

Governor Phil Murphy

# TRANSCRIPT: April 15th, 2020 Coronavirus Briefing Media

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Holding a COVID-19 briefing. WATCH:



**Governor Phil Murphy:** Good afternoon. Joining me today are three people who now need no introduction, I can say that without reservation. The woman to my right the Commissioner of the Department of Health Judy Persichilli; to her right, State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan, and the man to my left, the State Police Superintendent Colonel Pat Callahan. Also joining us, per usual, is the Director of the Office of Homeland Security Preparedness Jared Maples and Deputy Counsel Parimal Garg.

One quick reminder that is off script, only given the date we find ourselves meeting. Before I go through our discussion, a quick reminder that although today is April 15, your state tax returns are not due today. Pursuant to the legislation that I signed, actually yesterday, you now have until July 15, and the three months extension is automatic, you need do nothing. So, I just want to make sure to remind folks of that.

Now as we've done for the past couple of weeks, we want to get to the numbers upfront, if we can. Today we are reporting an additional 2,625 positive test results, and a total of 71,030 New Jerseyans have now tested positive. According to our online dashboard, accessible again through [covid19.nj.gov](https://covid19.nj.gov), as of 10:00 p.m. last night, 8,270 residents were reported hospitalized, of whom 1,980 were listed in either critical or intensive care, and 1,705 ventilators were in use. Thirty-nine patients are at one of our field medical stations. And between 10:00 p.m. Monday and 10:00 p.m. last night, 709 residents were discharged from our hospitals and that's good news.

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Additionally, we are now adding daily reports from our three veterans homes to our online dashboard. We know these facilities are a specific point of concern, as they should be, God bless our veterans, and especially obviously for those veterans themselves who are living there. We must remain, at all costs, committed to them. These reports will be updated when the Department of Military and Veteran Affairs receives their data from these homes, I believe it approximately 3:00 p.m., so more on that as we get it.

As we note every day, all of these numbers are just a snapshot in time. Overnight changes or late reports may not yet be reflective in the data that is posted. And remember too, that for our healthcare facilities, this remains a very fluid situation. Sadly, and with the heaviest of hearts, we also have the duty to report another 351 deaths among our extraordinary New Jersey family due to COVID-19 related complications. The overall cost in lives to our state from COVID-19 now sits at 3,156 blessing souls.

I do want to put a couple of numbers into a broader perspective and Judy and I have hit this point, but I think it's worth hitting again. First, the number of deaths that we report on any given day does not mean that we lost that many residents, literally, in the past 24 hours since we were gathered. In some cases, these are residents who we have lost within the past several days. But the determination into the cause of death means that now we are counting them among our COVID-19 losses. There have been several reports, in particular, about the number of deaths announced yesterday. And while yes, yesterday's number was our largest single reporting number, and today's is right behind, a significant number of these deaths occurred over the Easter weekend, and are only now being reported. Is that fair to say, Judy? Additionally, the overall number of positive test results we report is cumulative since our first case was announced on March 4. Of these, roughly 54,000 of the total of just over 71,000 had been reported in the month of April so far. Given that it's April 15, and I think the experts to my right would suggest plus or minus a two-week incubation period is still the expected reality with coronavirus, that means approximately 17,000 individuals have now exited that two-week incubation period. Sadly, we've lost some of those folks, let there be no doubt about it. But it is a fact, plus or minus, that about 17,000 are outside of that incubation period.

So as we see the daily overall number of overall positive test results rise, we should also keep in mind that every day there are hundreds, if not thousands, of residents who had received a prior positive test result who have now likely defeated the virus, and may it stay that way. These are just contextual aspects to these numbers that I think we should all bear in mind. They should not, however, be seen in any way as lessening either the gravity of the situation, the strain on our healthcare system and our state, or our need for preparedness. And they in no way ease the pain of the families who have lost loved ones, and the communities who have lost people who made life a little better and a little brighter, in all of the above cases.

I'd like to remember, if I may, three such individuals today. First up, Eugene "Gene" Thomas. There he is on the right. Again, a guy known for his hats, and he's wearing a pretty cool one right there. He was a fixture in his beloved Ridgewood in Bergen County, where he lived his whole life. And here he is with Ridgewood Mayor Ramon Hache. He had just turned 78 a few weeks ago, I believe on the day that he was admitted to the hospital. As his daughter Jackie put it, and I spoke to Jackie earlier today, even though some may not have known him personally, they always would see him in town, walking down the avenue with his hat on, and carrying his beautiful smile. He was also apparently somewhat famous for baking pound cakes. He worked in a dry cleaning business, but his love was music. Everything from Gospel to Blues, and the music he recorded in the 1960s is still played today. He leaves his daughter Jackie and her family, three granddaughters and a grandson who is due next month. He's also survived by his brother, two sisters, nieces and nephews and a tremendous community of friends. I spoke to Jackie, as I mentioned. She is in Florida and because of all that we're going through, could not even get up here to be with her dad. And so our heart goes out to her and her family in his memory.

Next up Lieutenant Danny Francis, there's Danny. He worked for nearly 16 years for the Essex County Prosecutor's Office. So to Ted Stephens and team at that office, our hearts are with you. After retirement, he kept going as a civilian analyst for the Newark Police Department, and to our brothers and sisters in the Newark Police Department, our hearts go out to you there as well. Danny was only 51 years old when we lost him on Monday. To know a little bit about his career, consider this: in 2006, he was recognized by the 200 Club of Essex County for valor in the line of duty for risking his own life to take down a known drug trafficker. He leaves behind his wife Sarita Vega, and I spoke to Sarita as well this morning. By the way, she herself is a detective with the Essex County Prosecutor's Office. He leaves his wife Sarita, along with two adult children,

another who's in college and a six-year-old son. So on behalf of our state, we thank Danny for his career of public service and for his longstanding excellent work to keep our neighborhood safe. We will keep him and his family in our thoughts and in our prayers God rest his soul.

And finally, we wish to recognize the legacy of Jacqueline Cruz-Towns, and there she is on the right. Many may know her as the mother of New Jersey basketball legend and NBA star Karl-Anthony Towns, but she was much more. She was a family matriarch and an enduring and constant presence not just in her son's life, but that of everyone who knew her. She also had spent, by the way, 20 years working at Rutgers University. Her husband Karl Sr. also contracted COVID-19 but is recovering, and we keep him in our prayers as well. One story noted that it may have been Karl-Anthony Sr. who taught his son the skills to play ball, but he got his emotional spark from his mom. She was only 58 years old. To Karl-Anthony and his dad, and I spoke with each of Karl-Anthony and his dad this morning, and their entire family and the broader basketball community we send our deep, deepest condolences. God rest her soul. And I can say today, without any doubt in New Jersey, we are all Timberwolves fans today.

These are only three individuals out of what is now 3,156 lives that we have lost to this disease. We don't take any pride or joy in recounting these stories, saying these names and seeing these faces, and knowing there are quite literally thousands more we can memorialize does not make our pain or your pain, or any of our pain and grief any less. But these lives should be the inspiration we need to keep working to defeat COVID-19 and to lower the toll this enemy is having on our blessed state.

I've said it many times before, we have taken among the most aggressive positions of any state in America to slow the spread of this illness. We have asked you to make tremendous sacrifices with us in this fight. I know some of them may seem like nuisances, but every step we have taken has been made out of sheer necessity, I promise you that.

I'll turn to a map that we've been looking at every day recently. The lighter the shade of the county, the better it is, and we're getting New Jersey lighter and lighter, and that's a good thing. The less bright orange we see, the slower the spread. That means we're flattening the curve, which not only means we're keeping people from getting COVID-19, but that we're also lessening some of the immense strain on our healthcare systems. We're continuing to do everything we can to prepare for the absolute worst. As we've said, we've already been able to increase hospital capacity statewide, Judy, I think by 60%. We've set up three field medical stations in partnership with the US Army Corps of Engineers, and we've had beds set aside for our residents on the USNS Comfort.

By the way, I mentioned this the other day. I want to put a name on this, who's captain and not today but at some point, Danny, let's get Captain Joe O'Brien's picture up here. He's a New Jersey native and as my son Sam reminds me, he is a graduate of Red Bank Catholic, by the way. Nothing, however, and I do mean nothing, would make us happier to come out of this realizing that we are over-prepared. That would be our new best-case scenario. The best mistakes we ever made in our lives. Because if we do, that means that you will have done the hard work of helping us pull through this. That means you took to heart our call to keep a social distance, not just most of the time or sometimes, but at all times and to stay at home unless you absolutely need to go out, or unless you are needed as one of the folks who are either an essential worker or helping us fight this virus.

This is a war. It is the fight of our lives, and wars are not won by one person or one small group. They're won when millions of people come together in a common cause. Our cause right now is totally flattening the curve, and then seeing it drop down the other side. And then we can begin the process responsibly, along with our neighbors, of reopening our state and beginning to live life in our new normal. But we only get there if this entire map in front of us gets to its lightest shade and stays there. This is no time to let up. We have got to keep at it.

And I just have to say this again. Although I think the weather for the next few days is not going to be terribly hospitable, but it's going to be sooner than later the weather will get better. All of us are anxious to break free. We completely understand that. We accept that completely. We can't. We have to stay home. Look at the progress we've made on that map. This is making a huge difference. That curve of positive test results undeniably, 10 days now, is increased, the 10% are now meaningfully less. We need to keep it that way. We need to flatten that curve, which means fewer people get infected, fewer people in hospitals, fewer people in

intensive care, fewer people needing ventilators, and please God, fewer people who pass. And as we continue to do that, Judy, and Christina and Pat and all of their colleagues are building out that capacity of beds, health care workers, ventilators, medicines, personal protective equipment, again, so that those two lines cross at a reasonable level and at a reasonable date. That is the charge to the 9 million of us.

So far, so good. No state has come close to what we've done in New Jersey. We could all not be prouder of the work that everyone is doing. We've just got to keep it up. Don't take your foot off the gas, folks. Stay on this. I know you're itching to get out. You're itching to get back to normal. So am I. Who could blame you? We can't. We just can't yet. I promise you, the second we think we can, we will let you know that. You have my word. But for now, stay home. Stay six feet or more apart.

By the way, I meant to say this, Judy, there have been some great homages, I saw one Vin Gopal sent me an homage for healthcare workers gathering. Pat, you were on the text, somewhere in Monmouth County over the past couple of days. So the good news is, everyone had a mask on. The bad news is they weren't six feet apart. And again, I want to repeat, unless you and Dr. Tan disagree, that nothing trumps social distancing. Six feet apart, at minimum. Putting a mask on, even a crazy one like this, does not give you permission to get closer than six feet. So please, folks, we want to celebrate our heroes and healthcare workers, first responders, essential workers, warehouse, supply chain workers, longshoremen, we want to do that with you. But we've got to stay apart from each other. We cannot congregate, even if we're wearing a mask. Stay on it, folks. You've done an extraordinary job. We will win this war unequivocally, but only if we keep at it. Please, folks, stay at it, stay home, stay apart, keep your face covered, and we will beat this damn virus.

Okay, switching gears, good conversation this morning with Secretary Mnuchin. Talking about, again, the important need, the overwhelming need for support and financial help from the federal government. He gets it, to his credit, and we're just working through. I spoke to Senator Menendez shortly thereafter and reiterated the same point. Individuals need it, who are unemployed. We've got an extraordinary, over 500,000 people have lost their job. Small businesses need it in a big way. The State of New Jersey needs direct cash assistance from the federal government. It was a good conversation. Again, a good conversation following that with Senator Menendez, comparing notes generally and also mentioning this point specifically.

On testing, as the slide suggests, of our two FEMA partner testing sites, both tomorrow, April 16 and Friday, April 17, so I want to make sure everyone hears that. Both tomorrow April 16 and Friday, April 17 only the Bergen Community College site will be open from 8:00 a.m. each day, maximum of 500 tests. Again, you've got to be a Jersey resident and symptomatic. The PNC Bank Art Center will open again on Saturday, April 18. That will be exclusively for symptomatic first responders and healthcare workers. It will reopen to the general public on Monday, April 20. And then they'll go back to a regular schedule on Monday.

I mentioned this yesterday, it has been clear that we have had an imbalance between folks showing up to get tested at the Bergen Community College versus Holmdel at PNC Bank Art Center. So again, words to folks out there, as you're thinking about planning your days, this is really relevant for next week because we've got a different schedule for the next couple of days. Think through whether or not you can pivot to Holmdel, because the lines have been shorter there. There are now roughly two dozen publicly accessible testing sites across the state that are listed on our information hub at [covid19.nj.gov/testing](https://covid19.nj.gov/testing). Additionally, there were roughly 40 more privately run sites that your primary care practitioner can send you to for testing if you meet the requirements for testing. I think in total, the number remains at about 66 locations in the state.

We have been in regular, I would say constant and deep contact for some time with the team at Rutgers, especially with Dr. Brian Strom. Judy mentioned this yesterday, we've also been in discussions with the White House, the President mentioned Rutgers in a shout-out yesterday, which was nice to hear. The White House who notified, by the way, this past weekend of the FDA approval for the Rutgers' developed saliva test and the potential for this new system to be put in widespread use to help us meet our testing needs. In addition to Brian Strom, I reached out this morning and left a message for Professor Andrew Brooks, who's part of that team.

We are working intensely with Rutgers and specifically now with Middlesex County today to roll out this new testing system and we will closely monitor how everything goes. Nationally, and you've heard this before, but it bears repeating, resources and PPE have been limiting factors to the testing regime. We know what we need and we will advance every opportunity to increase mass testing. It is incredibly gratifying, I think it's a

source of great pride for all of us to see New Jersey's own flagship university stepping up to help fill the testing gap. I am proud of the work at Rutgers and look forward to moving forward with them, and I know Judy and her team joins me in that.

As I said yesterday, we're not alone on our desire to have more sites and more tests. We've wanted that from moment one. Every state in the entire nation is facing the same issue we are. But as I also noted, we also have conducted the fourth-most tests of any American state, and the only states which have conducted more tests are states whose populations are significantly larger New York, California, Florida. This doesn't mean however, than I'm not continuing to push for more testing supplies and support at every opportunity. I made this clear to the White House and to our Congressional delegation.

And we've seen some successes. And we've mentioned this. We have received a commitment from FEMA to keep our partner sites at both Bergen Community College and the PNC Bank Art Center up and running through at least the end of May, and we are a rare state that got that support. And as I said, I will not let up until we have everything we need to successfully fight COVID-19, whether that be testing supplies, personal protective equipment, ventilators, you name it, we're going to turn over every stone anywhere, literally in the world, to get what New Jersey needs.

And of course, by the way, at the same time, we're going to continue to ask each of you who can help us to please continue to step forward. If you have any PPE to donate, no matter how large or small your stockpile, please reach out to us at [covid19.nj.gov/PPEdonations](https://covid19.nj.gov/PPEdonations), you can see the website right there. Or, manpower. If you have prior experience as an EMT, or a paramedic or as a physician, or a nurse, or a respiratory therapist, or any of the other medical specialties, we need you among our volunteer corps. Please visit [covid19.nj.gov/volunteer](https://covid19.nj.gov/volunteer), as you can see, to sign up.

A couple more brief items, Judy, before I turn things over to you, if I may? First I want to recognize another one of the truly good stories that's coming out of this emergency. And this one was sent to us by our dear friend and great leader, Senator Loretta Weinberg. Loretta lives in Teaneck, which we know has been one of the Bergen County communities most impacted by COVID-19. In fact, you could take Bergen County out of that statement, it's one of the communities that's been most impacted in this state, if not this country. The science director for the Teaneck schools, there he is on the left, Rolando Montserrat, came across the plans online for producing face shields. And his first thought was how to make enough to make a difference. Using his own personal 3D printer and borrowing three others from the Teaneck schools, and with the support, I might add, of the Teaneck PTO, and alongside one of his students, and that's the gentleman on the right, sophomore Elias Sanchez. He has been able to turn his home into a mini face shield factory. They just donated their first 340 face shields to Holy Name Medical Center in Teaneck, and God knows that Mike Marin and his team at Holy Name could use all the help they can get. They've been incredible heroes in this fight.

Additionally, the Teaneck schools have donated the goggles normally set aside for use in their science labs and gloves from their nurses' offices to members of the Township's ambulances. This is the essence of the community coming together. So to the Teaneck Public Schools, #NJThanksYou and we ask you all to continue highlighting the everyday people doing extraordinary things by using the hashtag, #NJThanksYou on social media, and we will keep sharing their stories.

Finally, before I close, I want to pay tribute to two folks who did not – Danny, hold on a second. Who did not literally die directly from the COVID-19 reality, but they have passed. The first one I just spoke to his widow Anne Lozado, Gordon Litwin. Gordon was 90 years old. He died, again, from reasons other than COVID-19. We don't have his picture because I called an audible at the line of scrimmage. Gordon was the Chairman, however, of the Hackensack Meridian Health System which is extraordinary that Gordon left us in the middle of this fight. His widow, Anne, said to me unequivocally, he would be right there with Bob Garrett and the rest of the team in the engine room. He was a giant in our state. Gordon, God bless you and we wish Anne nothing but the best and have her in our prayers.

And we lost a dear friend and great leader as well yesterday in our state, and a dear friend of mine, Professional Firefighters Association of New Jersey President Dominick Marino. Not sure why, but known to many as Don, notwithstanding, his name was Dominick. Again, we didn't lose him to COVID-19 but his loss leaves a huge hole in the hearts of many, including yours truly. I put it last night in the statement, as a firefighter, Dominick would run into burning buildings, but he would just as quickly run through walls if it

meant helping his fellow firefighters. There's a reason his members looked to him. He never stopped working for them, never stopped thinking about them, and never stop living and breathing the life of a firefighter. Personally, Dominick was a friend whose opinion I greatly valued, especially on matters related to his members.

Whenever it is I leave office, one of the greatest days of pride that I will look back on will be the day that I signed the Thomas P. Canzanella 21st Century First Responders Act. That law gives our firefighters and members of law enforcement greater protections when their health is impacted by their line of duty work, like the illnesses that many suffered as a result of their efforts at Ground Zero following 9/11. Getting that law passed was one of his great passions. It might as well have been named after Dominick, frankly. He was by my side when I signed that bill and I'm forever honored to have been the Governor to have signed it. But beyond that, wherever a firefighter or a department needed help, you'd find Dominick. He was one of a kind. A firefighter's firefighter. To his wife, Ellen, with whom I spoke yesterday, and you can only imagine he literally dropped dead yesterday afternoon, and their three children. And I also spoke to his daughter Rachel and Pat knows, as well, who's a New Jersey State Trooper and someone I've gotten to know over the past couple of years. He leaves two grandchildren. We thank you all for sharing Dominick with us all these years. He will be deeply missed by many, many, many in this state. So to you, Dominick, God bless you, buddy. Thank you for your service, you will never be forgotten.

And with that, please help me welcome the woman who needs no introduction, the Commissioner of the Department of Health, Judy Persichilli.

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Thank you, Governor. The Department of Health continues to work aggressively with our partners to expand our bed capacity in the state. The field medical stations, as I've shared in the past, two have opened, Edison and Secaucus, and we expect Atlantic City to open next week. The Secaucus site currently has 47 patients, 25 more will be accepted this afternoon. And overall, they have already served a total of 79 patients and discharged 32 of them. The Edison Field Station currently has 14 patients, 10 more will be admitted this afternoon. Overall, that field station has served 19 patients and discharged five to date. These field medical stations, along with the brick-and-mortar hospitals that we're bringing up, will provide more than 1,600 additional beds in our state. These beds, in addition to the work that all of our hospitals have done to increase their capacity, will help us handle the surge that we are in, in the North, and expecting throughout New Jersey.

Last evening, our hospitals reported 1,270 hospitalizations of patients with COVID-19 or persons under investigation. The daily growth rate in hospitalizations is 3%, down from the observed rate of 4% yesterday. There are 1,980 individuals in critical care, and 1,705 of those individuals are on ventilators. That's 21% of the hospitalized patients with COVID-19 or persons under investigation on ventilators. 86% of the ICU patients are on ventilators, slightly down from that peak of 97% a number of days ago. Since April 4, there have been 6,300 patients diagnosed with COVID-19 or persons under investigation discharged from our hospitals. So while the numbers we report every day are grim, over 6,000 discharges serve as a reminder that people are getting better and they are overcoming this illness.

As the Governor said, we are still looking for healthcare professionals to volunteer. The state is in need of EMTs and paramedics to support our current workforce. Individuals whose EMT certifications have expired within the past five years are eligible for COVID-19 EMT reentry. We've also granted a waiver for EMTs from out of state who wants to help us here in New Jersey. To sign up, please visit [covid19.nj.gov/volunteer](https://covid19.nj.gov/volunteer). Additionally, we still need nurse's aides for our long-term care facilities and we're encouraging all student nurses to sign up.

Today we are reporting 2,625 new cases for total of 71,030 cases in the state. Sadly, 351 new deaths have been reported to the Department for a total of 3,156 fatalities in our state. 55 of these new deaths were residents of long-term care facilities.

Of the deaths, 51.7% are documented as White; 21.9% Black non-Hispanic; 15.5% Hispanic; 5.7% Asian non-Hispanic; and 5.2% other non-Hispanic. On the underlying conditions, the trends are holding, 60.4% cardiovascular disease, 37% Diabetes mellitus, 29.6% other chronic diseases, 20.9% chronic lung disease such as asthma, emphysema or COPD, 15.3%, chronic renal disease, 15% neurological or neurodevelopmental disability, and 11.4% cancer.

There are currently 358 long-term care facilities in the state documenting individuals with COVID-19. 6,815 cases have been reported from long-term care facilities. In our veteran homes, there's a total census of 800 veterans between the three sites. 160 veterans have tested positive for COVID-19 or are persons under investigation. A total of 45 deaths have been reported. In our psychiatric hospitals, out of a census of 1,400 patients, 97 have tested positive, or 7%. Out of the staff or employees of 4,800, 237 have tested positive, or 5%, and six deaths have been reported among our patients.

According to data from this morning, seven laboratories reporting, 131,967 tests have been performed, 58,976 have returned as positive for a positivity rate of 44.69%. That concludes my report. Thank you again for staying home and maintaining social distancing. It is making a difference. Stay connected, stay safe and stay healthy. Thank you.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Judy, thank you. Just a couple of quick follow ups, if I may. The counties are holding the same, in terms of where we had the most positive tests. In order, Bergen, Essex now a little bit ahead of Hudson, Hudson is third, Union fourth, Middlesex fifth, Passaic six. You didn't do race and ethnicity, did you? I was making notes to myself.

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** I did. I can do it again.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** No, no, that's my bad. No, I don't want to make you do that. We had a conversation earlier including the Lieutenant Governor and Judy and Pat, myself and others. I know that there was a call last night, I believe that you, the Lieutenant Governor, Carol Johnson, Senator Rice –

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** The First Lady.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Tammy Murphy was on with the Black Doctors Association. I know Sheila is doing a town hall, I think tonight, with Mayor Ted Green in East Orange, trying to get at this question. It's been bouncing at around 50% higher representation in fatalities among African Americans than we have in the society writ large, and just trying to talk through the reasons for that. Judy, the ones that I took away from our call, among others, were the density of the living conditions. Overall access or lack thereof to health. As you call, comorbidity, a disproportionate amount of underlying health challenges on a going-in basis to this crisis, and a disproportionate representation in the workforce that is still going to work every day. Nurses, first responders, essential workers, etc. Is that a fair –

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** That's exactly what we discussed, yes.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** And so those are things that we've got to continue, as they say, to unpack and it's not like we weren't focused on those on a going-in basis before this crisis ever occurred. But now this, like a lot of other things, this really shines a light on the weaknesses and the inequalities in our society. Again, I want to give the Lieutenant Governor a big shout out, Senator Ron Rice who's been a leader on this from moment one.

And on the veterans you mentioned 45 lost lives, just to folks out there with loved ones in those homes, 29 of them I believe in Paramus, 16 in Menlo Park, but none so far, and I'm knocking on wood, in Vineland, and that's something I spoke to the Secretary of Veteran Affairs about yesterday. So, again, Judy, thank you for everything, including your report. Colonel Pat Callahan, anything you've got on compliance, PPE and other matters?

**State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan:** Thank you, Governor. Very briefly on compliance on the overnight, Hoboken Police responded to a burglary reported. Subsequent investigation led them to the arrest and charge of a subject who had broken in through a front window and was found in possession of alcohol and cigarettes. While being processed, that subject coughed at the police indicating he was COVID-19 positive. Perth Amboy Police issued two Executive Order violations. Salem issued one Executive Order violation in the wake of a motor vehicle accident where the subject provided false information. In Lodi, up on Route 80, a Jersey trooper was pursuing a vehicle in excess of 130 miles an hour, subsequently broke off that pursuit. The subject was later identified at a gas station by another trooper, who then again went up on Route 80. They did not pursue him but subsequently had enough to charge that individual who turned himself in up

at the Toto barracks with his attorney. In Elizabeth, three individuals were cited for violation of the Executive Order and in Passaic, an additional three were cited as well for EO violations. In Hillside, one cited and in Newark, always leading the charge, 88 Executive Order violations and five businesses were shut.

Although the Commissioner touched upon it, Governor, I think just one piece that is the stark reality of this is the Mortuary Affairs. That is a daily discussion for us. It is not an easy discussion between our Chief Medical Examiner, the Medical Examiners, the Funeral Directors. A few steps that we've taken, DEP this week issued a waiver to allow crematoriums to extend their hours in order to assist with the stress that our systems are under. The Attorney General I spoke with this morning, he is working through Consumer Affairs to try and extend, and I think will be successful, in extending the hours that cemeteries can operate.

We're hearing that from our Funeral Directors. Beyond the mortuary trailers that we have, one component that I just will stress before I turn it back is the crisis counseling that goes along with the not-normal process to have to deal with that much death. So we want to make sure that we build that crisis counseling into all of those that are working through this Mortuary Affairs issue. I know we use the term resiliency a lot, and some people think that that's bouncing back. But in this instance, we're not sure people can ever bounce back. So we use the term bouncing forward because none of us, I don't think, including us here and around the country and state will ever really be the same. So that resiliency piece, I think, is going to be monumental as we move forward to the to the other side of this. Governor.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Pat, really well said. Let there be no doubt, I don't think anyone is ever going to be the same, especially folks who have lost loved ones, but even friends and broader communities. And again, we have to sometimes talk about things that are uncomfortable and there are meetings that go on and these two folks are in most of them, that are not meetings you'd ever thought you'd have. And so thank you to each and every one of you who are part of it. And just know, folks out there, we're with you as best we can, every step of the way.

I will just say this notwithstanding the compliance challenges and you go over them in our pre-call and you went over them here, Pat. It has to be said, yes, there are still knuckleheads out there who are claiming they've got it and spitting on people and coughing. But the overwhelming compliance is just so impressive in our state. We just have to thank each and every one of you out there. Each and every one of the 9 million folks, in sometimes really hard circumstances. I mentioned the density of cohabitation we have in so many communities and so many homes. It's not easy. We understand that. And the only plea I would have is, we're not out of the woods. We're not. I don't think we can see the tree line yet, to be frank with you. But we will get there, and I promise you we will let you know the minute we know, or at least when we think we're getting there.

And we're dealing with, you know, we're dealing with models all the time, trying to assess, as we've said many times, best and worst case. But I know one thing is, if we fall off the wagon, if we stop adhering to the stay at home edicts and the stay at home pleas that we've made and the social distancing pleas, we will blow through any worst-case assessment on any current model we're looking at. And that number of 36,000 still hangs out there like a storm cloud.

It could have been, as we said a few weeks ago at this point with the charts, it could have been 3 million of us or more getting infected. But even with all the good work we have done, we take our foot off the gas right now, we swamp, no matter how good a job these folks are doing and they're the best in the nation right now at what they're doing, we'll swamp the boat. So please, again, thank you for everything you're doing to stay home and stay away from each other. And please, God, continue to do that. And I promise you we will let you know the minute we think it's safe to go back in the water, as they say. John, I assume there's no truth to the rumor that you sat there all night and compiled more questions, but you are in the same place you were yesterday. And with that, we owe you the first questions. Martel, thank you, as always.

#### Q&A Session

**John McAlpin, Bergen Record:** Thanks. Is the state tracking where people are dying? Whether that's at home, in the hospitals, nursing homes, and any comparison of deaths in hospitals, by hospital comparison?

And we're getting concerns from doctors who are concerned about practice at the hospital due to this all hands on deck, concerns about practicing outside of their specialties, practicing in emergency situations? Is the State Department handling complaints about medical practices right now? Is there anything that's popping up that you are concerned about?

And Governor, you pushed back the income tax filing deadline. What's the status of the May property tax deadline? And there's a looming sales tax payment deadline as well, any movement on that?

And last night, Governor, you tweeted about a chat with Dr. Eric Dean and his technology for contact tracing. There was some pushback by a Harvard epidemiologist and others about his credentials. Is that something you're concerned about now? Can you detail what you're doing now to start doing contact tracing in the future?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Judy, I'll take a few that are on my side and hand it to you, is that okay? Income tax, again, extended. I want to make sure folks remember that because it's April 15, your income tax is not due until July 15. Nothing to report on May property tax or sales tax. I did speak to Eric last night, I was not aware of any pushback on his credentials, but we had a very good conversation. You probably have seen, because I've deliberately tweeted about this, we're trying to get, I've mentioned multiple models that Judy and Christina and their teams and I and all of us look at, we're also trying to get as many different perspectives from this, from all sides, from all shapes and sizes. He's somebody, as you rightfully point out, John, has been particularly good at app development, contact tracing.

Nothing specific to report on that. Other than we know the broad reality is, again, remind ourselves, sequencing is beat the crap out of the virus, get it down as close to zero, get it down to a manageable reality where Judy and Christina and the experts can say, okay, we're safe to think about reconsidering some decisions we've made. Then it's a responsible reopening. Again, you only get economic recovery on the back of that healthcare recovering. And you need healthcare infrastructure, you need protocols in place, that frankly we don't have at the moment, that we will need before we reopen. Again, Judy will correct the record here, but at least two elements of that, number one is broad scale testing that is a very quick turnaround. Easy to do, big numbers, you get it back fast. That's why the Rutgers work is so interesting to us and to so many, including the White House.

And secondly, and Judy, I think you and Christina would agree, you've got to have a really robust, not just in theory but in practice, contact tracing program in place. So if you bring the community spread, if you're bringing that down to as close to zero as possible, you begin to reopen, you've got to have both of those elements in place or I don't think you can reopen. And so no specifics beyond that. We're looking at lots of different models right now.

I do know someone who is positive, who gave me a very encouraging readout of a conversation with a contact tracer that took place this week in New Jersey, in terms of the professionalism, the quality of the questions, the understanding by this person, I'm not even sure they were a healthcare worker, I assume they were. But it was an encouraging sign. The only discouraging part is we're so swamped fighting this war, it took a lot of days between the positive confirmation and the conversation.

I think that's all I've got on this side. Back over to Judy, is that okay? I guess, Judy, we had tracking where folks are passing and doctors operating outside of their specialties, or their particular lines.

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Yeah, there's so many physicians who have volunteered, I'm going to start with that. And are, you know, just helping us in our field offices or stations, helping out in hospitals. I have not gotten complaints, I can honestly say, from physicians. I have gotten emails with suggestions that are all very positive. Last night on the phone call with the New Jersey Medical Association, the Black Physicians Group, they brought up some really important points for us to consider, particularly those that are practicing actively in urban centers and the inability that they have to do telemedicine to take care of their patients. So it's something we have to consider.

A pediatrician brought up a really good point that we need to continue childhood immunizations. That's something you can't do by telemedicine and it's so important, because we certainly don't want to see the incidence of those childhood diseases that we can eradicate with vaccines come up again because we didn't

continue immunizations. So, a couple of things to work on. The suggestions from physicians have been very positive, and we're considering all of them.

Maybe Dr. Tan can talk about the death certificates and how you're not only confirming the deaths through the death certificates now, but also location.

**State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan:** Actually, we would probably have to get back on how detailed some of that information is. Currently, what we're doing right now is that we're looking at our electronic death records. They have to go through a process of what's called registration where the death certificates are ultimately finalized through a certain process, but we'd have to get back as far as the level of detail of some of the information that you're requesting.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Thank you, John. Elise, do you mind jumping in? Good afternoon.

**Elise Young, Bloomberg:** Good afternoon. We have heard from a company stating that it's been airlifting patients from New York City to places including New Jersey. Is that so?

Have any more governors signed on to the regional approach to reopen? And have you come up with any target dates for any aspect of that?

And regarding test kits, if you get more can you process them? Do you have the ability to acquire test kits on your own? What about for the Abbott quick-test devices which came with so few swabs?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I'll take a couple and then Pat, you may want to come in, in addition to Judy, here. I'm not aware of anybody getting airlifted to New Jersey, but that may be just me.

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** I'm not either, so.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Okay, so if you have more details on that, we would like to hear it. I spoke with Mayor de Blasio last night, I probably should have said that, and we're comparing notes on a whole range of things. Obviously, they've been ground zero.

The regional approach, Massachusetts got added. I'm not sure, I think that's public knowledge, Elise. Massachusetts, to the best of my knowledge, that's public. That's important. That's a state that we compare ourselves to a lot, in many respects, including health and higher education and pharmaceutical companies. Importantly, a governor, a very good guy and a guy I've known for 48 years, I went to high school and college with him, a Republican, so it's someone from the other side of the aisle, in addition to being a good governor and a good guy.

Targets on the regional approach, I think we're trying to make some announcements as early as tomorrow. Please don't hold me to that, in terms of at least who will form the membership of the Council. I think their intention was to have a first meeting of that council very quickly thereafter. Dan, you may correct the record if you know something otherwise, but I believe that is the current. Each of our states have been going through trying to make sure we've got, again, its Chief of Staff plus a medical or healthcare expert and a real economy expert.

Kits and Abbott, any comments from either of you?

**State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan:** I can talk briefly just on the Abbott, I think, as far as the distribution and we could probably get you the exact distribution plan, Elise, was to keep two at the state lab right in West Trenton. I think a regional approach with North Central and Southern with our primary healthcare providers. I think the turnaround on them, even though it's 3 to 15 minutes based upon the studies that have been done, we could probably do 100 to 300 a day with those Abbott tests, which isn't a lot, but I think the main focus is to have them at acute care facilities and long-term care facilities, maybe, where they may be – And I certainly defer to Commissioner Persichilli, where they may be most informative, given the struggles that we're having at our acute and long-term care facilities, Commissioner.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Judy, I don't know that this is necessarily either public knowledge or accurate, but compared to the 300 to 500 patents, Pat, is that what you said a day?

**State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan:** 100 to 300.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Pardon me. At some point, the Rutgers model, at least among others, was talking about 10,000, potentially, right?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** That's what it's reporting, yeah.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I don't have firsthand knowledge of that, but that sort of scale, we're still trying to think through, it's fair to say and Dr. Tam would be far more expert on this. How many tests you'd need to be able to do a day in New Jersey to have that responsible healthcare architecture in place so that you could feel comfortable about reopening? And it's, I suspect, double-digit thousands so that's something we're still toying with. Thank you. Do you have something, sir, in the back? I could barely see you back there.

**Dave Schatz, New Brunswick Today:** Hi, Dave Schatz, New Brunswick Today. I was wondering on, I think Elise just asked you about it, but on the back-to-work plan and anything more on the different aspects of the regional? And also, was wondering on the testing, if the private retailers and businesses were still in the picture as far as providing testing at their locations, like CVS?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Yeah, on the regional approach, not a lot new to report today, but it's a whole lot of discussions going on. You could think of it in sort of three rings. One is what we're doing in New Jersey. That's a constant. We were having a discussion, some of us today, you've got the firefighting team, and you've got the, where do we go when we put the fire out team? And whether we like it or not, the members of those two teams are overwhelmingly the same people, so that's constant.

The next ring out is the regional grouping of seven states now that Elise was asking about, and that's early stage, but each of the seven states, it's fair to say, are having similar deliberations as to our deliberations. So our point there is to have some amount of coordination. Best practices, certainly. So we see something that another state is doing that is really impressive that we like, we will have no shame to rip a page out of that playbook and apply it. But it's mostly to harmonize and coordinate. Again, under the theory that we did that when we were closing, let's do that when we're opening. Again, this is a little bit of a broader group, but I think that's a good thing. We're the densest state in America and this is the densest region in America, so there's a lot of commonality.

And then the third ring, and that's why I've said this a lot. It's not either/or, it's and/both. There's also the coordination we will need and want to have, and desire to have, with the federal government. There's no replacing the existential reality of the Federal Government of the United States of America. We can't print money, they can. They've got resources that we don't have, either any one of us, or even those seven states combined, as significant a piece of the country's economy as that is.

And so it's all three of those, and it's not one over the other. It's not one or the other. It's and, and, and. We'll continue to aggressively, we've got 66 different locations and testing sites. We're fourth in terms of total tests, only behind states that are California, 40 million people, Florida, 21 million people, New York, 19 million people, New Jersey, 9 million people. Per capita, we're punching way above our weight, but it isn't where it needs to be. It's very frustrating. It is not where it needs to be. From day one, we haven't had the support that we would have wanted ideally, particularly from the federal government, to have been able to do the universal testing.

As we broaden that out, that will include, without question, private sector. I know CVS, which is based in Rhode Island, is doing that there. Those are models that we will embrace wherever we can and again, scale will be key here. Thank you. Are you good, sir, with the camera? You're good? You're good? You're making up for yesterday, I assume. Come on down.

**Ian Elliott, NJTV News:** I don't want you to feel left out for yesterday.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I appreciate that.

**Ian Elliott, NJTV News:** Ian Elliot for NJTV News. Colonel Callahan, yesterday you mentioned the state is expecting to receive a decontamination unit and would likely send it to University Hospital to extend the lifespan of their N-95 masks. Do you have any more information on when the state expects to receive it?

Governor, you said you've taken a data-driven approach to this virus and your response. Are you looking at Google mobility data? Did that influence your decision to close the parks? The April 5 report showed a 26% increase in people using parks in New Jersey.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Pat, do you want to start?

**State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan:** Sure. That Patel decontamination system that we talked about yesterday actually arrived this afternoon. I was misspoke when I said it would be physically at University, it's actually going to be kept in Edison, right adjacent to that field medical station. We are currently working on the logistics on the collection, have the decontamination and then the redistribution of that. Kathy Bennett from the New Jersey Hospital Association is in the process now of sending out the fact sheets, the instructions for healthcare providers, the instructions for healthcare personnel. I would imagine that that plan is up and running with, again, a regional collection, de-con and then send it back out within the next few days.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I did not on Google mobility, but I know the team did. I know there were an uncomfortable amount of anecdotal stories that came back to us. Again, I take no joy in having parks closed. The problem is, and I know some folks have said in the rural parts of the state, you know, come on, we're less densely populated. And the answer is yes, the problem is, our fear, my fear is that the entirety of the rest of the state, if not the entirety of the rest of the region, would descend on the parks that are open. And again, we had a lot of out-of-state tags in the parking lots. I forget if it's the same weekend, I assume it is. It was the first good weather weekend we had of the year. Ian, real quick, have you got another one?

**Ian Elliott, NJTV News:** So are you using people's queries to the state COVID site and symptom tracker to find virus hotspots? There's nowhere on the site that seems to tell people that that's being done. Is this an invasion of privacy? Do you think people should be giving up some of their privacy during this pandemic?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** That's to me, I think we can take your input on this, Judy and Christina, we should be able to fight the pandemic and not violate people's First Amendment rights and their right to privacy. We should be able to find common ground. I believe, so far, we have. That's not to say it's without casualty because we've lost far too many folks. But I believe you don't get one -- or put it this way, I don't think it's a zero-sum game. You only get what you need if you take away people's privacy. I don't believe in that. Okay, thank you. Dave, good afternoon.

**David Levinsky, Burlington County Times:** Hi, Governor. A couple of questions. First one, right before we started here, Governor Cuomo in New York was talking about we're going to have to maintain social distancing until a vaccine is developed and/or more testing is widely available, quicker testing. Would you agree with that? And the reason I ask is, there seems to be this sense with a lot of people that somehow, some day in May, it's going to be like, hey, everybody, everything's getting great and the masks can come off and the dancing can begin. I mean, what's your sense about this? What do people need to understand, do you think, about the severity of what we're dealing with here? And how slow the reentry is going to be? What do people need to understand and accept?

Another question for you, Governor, state revenues for March were reportedly up 3.6. We assume this is because there's a reporting lag, especially for the sales tax. The revenue report for April that will come next month is obviously going to be very different. What's your reaction to the March numbers? Are you bracing for what we're going to learn next month? How are you preparing for what would most certainly be a massive hit that is coming?

Another question, if I may, on your encouragement. Every day you give strong encouragement to the people of New Jersey about staying strong. You were particularly passionate earlier, talking about that we're doing a great job, but we can't let up, we've got to keep our foot on the gas. Are you afraid that if you don't do this, people will get careless, sloppy and stupid? And is this your nightmare scenario that somehow people will take their foot off the gas and then the whole thing will turn into a disaster?

And finally, if I may, for the Commissioner who needs no introduction, could you give us even a guesstimate, Commissioner, about you know, you give different statistics about people who die from COVID and the categories that they're in. I've heard that 99% of people who succumb to COVID either have heart disease,

immune system deficiencies, facing some sort of a serious struggle with cancer or some other debilitating disease, diabetes. Would you agree with that? That the vast majority of people who are dying fit into that category? And I guess obesity is in that category as well? Or, do we not know enough about it?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Judy, I'll start. Do you want to come in? Yeah, I think without having seen or heard directly what Governor Cuomo said, the notion that we're going to go back to some sort of, let's just turn the clock back to three months ago, I just don't see it. People talk about a new normal and I and I think that's a reality. I hope, please God, in His sequencing of events, that the testing in large scale, rapid testing comes a lot faster than the vaccine. I've not heard any expert, and we've tried to speak to as many as possible, from the likes of Alex Gorsky, the CEO of Johnson & Johnson, to Dr. Tony Fauci and everybody in between. I haven't spoken to anybody who lives in this field and Judy and Christina, you tell me if you disagree, who thinks a vaccine sooner than a year or a year-and-a-half is realistic, at least that's safe and scaled.

I am praying that the broad-scale testing turnaround, the saliva-like test that Rutgers is trying to develop, and hats off to them, that that comes a lot sooner. But even then, I've mentioned this example before, I can easily see the restaurant protocol, a temperature check or some kind of check, if it's available, maybe a quick saliva test. I don't know that it's going to be that available. You go inside, the servers are masks and gloved. The wiping down of surfaces is hyper-aggressive. You're at 50% capacity at most, no table, I can't get closer than I am to you Dave, right now, in terms of my table to yours. Not shaking hands. Harvard apparently, there's some Harvard study that came out yesterday that said we would be social distancing until 2022. I don't know that we're going to anytime soon go back into the, what I love by the way, I have to say big handshake, kiss on the cheek, hug, high fives. I think that's postponed for the foreseeable future.

That leads to your second question, which I think I've kind of already answered, but I'm getting an enormous amount of incomings from parents, in particular of high school seniors, and I don't blame them for one second. It's in part related to sports. Can't we just get back to sports again? And the other part relates more to the pomp and circumstance associated with graduation ceremonies. I had an incoming today questioning a couple of religious gatherings that are currently expected to take place in June. And we have not given you the guidance on schools, and I think we're going to probably do that tomorrow. I'm sorry, it's a day later than I was hoping for, but it's for good reason.

We're trying to figure all that out. I would love nothing more than to -- I just don't see. I mean, I take my cues from the health experts, and I'll continue to. I don't see a normal, even if it were to take place, a normal gathering in the foreseeable future. I just don't see it. And I'll be the happiest guy on this planet if I am wrong.

Lastly, two other quickies, the revenues are off. I don't have the numbers for you, but they're falling off the cliff. That's part of the reason I was on with Secretary Mnuchin today, underscoring the necessity. The states need direct cash assistance, both how the CARES Act is interpreted and any other steps that will be taken. And its expenses going this way and revenues going that way.

And yeah, my worst nightmare I think I said it earlier, other than the loss of life, which is far too, it's jaw-droppingly large already, and each one of them a precious life. My nightmare scenario right now is that people get sloppy. That they get, I don't know if I'd use the word stupid because I don't blame them for being frustrated, but they basically let their guard down. I mentioned this yesterday, and I think you all would agree that the direct line between human behavior and what the 9 million of us are doing, and what the reality then that these folks have to figure out in terms of hospital beds, ventilators, PPE, medicines, healthcare workers, it's literally, the model changes like that. We can see from that map, it's going in the right direction. But that 36,000 worst-case bed need is not out of the realm, assuming folks do just how you've described it.

Again, we've dodged one bullet. Again, we could have had 3 million or more infected. Because of the steps we took from day one, we've avoided that awful bullet, but 36,000 beds, if we drop our guard right now, and there's no amount of work they can do, there's no amount of help from other states. There's no amount of help from the federal government that can allow us to stay above water in that circumstance. I'll put my shoe back on and stop pounding the podium. Judy, underlying, in particular, any comments you've got about social distancing and how you see that, and Christina, going forward? Secondly, underlying conditions, heart disease, obesity, etc.

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Let me just give you some statistics. The deep dive into 1,442 cases, 60% of them have identified underlying cardiovascular disease, so that's like 871 cases. Now remember, it's not unusual that if a person has one comorbid condition, they have others, so the percentages won't add up to 100. But 37% of the cases, or 533, had diabetes mellitus and 29.6% or 427 chronic diseases, of which 20% of the cases are chronic lung diseases, which with pneumonia, you would understand that that would be a complicating factor. And for the immunocompromised conditions, about 15% are identifying along with that in cancer in 11.4% or 164 of the 1,442 cases. So definitely comorbid conditions are a complicating factor for COVID-19 deaths.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Judy, one comment and a question to add to Dave's, and then we'll go to Sam after this. To your point, more than one condition, if you add up the percentages, it's about 201%. So that's an important point. It's invariably more than one thing.

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Yes.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Gotcha. Secondly, that's n equals 1,442, that's out of a total death toll, it's shocking, but it's 3,156. We've been asked this before, that doesn't mean that no one else had an underlying condition. That just is the 1,442 folks that you've got visibility into.

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Yeah.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Okay. Thank you. Sam, back to you.

**Sam Sutton, Politico:** Thank you, Governor. A couple of questions from me and then one from WNYC. Yesterday, a lot of reports out of Illinois about Governor Pritzker working keep the details of his state's shipments of PPE and ventilators from China secret, out of concern that the feds would seize those materials. I know that New Jersey is obviously sourcing PPE abroad. Are you at all concerned about the feds taking whatever you can find from China or Taiwan or wherever, should that come to our shores? And did this come up in your discussions yesterday with Huang Ping?

Second question has to do with triage guidelines. I understand that there's no exclusionary element in those guidelines, but the scoring system clearly prioritizes those who don't have conditions with high comorbidities like heart disease or diabetes. I know this is only supposed to be used in the worst-case scenario and I understand that there's no tolerance for discrimination or bias here. But given the high prevalence of those conditions in the African American community, and given that these guidelines are supposed to take lifespan into account, don't they somehow reinforce some of the implicit biases that exist currently in the application of healthcare?

Last question from WNYC, I think it touches on some ground that John covered earlier. New York City has now begun to release the number of deaths that occur each day at home, as opposed to just reporting the deaths in hospitals. Will New Jersey begin to provide that data? And until then, can you give us a sense of what you're seeing in terms of deaths at home?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Let me start, is that okay, Judy? And then we'll jump in. I think on the last one, we're going to defer, as we did with John. I think Dr. Tan said that's something we want to come back. Dan, Brian, can you make sure we follow up both with John and Sam on that? And the extent to which we have the data, we will share it with you. There's nothing we're holding back from you, so let us come back to you on that, if we could.

I'm not aware of, I wasn't even aware of the Governor Pritzker's situation. I'm not aware of anything untoward in terms of seizing anything. In conversations that you have with governments, this was part of the conversation with China. It's you want to make sure that the customs folks on either side of this understand where this is coming from and what its intended use is. You're constantly looking for help in raising that as a factor. That's harkening in my case back to being a US ambassador, that's just a fact of life. But we've seen no evidence of anything untoward on that, we just don't have enough PPE and we're constantly out there fishing. I would just say Judy is going to take the so-called triage guidelines, we are hyper focused, overwhelmingly focused on the nothing exclusionary and no discrimination piece of this. And we mean it. We expect all the healthcare providers in the state to also mean it and to act on that basis. The last thing we need right now, as a state, with inequalities that already exist in peacetime before this ever came upon us, is to have those

inequalities exacerbated. It's why leadership from the African American community, the minute there was a press article about one of the providers doing something that was not consistent with Judy's guidelines, why they came immediately to me, and raised this, rightfully. We will do everything we can to avoid that at all costs.

But, Judy, please take away any of those specifics.

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Sure. Let's talk, you brought up a really good point about implicit bias because we do know that it exists. It's institutional bias that exists throughout all of healthcare. The allocation policy requires that there's groups of people that help make the decision and the directly treating physician cannot make the decision. Hopefully that group will be able to control for the bias that we know exists prior to a pandemic.

As far as the underlying comorbid conditions, there are no exclusionary criteria and there's degrees of underlying conditions. You may have cardiovascular disease that required you to have a stent, that's not an exclusionary criteria, and it does not perhaps affect your lifespan, so it doesn't necessarily mean that you're going to be excluded because of it. We all have some underlying conditions, especially as you get older.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Thank you. Matt, we're going to close this out with you, if that's okay. Give us a sec.

**Matt Arco, Star-Ledger:** I'm curious if you just answered Sam's last question about the whole issue of under-counting deaths that New York --

**Governor Phil Murphy:** We did not. We said we actually need to come back to you that. Thanks for looking out for Sam.

**Matt Arco, Star-Ledger:** Apologies, okay. Governor, curious, and Commissioner, have any nursing homes been cited for violations during the outbreak so far? If so, which ones? I'm curious if you can confirm any deaths of employees at the psychiatric hospitals or developmental centers?

Governor, from another outlet, I'm curious if New Jersey's the only state ordering everyone to wear masks in stores. Have the local police been asked to help stores enforce this order? Has anyone been cited for violating the order? Is that something that you folks will keep stats on?

Lastly, off topic, Governor, the Department of Justice concluded Monday that the state's women's prisons for years has ignored rampant sex abuse of prisoners by staff. The feds say, and your administration cooperated with their investigation, but has, quote, failed to fix things. I'm curious what your reaction to the report was, and what you plan to do going forward about it?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Judy, I'll leave the nursing homes to you, obviously, it's an area, and the psychiatric and developmental homes in terms of you asked about employees, in particular. You asked about employees in particular on the--

**Matt Arco, Star-Ledger:** Employees, yes.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I'll deal with the off-topic one because Pat can deal with the local police and the stores. In fact, we do have some experience with that being enforced, so Pat can go through that. This was now, I think on Monday or yesterday this came out, Ed and Mahen in particular, this is a situation that existed as we came into office. We've taken a whole range of steps since then. We have a new commissioner, I signed a whole series of prison reform laws. We have an all-female advisory board. There have been a number of training protocols that have been put into place. It is something that was a complete and utter not just mess, but a deeply troubling situation. We've taken, again, I don't have the list in front me. We've probably taken somewhere between 10 and 15 steps between laws signed, new leadership, protocols observed, etc. It's a black mark, without question, in the corrections history in our state, and frankly, it's a black mark in our state's history.

Again, I'm not dodging it in any way, shape, or form. It's a situation we inherited and we have taken a whole range of steps to redress and address the situation that we inherited. Let me just say that we continue. This is one of these situations that each and every day we try to get better than the day before.

Judy, do you want to hit first Matt's questions on nursing home violations, if any, as well as psychiatric and developmental homes?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Yeah, we have not cited anyone, what we would call a quote-unquote violation. We have gone out with the Local Health Officers, by the way, we have gone out to some of the nursing homes to help correct what are really daunting situations where staff has called in sick or have abandoned the nursing home, and they needed some oversight and some extra help. We still need help in our nursing homes. That's why we're trying to call up as many nurse aides as we can. The staffing and the PPE continue to be a problem. We did put out, I think I reported yesterday, we did send a significant allocation of PPE to our nursing homes and today or tomorrow we're fitting our survey team within N-95s, because we expect that they'll be making more visits.

On the psychiatric institutions, out of a total staff of 4,800, 237 of our employees have tested positive. That's 5%. And we have had two employee deaths.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Pat, do you want to hit the enforcement of the retail side?

**State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan:** Sure, we did as recently as yesterday, there was a subject in Pleasantville that was cited on Saturday, cited on Sunday, and then because of his persistence and failure to abide by that, the last charge was put on a warrant, which means that he was lodged in the county jail. So it is one of the charges that we ask all law enforcement to track and report on a daily basis to our Regional Operations Intelligence Center, Matt.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I just say, before we break on the long-term care facilities, we said this yesterday. Judy laid out a whole series of steps that have been taken now, measured in months. We continue, not withstanding, not citing violations, we continue to, through her offices, through mine, through others, pounding away on these operators to do everything they can in their power. Obviously, we're providing them, as Judy said, with trying to address a huge shortage of PPE, but also to do the right things by these folks, including notification of loved ones and status of the facilities.

The comorbidity question that you triggered, Dave, is none more true than it is with long-term care patients, right? So you get an overwhelming overlap between underlying existence, age, etc. This is not a New Jersey unique situation. But when we all do the post-mortem, and we're going to do as a nation, please God, we do an aggressive post-mortem that is in the spirit of the 9/11 Commission, led by Governor Kane so well with Congressman Lee Hamilton, it must be done. It cannot be partisan. New Jersey, I promise you, if we have anything to do with it, we'll do something very similar. But it's pretty clear and I'm going to start putting this on, it's pretty clear that a big weakness in the system, in the reality, is long-term care facilities. We're going to close down. We'll get to you though. We're going to sweep across once every day. Just in the interest of fighting the fire, we've got to get back to the shop. But Dan, John may have a follow up that you could get. So we'll be back here at one o'clock tomorrow. The White House VTC is right now scheduled for 3:00 p.m. tomorrow, so we will be here at usual time, at 1:00 p.m. Obviously, if there's something material or report between now and then we will.

I want to thank the Commissioner Judy Persichilli, Dr. Christina Tan, our epidemiologist. Thank you, Doctor. Pat, thank you. Jared, thank you. Thank you to Parimal, and again to each and every one of you keep doing what you're doing. If we keep doing what we're doing, we will get through this. As you rightfully asked, the new normal probably won't look like the old normal, at least at first. But we will get through this together, stronger than ever before. Thank you all.

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