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Gov. Christie With Gov. Cuomo: Mandatory Quarantine Is To Protect People Of NY & NJ

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Gov Christie With Gov Cuomo: Mandatory Quarantine Is To Prote...



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JPZh7eOGWs>

Transcript:

Governor Cuomo: I want to thank Governor Christie and his staff and his team for the expeditious work on this situation and for their spirit of partnership. This is an evolving situation. It's a situation where government must move quickly and rapidly. It's unfolding. The more facts you get, the more information you get, the more adjustments you need to make in your policy. And it's a situation that truly tests the capacity and the ability of government to perform. I'd also like to remind everyone that while this is a difficult situation and Ebola is a frightening virus, there's no doubt. There's also no doubt that we have gone through many frightening situations, many difficult days. We've had many diseases that we've dealt with. We had fears about the SARS virus, the MERS virus, the H1N1 flu, the bird flu. HIV, when that was first heard of, it was petrifying to society because we didn't know enough about it. We worked our way through all of that and there is no reason for undue concern or undue anxiety under this situation. We are very well prepared, very well trained and things could not have been going better from a functional point of view to this date. I believe this adjustment and increasing the screening procedures is necessary. I think it reduces the risk to New Yorkers and to the residents of New Jersey and I think public safety and public health have to be balanced and I think this policy does that. With that, let me turn it over to Governor Chris Christie and once again, thank you for his partnership and all the good work that his team has been doing over the past couple of days.

Governor Christie: Thank you, Governor. Appreciate it. These actions that we're taking jointly today, I believe are necessary to protect the public health of the people of New Jersey and New York and it builds on what we have already

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been doing at the state level in both states. Let me give you one example that Governor Cuomo and I have just resolved before we came out here. Today a traveler arrived at Newark Liberty International Airport who was a healthcare worker, with a recent history of treating patients with Ebola in West Africa, but with no symptoms. After the CDC alerted the New Jersey Department of Health, the New Jersey Department of Health has made the determination that a legal quarantine order should be issued. The individual is not a New Jersey resident. As we outlined at Wednesday's briefing though, we're going to be working with neighboring states, where appropriate, to attempt to make sure that these folks are dealt with. This woman, while her home residence is outside of this area, said her next stop was going to be here in New York. Governor Cuomo and I discussed it before we came out here and a quarantine order will be issued either here in New York or in New Jersey, but we have agreed that quarantine is the right way to go in this regard and we will work out the particulars of where this particular individual will be quarantined, whether it will be in New Jersey or New York, but it's the first application of this new set of standards that we have developed over the last 24 hours and now have had the opportunity to implement. Now this is exactly, in my view, what needs to occur in every scenario and New Jersey and New York are going to determine the standards of quarantine since CDC's guidance is continually changing and we need to set a standard for our two states. I was very clear on Wednesday that we would take in New Jersey whatever steps were necessary to ensure the public health and if that meant expanding beyond the CDC standards, that I wouldn't hesitate to do so. The decisions that we make at Newark Airport, JFK, and LaGuardia have a ripple effect, which is why we need to be positioned to have access to the most accurate information to make smart decisions. And so we're going to continue to work together as we have for the last number of years. This is just another one of these issues that as Governor Cuomo put it aptly, we're a densely populated area. Our folks are coming back and forth between our two states on a regular basis and we have two of the five airports that have been designated as funnel points for folks to come in. Our states have to be the most vigilant and we are going to be the most vigilant. I'm just happy that I have a partner like Governor Cuomo who understands these issues and we were able to come to very quick agreement today about how to deal with it. So I thank him for his partnership and the work that we're doing together. We'll continue to work this closely on this issue and other issues as they come forward to protect public health and public safety. That is our obligation and we'll continue to do it. I'm glad to have Dr. Zucker here and he has some remarks to make as well. Doctor, thank you for your hard work.

Dr. Zucker: Thank you Governor Christie. Thank you Governor Cuomo. In light of the circumstances of yesterday, the states of New York and New Jersey are issuing the following state screening and mandatory quarantine procedures at John F. Kennedy International Airport and Newark Liberty International Airport. The Centers For Disease Control and Customs and Border Protections will cooperate and communicate with respective State Departments of Health on all screening on a real time basis and to provide daily recap as to the status of that day's screening and CDC determinations. Each State Department of Health at John F. Kennedy Airport and Newark Liberty Airport will, as permitted under applicable law, make its own determinations as to hospitalization, quarantine, and other public health interventions. Number one, any individual while in one of the three West African nations who had direct contact with infected people or people who could have been infected with the Ebola virus and including any medical personnel having performed medical services to infected patients will be automatically quarantined. Number two, all individuals with travel history to the affected regions of West Africa with no direct contact to Ebola patients will be actively monitored by public health officials and if necessary quarantined. This will be depending on the facts and the circumstances of the particular situation. This has already been put into effect, as you have heard and will move forward from this point forward. Thank you.

Governor Cuomo: Thank you. Mary O'Dowd, the Commissioner of Health for the State of New Jersey was going to be with us. She's actually handling the case that Governor Christie mentioned about the quarantine case of the health worker at Newark Airport. Questions?

Question:

Governor Cuomo: I don't believe there were issues. The CDC is a federal agency. The federal government has the authority to say who enters the country. The State of New Jersey has the authority to say who enters the State of New Jersey. The State of New York has the authority to say who enters the state of New York. The CDC established guidelines, as Governor Christie mentioned, the guidelines changed. I consider the guidelines not rigorous enough and this is a strengthening of those guidelines. I spoke to the CDC. The CDC understands that states have the ability to increase the guidelines or the threshold for entrance to the borders of that state and that's what we're doing. We are significantly increasing the screening process for people who want to come in to the New York-New Jersey area.

Governor Christie: We simply were not satisfied. And Zach, I alluded to this on Wednesday that we were constantly going to be reviewing the facts on the ground and the standards. And that I felt - I was asked this specific question on legal authority on Wednesday - and I said that we had a very aggressive view of legal authority in the state of New Jersey to set the standards for screening of those who want to enter the state of New Jersey. And so Governor Cuomo and I spoke today. We agreed immediately to what our legal authority was. And then we went to work to try to come up with a set of standards for our health professionals that we felt were more rigorous and appropriate given the circumstances on the ground. That's what we've done. And already since we came to that agreement, we've put those new, more rigorous guidelines into effect. And that's what Commissioner O'Dowd is effectuating right now at Newark Liberty International Airport and why she's not here with us.

Governor Cuomo: [inaudible] Voluntary quarantine, no, it's almost an oxymoron to me. This is a very serious situation. A voluntary quarantine, raise your right hand and promise you're going to stay home for 21 days, right? We've seen what happens on a number of cases. People say 'well, I get bored, I went out, I went to the store' or 'I did this.' You know in a region like this, you go out one, two or three times, you ride the subway, you ride a bus you could affect hundreds and hundreds of people. So I don't believe this is too serious to be dealing with voluntary quarantines, I mean, it makes no sense to me.

Governor Christie: And listen, we have experience in this right? We tried voluntary quarantine once with the NBC News crew. And within a day or two they violated their agreement with us. And then we issued a mandatory order. And I made the decision right then, after having that experience, that there was going to be no more voluntary quarantine in New Jersey, because you just cannot count on people to do that. And the stakes are just too high to count on people to do it. We have the legal authority to do it. We're doing it.

Question: Governor, these measures go into effect today, however we saw with Dr. Spencer, he arrived in the United States a week ago, and just started showing symptoms yesterday. Are there any efforts to try to track down health care workers or other people within that window that maybe [inaudible]

Governor Cuomo: I believe we have Dr. , do you want to ...

We have contacted some of the organizations that, particularly Doctors Without Borders, which is where he worked to find out if there are any other individuals coming in from those countries who worked for that organization.

Question: Governors, does the CDC have any feedback or recommendations or concerns regarding your procedures?

Governor Cuomo: I spoke to the CDC myself. The CDC a) recognizes the states' rights to exceed the CDC limits, which is what we're doing. The CDC also suggested that they are reviewing their procedures, especially relevant to the health care workers. We said that it would be our pleasure to work with them on those procedures.

Question: Why not institute these increased screening procedures days ago or a week ago? You said that you're being proactive, but why not do it a week ago.

Governor Christie: Because we're, listen, because we're learning every day. We're learning new things every day about how to do this. And also, quite frankly, I think the states are becoming more assertive and affirmative in this regard. And so I think the action you see us taking today is based upon experience that we've had on the ground both in New York and in New Jersey. And that's our responsibility. Our responsibility is to make sure we protect the public health of the people of our state. When we see circumstances that we think need to be changed and addressed we're going to do it. And I think you see from the actions Governor Cuomo and I are taking today, and the swiftness with which we're taking these actions. He and I, we've talked about this many times before in the other contexts, the context of the security steps we've taken in regard to ISIS and in regard to increase terrorist threats, this is when good relationships between governors of neighboring states matter the most. Governor Cuomo called me this morning, we spoke this morning, we spoke a couple of times this afternoon, we came to agreement, and we've implemented and we're moving. That's the way you do things. You're not always going to know everything on the first day.

Governor Cuomo: By the way, we were operating under the CDC guidelines, right, which we assumed were appropriate guidelines? I think we have learned that we need to go further than those guidelines. That's our basic point. The situation at Bellevue and Dr. Spencer is a valiant fellow and he was a volunteer and doing great work, but that was a voluntary quarantine situation for 21 days. He's a doctor and even he didn't follow the guidelines for the quarantine. Let's be honest. So we have to do more. It's too serious a situation to leave it to the honor system of compliance.

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Press Contact:
Michael Drewniak

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Office of the Governor | Newsroom

Kevin Roberts
609-777-2600



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Office of the Governor
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625
609-292-6000