issue is finding the stuff. It's not like we're the only state that's looking for this stuff right now. And so, Judy made the point which is a really important one – FEMA being involved has a one plus one equals three outcome here, including in the sense that they're bringing their own gear. Getting Jemal and his folks engaged is adding. I'm not suggesting they've got all the gear but adding manpower, sophisticated trained manpower to the denominator is a big deal.

**Brent Johnson, Star Ledger:** The school closings, one, does that not affect daycare centers?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** It does not. Daycare centers are not being mandated to be closed although they're allowed to, or should they choose to they're welcome to do that.

**Brent Johnson, Star Ledger:** The other thing is we're getting reader questions on barber shops, convenience stores, Wawa, places like that and malls in particular.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** So, you'll expect when we take the amount of steps that we're taking today, which I think is maybe unprecedented in the state of New Jersey, maybe since the Revolutionary War – we don't have all of the slight pieces buttoned down. But I think you can assume that barbershops are going to be okay but they're going to be in the category that needs to close at 8:00. Malls, we're going to ask malls to adhere to the 50 max in the given unit within the mall and social distancing. But for the time being at least, that's an area that we're going to continue to watch. For the time being, they'll be able to stay open until 8:00. But we're going to be monitoring all of the above going forward.

**Brent Johnson, Star Ledger:** Why no daycare centers?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I think for the moment at least we think the burden on particularly first responders and healthcare workers, of which we have a disproportionate amount in our workforce, and when you add to that shuttering of every school in the state, we need to be smart about this. We need all the help we can get.

**Reporter:** So, I was wondering is there any updates on mitigation factors for the elections coming in the next few months? I know that Ohio today announced that it was cancelling in-person voting for its election tomorrow.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** No update since David asked me yesterday. I would expect that I'll get recommendations, Sheila and I will get recommendations within the next day or two.

**Reporter:** Two things, on the numbers of cases, can you give us – to put those numbers in perspective – the number of people hospitalized due to the virus? And on the closures and curfews, what happens if people don't, if people are... Can people run at night? They're asking questions like can we go outside? Can we get deliveries? Can we deliver newspapers? What happens? And what happens if places don't close down? Can you order them, are there penalties for this?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Yeah, let me take the second and then, Judy, you can take the first because you know the answer to that and I don't. So again, bear with us on this. We had a robust discussion about parks earlier. The fact of the matter is, if you look at any list of recommended actions, getting fresh air – with two healthcare experts to my right – I think getting fresh air and being out in the open is a good thing. And so, I

think we would look kindly upon that other than please be safe, because after 8:00 by definition it's dark out. So, I'm not sure how much of that is going on. Deliveries we've said were okay, particularly food deliveries. I forget what else you had asked as part of that.

**Reporter:** And penalties for people?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Oh. So, Pat and I had talked about this. I'm going to give you my answer, and then Pat, you should come in and tell me. We're going to... If you're a nonessential business and you're staying open beyond 8:00 we'll probably give you a warning shot but we probably won't give you two.

**Reporter:** Are warehouses, particularly those with Amazon shipping nonessential?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I haven't been asked about warehouses. I have to believe we have to allow them to continue to operate, because that would impact the supply chain and that's the last thing we need right now. So, I think you should assume that warehouses are going to have to be able to proceed as business as usual. Was I too kind on the one warning shot and not two, or no?

**State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan:** No, it's a kinder, gentler State Police. No, I would agree with the Governor as far as discretion being one of our greatest tools in law enforcement, in that the warning is where we're going to start.

**Reporter:** But are there penalties?

**State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan:** At this juncture I don't know what the penalty would be.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I'll tell you what we won't look kindly upon, and I do mean this and this is a local law enforcement issue. The Russians are weighing in on Sheila's phone here just to make sure they answer Nakita's question about the elections, is we won't look kindly upon big house parties, big private property parties. I'm not a member of law enforcement; I'm not particularly in local law enforcement. Pat's got about 90 communities that the State Police have direct responsibility for. We will not treat those kindly nor should we. That's completely contrary to the objective. Back to the most important first question, Judy, sorry about that.

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** I don't have specificity on the numbers. I can tell you the majority are hospitalized or have been hospitalized. Several have mild to moderate disease and they are able to be handled and followed at home. Just generally speaking, about 80%, 85% of the people that get COVID-19 will have mild to moderate disease. 15% may require or do require hospitalization, and of that 15% right now we don't have very strict percentages because, as you know the numerator and denominators are very difficult to get. But a certain amount of them will require critical care going into pneumonia, organ failure. And unfortunately, we do expect that we will unfortunately see more deaths as a result. But again, 80% to 85% mild to moderate.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Thank you, Judy.

**Brenda Flanagan, NJTV News:** Hey, Governor. So, we've got people who are typing in on social media what do you consider to be nonessential driving, the kind of driving? I mean, what am I allowed to be on the road for? What should I avoid going out between 8:00 and 5:00 on the road?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I think you've got to use your judgement and your common sense. At one end, you're going over to a buddy's house to drink. No, sorry. By the way, don't drink and drive anyway even if you're in an Uber or a Lyft. At the other end you've got a sick family member or I won't even use the example of being a healthcare worker because they're obviously essential. But we basically are saying as loudly and clearly unless you need to be out we want you to be at home.

**Reporter:** Thank you, Governor, just a couple questions relating to the legislature. You mentioned earlier you're expecting a pretty significant economic impact from all of this. Have you consulted with Treasury about revenue projections going into 2021? And then, the second one has to do with the legislative package that's moving through the Assembly today, all addressing coronavirus. How closely were you working with them on that and do you plan on signing those bills?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** On the first question, I think I mentioned this. We had a good meeting with the Treasurer and her team. It's too early to give you a crisp answer on this. We'll do everything we can within our powers. I'm not here to make a budget speech and for Sheila and me to pound the table on what we've asked for, but recurring revenues really matter now more than ever before. And that's a point that I think is an obvious one but I want to make that point. And secondly, we're going to need the federal government with us in a big way, and I think everybody recognizes that. And I don't mean just New Jersey. We're going to need help. This is beyond any one state. I think Governor Cuomo said the other day that there's no amount of money New York state has that could compensate for the revenue and business loss, and certainly that's the case for New Jersey. The fact of the matter is, we have the same posture as I would always give you about legislature and pieces of legislature. We look at them one at a time. I want to give a big shoutout to the legislature and the leadership on both sides of the aisle. We've gone, our teams have gone through the steps we're announcing today. They've been very responsive. I know their heart is in the right place. I just will tell you we've been working 24 hours a day including through the weekend. We just haven't had the ability to look at each of these bills on their own as we may have at a quieter time. Conceptually, some of them are very consistent with where we want to go and where we agree we should go, and I mentioned the other day – and this is a good example that Sheila and I have talked about, and Lamont knows this well and now Zakiya with the Higher Ed is reducing the digital divide. I think I mentioned this on Friday. If you do the math, we think there are 210,000 of our school kids out of 1.4 million who have acute food insecurity, and I think based on a survey you had done 259,000 of our K-12 kids in this case didn't have access to a device at home. Anything we can do as a state, I hope with the help of the federal government. And I also want to give a shout out to private sector players. Comcast came out hard with trying to plant in hotspots. I don't know if you saw Verizon's announcements yesterday, both free access to their services as well as cash on the barrel to pick two corporate players. Big shout out to the corporate sector. Tammy and I and the team have speaking a lot about how we can further mobilize their resources to help us here, so that's to be determined. Charlie, I see you back there.

**Charlie Kratovil, New Brunswick Today:** Yeah. Governor Cuomo made a pitch after your press conference to urge the federal government or the Army Corps of Engineers to mobilize and consider or start building as soon as possible backup hospitals or backup units for hospitalized patients. I was wondering if that came up in your discussion with the President. And I had a second question about community spread. There was a lot of discussion last week as this was growing that we were not at the stage of community spread when it came to the number of confirmed cases. Are we there now or is that going to be impossible to actually detect because of so much private industry or companies now doing the testing and not doing the investigative work that the local health officials do?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** So, I'll do the first and then I'll tee up the second, and Judy, you and Christina should weigh in. We spoke about it among Governor Cuomo, Governor Lamont and I, and while I don't think it came up per se with the President and Vice President – it may have actually – it is certainly in the category of boots on the ground in terms of where we may need help. So, the immediate federal boots on the ground help that we want and need is the FEMA testing help with PPE, importantly as Judy made the point. They're not just bodies but they're coming with equipment which we desperately need. But on the longer list absolutely, and it's also on Jemal's longer list as well. He mentioned his engineering capabilities. So, could you see some combination of federal, Army Corps or some other entity working potentially with the National Guard, other entities in the state to refit or buildout facilities? Absolutely. On the second, I would just make a general comment on community spread because I'm not qualified to answer it, but the steps we're taking today are unquestionably to do everything we can to get out ahead of that as best we can. So, even if it is already among us, our job is to crack the back – not just flatten but crack the back of that curve. And that means we've got to separate ourselves. I will defer to the experts on how you see it right now, Christina.

**State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan:** So, the way that we're monitoring the COVID-19 activity right now is very similar to how we approach looking at influenza-like activity that we do in the state every single year. And if you have the opportunity to go to the state Health Department's website, on the dashboard where you can kind of monitor how the spread is occurring and how these cases are occurring, you'll note for example right now our highest amount of activity, COVID-19 activity for example as everyone's been mentioning has been occurring in Bergen County, and is kind of spreading out from Bergen going a little south. And then we have some regions in the state that haven't been impacted by COVID-19 yet. And it's important to remember

that right now we don't have complete information on all of our COVID-19 cases at this time. We do know that many of our COVID-19 cases have had some sort of exposure to a confirmed case, but many of them don't have source. We haven't been able to identify the source of exposure which means where did they get that? From the community. But the important thing to remember is that again, we look at this regional activity, we look at the intensity of the activity. In some areas it's isolated, sporadic cases where you take certain strategies that are helpful, like for example contact tracing. But like the Governor had mentioned, you know, at the same time we're doing overarching community mitigation impacts to help reinforce what we're doing at a local level for our individual investigations.

**Charlie Kratovil, New Brunswick Today:** Just on the first point about the hospital space, wouldn't the... Given the amount of time that's needed to actually find these sites and actually do the retrofitting and construction, shouldn't that be launched now rather than waiting later?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Judy, if you'll permit us, Charlie, to go through the exact number of beds we have and where we would go because this is something we're very much focused on. It's a good point.

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Right now we have a little over 700 negative pressure isolation rooms in the state. We have 23,687 acute care beds. They are acute care beds that are currently maintained and staffed. We have 1983 intensive care beds. We know that there's one hospital that has closed within the last five years and we're going to be doing a site visit this week to see what it would take to bring that hospital online to be able to accommodate a surge. Additionally we've inventoried all of the hospitals and we've identified hospitals within the state that have full wings closed because utilization has decreased, and those hospitals are giving us an estimate about how we can make the whole wing a negative pressure wing to be able to handle surges. We've identified four hospitals right now that may be able to accommodate that for another 200 beds available. So, today we have a 5:00 call with the Hospital Association and all of our hospitals and that's the type of conversation we're having with them really on a regular basis.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** So, I've got a health warning I have to read from the side of the cigarette pack but before I do, this is the hip bone's connected to the thigh bone here. So, just remember all the steps we're taking today – closing schools, casinos, gyms, movie theaters, restaurants; calling up the National Guard, all the other steps – all those steps are intended to take pressure off of over here, the healthcare system. So, we are balancing both plates in the air right now. What are the steps we need to do over here which come with pain, both individual and collective pain and we get that including economic cost. But their soul intention is to take the pressure off the system over here, and not only the system but to save as many lives as possible.

From the lawyers among us I've been asked to read the following. Pat, this is for you and me I think. Violations of the executive order can be enforced by disorderly persons offenses by county and local law enforcements. The AG has already briefed county prosecutors. It's a case-specific analysis and they will try to protect behavior, but everyone should assume it will be enforced. Thank you.

**Daniel Munoz, NJBIZ:** Hi. I guess this is a question for the Health Commissioner. These four hospitals and the one additional offsite hospital, what are their names? For the Health Commissioner, these four hospitals that have inactive wings, which ones are they? And this offsite hospital. And I guess for the Governor, are you going to ramp this up to actually a mandatory curfew if you find that not enough people are still adhering to the recommendation?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I'm going to be brief just because I'm concerned that we've got so much to do here and this is an incredible cavalcade of talent with me here at this table. The answer is we reserve all rights to crank things further if we have to. Our hope is... By the way, I will give a shoutout to the collective New Jersey. The 250 max that we put in place, I don't know if we're aware of anybody who willfully went against that. Now, it's possible some did but we're not aware of any. We've now dropped that to 50 which we admit is going to be... That's 80% tighter. I think most folks in this state overwhelmingly in fact want to do the right thing. But if we see that there's willful disregard for what we've put in place we reserve the right to ratchet up the pressure including legally, law enforcement and otherwise. Judy, real quick on the four hospitals?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** We're not prepared to give those names out yet. [inaudible] We're meeting daily. I'm sure I'll have an opportunity to share that with you.

**Reporter:** Hi Governor, a couple questions on schools. First of all, is there a reason why you're waiting for another day to make this closure order effective? And speak to what's going to happen in the next day that hasn't happened already for schools.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** And I'll let Lamont and Pat jump in here. This is largely to make sure, as I said beginning on Friday and as I think Sheila was saying quite well before I spoke on Friday and over the weekend, to make sure we had the food security, daycare, remote learning pieces as best in hand as possible across as many districts as possible. So, we had asked each of the districts, 600 and something of them, to come up with their emergency preparation plan. We're almost at full compliance but we needed to go through each and every one of them. We just needed a few more days to get hat in hand. So, there's no magic necessarily. We don't want to let the perfect be the enemy of the good but we also didn't want to just do something to get a sugar high and then realize holy cow, we got a lot of kids who are going without the only meal that they can rely on every day.

**Reporter:** But might there be any schools open tomorrow that you know of but are they effectively all closed?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I assume there may well be schools open tomorrow. I don't know that. I think Lamont said 90% of schools are closed so probably not many, but tomorrow they're welcome to be. Anything you want to add, Lamont?

**Commissioner of Education Dr. Lamont Repollet:** Yes. The Governor's correct in regards to preparation. There's certain communities, certain counties that don't have any effects of COVID-19. Those communities have been submitting their plans. We have 10% of the plans that are due, so we're looking forward to those individuals. However, by tomorrow you're going to have probably 100% of school closures. Everyone was moving towards that, that preparation. I think the Governor said it right. People wanted to make sure that they had an opportunity to make sure that the students had food security and making sure of the continuity of instruction, and making sure they do it right and collectively, not from the top-down but more so from the bottom-up as far as collaboration from their NJEA partners.

**Reporter:** Just two points of clarification, Governor. One, the tents, the FEMA tents going up at BCCC and PNC, if were to go there now are there crews on the ground actively getting that organized and put in place? And two, we got some questions from restaurants and bars specifically as far as your order goes. There was something about a waiver, an alcohol waiver? If you could just clarify again the bars and restaurants and what that waiver entails.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Okay, so on the first one, there are no boots on the ground right now, are there, Pat?

**State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan:** Not yet. We had to provide those two locations to FEMA Region 2 by noon today. We did it by about 11:00 but I would anticipate that probably by tomorrow that equipment's going to start to arrive at those two locations.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** And as I mentioned testing is already going up dramatically largely through the private sector players. But intake and testing, as I predicted last Friday, by the end of this week will be up dramatically. I'm not sure, Matt's here somewhere, the waiver I assume is to allow these restaurants to deliver not just food but alcohol? I assume that's the waiver you're referring to?

**Chief Counsel Matt Platkin:** Yeah, there's no waiver. It's just written, I think if you read the EO it's written so that you can see restaurants, whether they have a liquor license or not, can do take-out and delivery. Some bars or establishments have package stores associated with them. They can continue to sell containers in their original packaging for take-out only, but there's no other waivers.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Thank you.

**Reporter:** This question is for Dr. Tan. The 80 new cases, the contact tracing with that, is there an expectation for the timeline there of the new ones that have popped up today? And are you worried about the timing in this timeline and people maybe going to a grocery store or a place that possibly could have been visited by these 80 cases?

**State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan:** First of all, the recommendation for anyone who is ill who is not hospitalized, again, the self-isolation at the home place until medically cleared. You know, the issue of contact tracing is somewhat involved, and we have to remember that we're moving away from solely relying on contact tracing because, as our case count increases, the emphasis really has to move, shift away from intensive contact tracing to these community mitigation efforts. We also have to think about our public health workers and how they need to prioritize their efforts as well. The recommendations still remain the same. For close contacts of cases of COVID-19, that they should self-quarantine and monitor for any sort of symptoms for 14 days since their last exposure. That hasn't changed and won't change for now, so there's nothing more that we can do on that end. And we do our best and from the local health department perspective, we have to realize that this is an extraordinary amount of work that our local partners are doing at this time.

**David Levinsky, Burlington County Times:** Governor, could you just clarify a couple of things? You had mentioned that the essential situations, essential stores like supermarkets can remain open until 8:00 PM but they have to observe the no more than 50 rule I believe you had said? That may cause some problems 'cause now, all of a sudden people may not be able to get into the supermarket to get food. How is that going to be enforced? Is that an issue that's been discussed with law enforcement? What would your advice be in terms of having people not panic about that?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** So again, as I said I think earlier, we're a state right now, which if you looked at the data points to describe who we are you'd really be struck. And over the weekend we saw this clearly. Bars were so packed you couldn't get into them on the one hand, and Tammy and I did an under the radar screen visit to a store and there wasn't one piece of toilet paper, never mind a roll of toilet paper left. So, the steps we're taking today are to dramatically bring those steps, those realities into norm, particularly overwhelmingly congregation of large numbers of people. I think you meant the opposite – supermarkets are essential so they're able to stay open past 8:00, so that's number one. Number two, I'd say the answer is consistent with what Matt handed me earlier and that is we have to monitor this. We're going to start to find out tonight at 8:00 but the reality is, maybe among other things it injects a little bit of calm into the crowd control in these entities. But we'll live and learn. We're going to be back here tomorrow at 2:00 and my guess is we'll have a good amount of sense of what happened overnight. And we'll go from there.

**Reporter:** At this point would you recommend that people vote in person?

**Governor Murphy:** Again, too early to tell. I know that's of interest to you. You know, I saw the Governor of Illinois asked this question last night. They've got elections tomorrow. He made a point which I thought is a fair one. I can't remember the last time, I'll speak for myself and Tammy and our local voting elementary school, where there were remotely 50 people in that room at the same time. Just I don't think it's ever been the case. And if we think that's a chance we would probably put in place something to monitor that. But it's too early to tell. Sheila and I haven't gotten the recommendations yet. But it does give me a chance to give a free commercial for early in-person voting which we don't have in New Jersey and we should have. So, and I know Sheila joins me in this and the whole team. We should have... Each county should have a location that's open Monday through Friday from 9:00 to 5:00 for one month before the election so that you're not either running into a public health challenge like we're talking about today or crazy-bad weather where the train or bus is late, or seniors have a hard time getting to the polling place. I think it's crazy that we don't have it so I'll use that as a commercial for that.

**Brent Johnson, Star Ledger:** Commissioner, I didn't hear the number of total beds you had. There were a lot of numbers being thrown around. That's one question. And the other is, the five-year-old, is that the first child affected?

**Commissioner of Health Persichilli:** That's the youngest child affected. I think the next would be a 17-year-old and that child is home, not hospitalized. 700 isolation beds, 23,687 acute care beds, 1983 intensive care beds.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** None of that includes wings that are closed or hospitals that are closed.

**Reporter:** Very quickly on the testing centers. They'll both be drive-through testing centers, both to be set up tomorrow or so?

**State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan:** They will both be drive-through but the timing of them actually opening is still somewhat of a moving target for us.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I think we still think this is a matter of days. Is that fair to say, folks? And again, I'd stick to what I said last Friday. We should assume a dramatic increase in the ability to intake on the frontend and test on the backend by this Friday.

I would just say thank you to my colleagues', number one, extraordinary work, both the ones at the table, in the room and beyond. And then, leave you again to reiterate a couple of points to the folks watching This is no time to panic. This is a time to be smart, prepared, proactive. It is also just as much no time for business as usual. We've got to break the fever, we've got to break the back of this. We've got to flatten the curve. We've got to do all the stuff over here so that we take the pressure off our healthcare system and save lives in the process.

Again, if you've got anxiety, we understand it. We have enormous respect for that. Our job collectively is to lessen that anxiety. If on the other hand, you don't believe, let me say this again – believe. This is real and if we're wrong, it's on me. Please take this seriously. And lastly if even benignly and innocently you don't care, I am begging you to care, to do what you need to do personally – even the little things, the soap and water, the cough in your sleeve, don't touch your face, stay home if you don't feel well. Adhere to the steps we've taken today.

Stay home. And I think if we do all of that – if we lessen anxiety, if we get folks to believe, if we get everybody to care... And overwhelmingly this is an extraordinary state with extraordinary people. And as I said earlier, folks are rowing the boat overwhelmingly in the right direction with us. But we need not just most of us, we need all of us together. And assuming we do that we will get through this crisis and we will emerge unequivocally as one family stronger than ever before. Thank you all.

Same time same station tomorrow, right here I assume 2:00 PM.

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