

Governor Phil Murphy

TRANSCRIPT: July 2nd, 2020 Coronavirus Briefing Media

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Holding a COVID-19 briefing. WATCH:



Governor Phil Murphy: Good afternoon. I am joined, as I am every day, by the woman to my right who needs no introduction, the Commissioner of the Department of Health, Judy Persichilli. To my far left, another guy who needs no introduction, the State Police Superintendent Colonel Patrick Callahan. We're joined by another familiar face to the far right, the Department of Health's Communicable Disease Service Medical Director, Dr. Ed Lifshitz. And today we're also joined, again a familiar face, we welcome him back, the Chief Executive Officer of the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, Tim Sullivan. Good to have you, Tim.

We will not be holding a briefing tomorrow, so we've got to cover a fair amount of ground today as we head into the holiday weekend. We'll get right at it, and I think unless you hear otherwise, we'll be with you Monday at one o'clock, in this room.

So first, today is July 2, and we have a whole slate of economic restarts happening today as we head into the long Independence Day weekend. Today, our casinos may reopen as may our outdoor amusement and water parks, and many indoor recreational facilities. Our museums and libraries may reopen their doors, and our playgrounds are open once again, among other locations. As you continue to get back out, please continue to keep a social distance from others and wear a face covering. And if you're going to be in an indoor business, remember that face coverings are required before you step foot inside. So let's all have an enjoyable holiday, a safe holiday weekend wherever we go. But again, please be responsible in your behavior.

Next, I've asked Tim to join us today to speak a little bit more on the efforts of the EDA to assist our business community throughout this pandemic and to help position our economy for long-term health as we continue our restart and recovery. We have discussed before the EDA's offerings to help our small business sector



through what is undoubtedly the most challenging period many of them have ever experienced, and likely ever will experience. And those offerings have included millions of dollars in grants to small businesses and direct cash support for micro businesses. And while the EDA has been there to help support many established small businesses, their efforts have also been noteworthy to the many nascent startup and newly emerging businesses whose access to vital capital has been greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The EDA created a separate program especially for them, the Entrepreneur Support Program, with \$5 million in guarantees for private sector investors making working capital loans to New Jersey based startups and new, cutting edge enterprises. And by working alongside investors as opposed to paying direct cash to businesses, we are strengthening the system through which these businesses receive their capital. This is a classic, Tim. Either we can give you the fish or teach you how to fish, and this is a classic case of enhancing the system, not just delivering much-needed capital to the end user.

On Friday, the EDA announced the first five recipients under the Entrepreneur Support Program for a total of \$700,000 in investment guarantees, and yesterday I actually had the great pleasure of speaking with the CEO, Madhu Stemmermann., who is alongside her husband Andrew Stemmermann. of Eatontown-based Sunray Scientific. They are each incredibly impressive. Madhu and I had a really good conversation. She's a boilermaker, a product chemical engineer from Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana. Sunray just moved, as I mentioned, to Eatontown from Long Branch, so still in the Monmouth County family. Sunray develops and manufactures conductive adhesive materials for use in miniaturized and flexible electronics. It's safe to say Madhu and Andrew never saw me in one of their classes. It currently employs five people and is positioning itself for future growth. In fact, Madhu thinks ultimately this thing could be in the hundreds of employees, and it's exactly the sort of jobs we want and need in New Jersey, and they're really purpose-built for our state. Because of \$184,000 in guarantees it received through the ESP program, Tim, as you know, Sunray was recently able to close on \$230,000 in new capital investments. Even through this pandemic, our work to reposition our state's economic future to one driven by cutting edge companies has not wavered, and Sunray is just one of numerous examples of high-tech firms looking to call New Jersey home, because of the entrepreneurial ecosystem we are creating here.

These are the businesses which we are, as I mentioned, are perfectly located and positioned to attract and keep. And now we're a place where they can find the backup they need to keep capital coming in, so they don't just survive, but in fact, they ultimately thrive. So to you, Tim and your incredible team at the EDA from Chairman Kevin Quinn, and other members of the board, right on down, I thank you for your continued work to support our economy and our small businesses throughout this unprecedented time, and I am confident that the payoff of these investments will come in a state economy that is stronger and more resilient.

Next, this morning the Department of Labor released its weekly unemployment figures. The department received just shy of 28,000 initial claims last week, which is a decrease of roughly 5,000 from the week prior. Overall, more than 1.3 million claims have been filed with the department over the course of the past three-and-a-half months, it's unfathomable. This is, in a word, unprecedented. However, through the hard work of the department, 96% of all who have been deemed monetarily eligible have received a payment, at least a payment. All in all, the department has been able to put \$9.1 billion into the accounts of New Jersey's families, including \$612 million in federal relief of self-employed and gig economy New Jerseyans who would have not qualified for unemployment, and another \$170 million in extended federal benefits for those who had exhausted their prior eligibility.

The department has also extended benefits by an additional 20 weeks, which is music to the ears of many. As Commissioner Rob Asaro-Angelo would want me to note, many of the remaining unresolved cases can be traced to very specific, complex, and individualized issues, including delays of the department receiving federally required records from other states, or because the claimant is awaiting a determination on an appeal. But the department continues its work to ensure that every New Jerseyan who is eligible for benefits gets every penny which they deserve. As always, I thank Commissioner Asaro-Angelo and his team, especially the women and men on the frontlines who have been working hard every day to get answers for everything they are doing to support our deserving workers and their families in this time of extraordinary need.

I did not welcome but should welcome Jared Maples, the Director of the Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness.

Switching gears yet again, we want to give you a quick update on the work of the Rutgers School of Public Health in leading our efforts to build up our contact tracing program, which we discussed at length last week I mentioned, Judy, yesterday was Lamont Repollet's last day as the Commissioner of Education. He'll now be President of Kean University, but I should have added that yesterday was the first day of Dr. Jonathan Holloway's tenure as President of Rutgers University. We wish Jonathan nothing but the very best in his years at the helm of an extraordinary American university.

So over the past week, the work to onboard more contact tracers for training has continued. Today, the community contact tracing corps has increased to 357. That's more than 130 additional contact tracers added since we last spoke last week on this. Additionally, Rutgers School of Public Health has invited 859 current local public health workers to be trained on the CommCare reporting system, with more than 600 of those now having completed their training. That 859 is the approximately 900 contact tracers that Judy and I have been referring to that are at the county and local levels that have been on the field battling on our behalf, and hats off to them, as well as to the new signees.

What this means is we are continually building and training the statewide team of diverse public health workers, we will need to help us prevent new cases from becoming flare ups that can threaten our recovery. As Judy and Ed and Pat and I have spoken many times, the objective with the capacity we now have in testing, as good as any American state per capita, the objective of the contact tracing community corps, the objective of the isolation rooms and plans that Judy referred to the other day is not that we expect that the virus won't come back, we in fact expect it will. The question is, what are you going to do about it? And the fact of the matter is with the testing, tracing and isolation trinity that we have in place right now, the expectation is we can spot it, surround it, isolate it and drive it back into the ground. Those are assets we literally did not have at our disposal, other than some contact tracing at the local and county level, we did not have when this crisis started back when we first formed the commission that you still chair on February 2nd. Those were assets we did not have, we now have them and we hope that that is a huge boost in confidence for folks to be able to get back out there and engage in society and the economy.

Switching gears again, before I get to the overnight numbers, I want to give a brief update on New Jersey's response rate to the 2020 census. As we've noted weekly, the census is absolutely critical to ensuring that New Jersey receives its fair share of federal funding from Washington for a whole host of programs, from education and transportation, to social services and COVID-19 relief. We were completely and dramatically under-counted 10 years ago; we cannot let that happen again. Having a complete and accurate count is vital for our future. Everyone has a civic duty to be counted. New Jersey continues to exceed the national response rate, and that's the good news, and 63.8% of you have already taken the time to go to 2020census.gov to be counted, and I thank you.

But that means that nearly one-third of New Jersey households still need to be counted. Our census team at the Department of State is continuing its community-based information efforts in advance of the Census Bureau's initiation of door-to-door canvassing of those households which do not respond online in advance. In other words, if you get counted online today, you won't get a knock on the door in the weeks ahead. And we need more households, especially in Atlantic County, Essex County and Hudson County to be counted. And I want to give a shout out again to a point I've made on a number of occasions in Cape May County, we know the response rate is being skewed because a lot of the homes which haven't yet responded are summer homes, and these property owners have likely already responded from their primary homes. So if you own a second home in Cape May, bless you, we thank you for that. But if you're planning on getting down there this weekend, before you do, go to 2020census.gov and register that home as a seasonal home. Then we'll have a better idea of how many year-round Cape May residents have responded to the census. Let's make sure, folks, we have an accurate count.

The census only happens, as I mentioned, once every 10 years and if we are undercounted again, as we were, as I mentioned in 2010, we will lose out not just for the next year, but for the next decade. Let's make sure we don't miss out on the ability to craft a better future for our state.

So with all of that to the side, let's turn to the overnight numbers. Yesterday we received another 539 positive test results for a cumulative total of 172,356. The daily spot positivity rate was 2.95% for tests recorded on June 28th. The rate of transmission was 0.87. Again RT, rate of transmission, as you see and the daily spot

positivity rate give us our best picture of how COVID-19 continues to spread. And alongside new hospitalizations, are the most important non-hospital metrics we look at when making decisions for when we can enter the next stages along our road back.

If you stay here for a second, I would just say this. We have said, Ed has said it, Judy's said it, I've said it, Tina Tan has said it, just because you get a little bit more one day to the next, or a little reduction one day to the next, that's not a trend, but it is worth noting. We have more daily positives today, the spot positivity is up slightly, the rate of transmission is up slightly, and that's something that we're going to keep a close eye on.

Looking to our hospitals, the total number of residents hospitalized for COVID-19 yesterday was 1,027. The number of patients requiring intensive or critical care was 216. The number of ventilators in use was 170. Now all three of those numbers are down from Tuesday, so let's also keep that in mind. There were 51 patients who are known COVID positive admitted to our hospitals, while 83 live patients were discharged.

Here are how these daily numbers feed into the overall trends, but even though we have lots of positive data to see, we know we still have challenges ahead. We need to improve our standing among all states. We need to keep pushing ourselves down on these rankings. Today we are reporting, with the heaviest of hearts, an additional 27 confirmed COVID-19 deaths, and that total is now 13,251 confirmed fatalities from our New Jersey family. The number of probable deaths that Ed went through the other day remains unchanged at 1,854. As we do every day, let's remember three more of the New Jerseyans who we lost.

We'll start in North Bergen, a great community in Hudson County, and that was the home of Mary Klesh, and you can see Mary there. She was born in Vineland, in Cumberland County, and her early life eventually took her to Hazleton, Pennsylvania, where she met the young man who would be her husband for the past 55 years, Joseph. The couple move first to Pennsauken before eventually settling in North Bergen. Mary was a bookkeeper and administrative assistant at the corporate offices of the Western Union Telegraph Company in both Philadelphia, and then in New York City. But she will be better remembered as a loving mother and homemaker, a woman who cared for animals, who was not only smart, but could make people laugh, and the one person who always remembered everyone's birthdays and anniversaries.

She was also a dedicated and active member of Trinity Lutheran Church in Fairview. Mary leaves her husband, Joseph, who I mentioned and their son Kevin, and I had the great honor of speaking with both of them yesterday, bless them both. And Kevin's wife, Amber and their son, Mary's grandson, Ian. Mary also leaves behind her sister Joyce. Mary was 85 years old. May God bless and watch over you and your family.

Next we recalled Gaspar Madrazo of Hillsborough in Somerset County. He was a veteran, a member of the United States Navy from 1978 through 1981, and he earned an Expeditionary Medal for his service. After his military service concluded, Gaspar found his next calling in law, starting as a patrol officer, eventually being promoted to detective, and again later to criminal investigator before retiring in 2006. Gaspar made the most of his retirement, spending time with his children and doing as much hunting, fishing and camping as he possibly could. He will be remembered for his warmth and willingness to lend a hand to whoever needed it. Gaspar leaves behind his wife of 23 years Anne, who grew up in Da Nang in Vietnam and whose family is still in Da Nang, and their three young daughters Ve, Jia and Tiffany, and they are 21, 19 and 16 respectively. He is also survived by his older sister Nancy, brother Artie and sister-in-law Maggie, and four nieces and nephews. And Gaspar, for that extraordinary life he lived, was only 60 years old. We thank Gaspar for his service to our nation and to his community, and may God watch over his soul and his family.

Finally, we remember Melesio Morales of Gloucester City. A native of Mexico, Melesio came to the United States 22 years ago at the age of 39, for the same reason that so many others have come here, to find better opportunities to provide for his family and to live out his American dream. Melesio was a hard worker and found his calling in the restaurant business, working in Westmont Bagel in Haddon Township, Seasons 52, and other establishments. He is survived by his wife of 42 years, Maria Isabella, and their six children, Elizabeth, Alfredo, Daisy, Leslie, Eric, and Kenya. He also leaves behind his younger siblings, Julian, Alejandro with whom I had the great honor of speaking yesterday, Roberto and Nicholas.

He came here for a better life and found it, and COVID-19 took him away. And his story, by the way, before we leave this, it's extraordinary. I asked his brother how his wife, Maria Isabella, was doing. And he said, and this is the life that too many families right now are forced to live in, and it's not who we are as a nation, and it just, it pained me deeply. I asked him how his wife was doing and his brother said not well, she hadn't seen him in

23 years. And I thought for a minute, well, maybe they weren't together anymore. They were together. He moved to New Jersey to make money to educate his six kids, but he was neither ever able to get back to Mexico, and his wife and kids were never able to come to see him in New Jersey. That is not the America who we are, that is not the American values that are inscribed at the base of the Statue of Liberty. We are the immigrant nation, and that is an extraordinary tragedy. So with that, may God bless Mary, Gaspar, and Melesio and their families.

For each of the past 90 days, our flags have been at half-staff for every New Jerseyan we have lost to COVID-19, as a sign of respect to them, and of solidarity with the families, friends and communities they leave behind and have left a little bit emptier. Tomorrow, as we begin our commemorations of our nation's birth and as a sign of rebirth for our state as we keep moving down our road back, our flags will return to full-staff. But even as we do this, we must be mindful of the fact that more residents are going to be lost to this pandemic. This is not a moment of closure. This is not a moment of triumph. This is an acknowledgment that the time is right.

We still don't know the final number, or when this virus will stop taking away members of our extraordinary New Jersey family, but we do know this: regardless of our flag's positions on our flagpole, we are fighting this virus together, all 9 million of us, and you've been extraordinary. We will keep fighting until every indicator we track reads zero, and we will dedicate our efforts to every life that has been lost, and sadly will be lost.

In addition to the order returning our flags to full-staff, today I'm also signing two other Executive Orders. The first order raises the limit, and we've signaled this, on crowd size for outdoor gatherings to 500 from its current 250 and that is effective tomorrow. We first signaled this eventuality back on June 9th and we are comfortable at this time to keep to the timetable we set. So on Monday, when outdoor graduation ceremonies are slated to begin and games to be played, schools will be able to accommodate them.

First Amendment protected activities such as political or religious gatherings will continue to have no limits outdoors, and our limits on all indoor gatherings are 25% of capacity, but with a maximum of 100 people, that remains unchanged.

Additionally and separately, I have extended the public health emergency in our state for an additional 30 days. These declarations, unless extended, expire after 30 days. What today's action means is that we will have the authority to remain vigilant and prepared to act should there be a new outbreak, please God no, of COVID-19.

And we continue to work vigilantly to protect against exactly that happening, but we can't do this all by ourselves. You've been extraordinary, and we continue to need all 9 million of you to continue working right alongside of us. So as you get out this weekend, have an enjoyable time, but use common sense and remember that we are all responsible for beating this virus. Keep your social distances. Wear a face covering. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water. We haven't said this in a while, Judy, for at least 20 seconds, or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if you're not near a sink or running water. And, please be safe. Pat, I know, will talk to this in a minute. Jared is here, safety and security of each of our 9 million member family is paramount.

If you're going to be at an outdoor bar or an outdoor restaurant, where I was again last night and had a really exceptional meal, with family or friends, remember that we cannot let our guards down. Don't crowd around bars and keep your face covering on unless you are eating or drinking. And if you feel uncomfortable at an establishment because of overcrowding, leave. We cannot have an overcrowded bar turned into a COVID-19 tinderbox. We have to do this. We have to keep up with the practices that have gotten us this far in the past three-and-a-half months. We are in fact, right now, a model for the nation on how to responsibly restart. Let's keep it that way. As the woman to my right who needs no introduction would say, stay safe and stay healthy. Let's have a good weekend.

And with that, may I turn the program over to the guy on my left side, the extraordinary Chief Executive Officer of the Economic Development Authority. Tim Sullivan.

Economic Development Authority Chief Executive Officer Tim Sullivan: Thank you, Governor. It's great to be here again, and great to be here with you Colonel and Commissioner. I just wanted to provide a quick update, as the Governor described, on the economic relief efforts that have been underway since this

pandemic broke out in March. The Governor has directed us and given a strong encouragement to be leaning in to supporting our smallest businesses that were the least prepared and the least well-capitalized heading into this crisis, and we've been working around the clock to deliver on that.

Since the packages of aid have been released, we've supported nearly 7,000 businesses; 6,700 businesses as we sit here right now, through a variety of our programs, more than \$25 million of funding deployed and out the door. We expect to, in the next couple of weeks, have that 7,000 number go up by about another 10,000 or maybe 12,000 as we continue to roll through the phase two grant program, which I'm also happy to provide an update on.

The Governor mentioned June 9th, which I was here that day as well to describe the application process. Under phase two of our grant program, we've now awarded about 3,300 grants for a little more than \$11 million of that \$45 million that was allocated. You can see that on the slide here, \$11.9 million, in fact.

We focused really aggressively on making sure that these grants were made available for businesses that are historically left out of small business programs: minority-owned firms, women-owned firms, businesses that are located in high poverty, high unemployment, low income census tracts. Of the 3,300 or so that have been approved already, more than 22% are minority-owned. More than 25% are women-owned. Of the applicants that we expect to be able to fund, about 38% are located in opportunity zone eligible census tract, so obviously more work to be done, more to go here, but through the initial phase here of the \$11.9 million that we've gotten out the door in the last couple of weeks. Really good, I think, progress towards a more equitable and fair recovery.

Just one PSA on this. Three counties are partnering with us to add additional funding beyond the money that the Governor allocated for the entire state, so Essex, Ocean and Passaic Counties each contributed \$10 million to support businesses in their counties that we're essentially administering on their behalf. Applications for those three counties are still open through next week, through July 8th, so if you are a small business under 25 employees located in Essex, Ocean or Passaic, those programs are not oversubscribed and you should fill out an application if you need funding at cv.business.nj.gov.

Two other quick announcements. One of the things we've heard loud and clear through the Restart and Recovery Advisory Council that I've got the honor of co-chairing with Zakiya Smith Ellis and Jose Lozano and the Commission that the Governor convened is that small businesses need technical assistance and resources, particularly around ecommerce, to support their reopening. These are your sort of prototypical mom-and-pop operations that maybe never got around to building a website, or never figured out how to do electronic scheduling for their workers or do web booking for appointments at a barber shop or a nail salon, and that was okay pre-COVID, but now in an era of limited capacity and more need to rely on technology. We're going to be launching a program to provide direct support to those businesses that help you build a website, help you set up your online, you know, ecommerce platform, help you figure out a delivery technology platform and so we'll have some more details on that in the next week or two. But we're going to basically launch a pilot program, kind of work out the kinks and see what works and then scale that up, and hope to support thousands of businesses to get the technical assistance they need.

Last thing I'll mention, both Chambers of Congress passed an extension of the PPP program that the SBA is running. There's a little bit more than \$100 billion with a B of funding left in that program. I don't know that it's been signed yet, but it passed both Chambers of Congress. New Jersey businesses have received a little more than \$21 billion of SBA programs, which have been critical, vital lifelines as well. Again, we wanted to make sure, as part of Governor Murphy's commitment of not just being stronger but fairer in how we think about recovery and economic development, that we worked really hard to make sure that small businesses, particularly businesses that are minority and women-owned, veteran-owned, were able to access these programs. We've partnered with the African American Chamber of Commerce, the Veteran Chamber of Commerce, the statewide Hispanic Chamber and Rising Tide Capital to help small businesses apply for these SBA programs. Those four organizations have helped more than 400 applications go into those programs, which is a lot, and we're announcing today that we're extending those partnerships to extend through the extension of the federal program that looks like that'll be happening in the next day or so here.

So, if you are in need of support, in need of resources through the SBA's programs, not just their members, but anyone can contact any of these four organizations to get support and technical assistance to fill out those very complicated applications.

So, a lot going on. We'll continue to work around the clock to get as much resources on the street as we can, and with that, Governor, I yield the floor back to you.

Governor Phil Murphy: Tim, great work. And God knows we've spent a lot of time, for instance, talking about restaurants and hospitality, restaurants and bars, and we've spent most of our time talking about the public health reality indoors at those locations. But they're the best example of an entire community of small businesses that have been crushed by this. You've done an extraordinary job. It is quite clear when people say to me, hey, if you get the ability to borrow, and by the way, we need that ability almost immediately, or if you get that direct federal cash assistance, or you get new sources of revenue, can you give us an example of where you can be more robust? And it's exactly in that neighborhood. It's the EDA and other, as you mentioned, it's not all cash, it's technical, but a lot of this is just direct, coming in and injecting the desperately needed funds that these small businesses, and as I mentioned, I think the best example is the hospitality industry, that they desperately need. We are completely committed to being able to get that borrowing ability, to get the federal cash, to find new sources of revenue. It's all of the above, and to use a good slug of that to put it right into getting our small businesses back on our feet.

So you've done an extraordinary job keeping us in the game and moving the ball down the field, to continue that analogy, and we now need some more boosters in our machine. Is that fair?

Economic Development Authority Chief Executive Officer Tim Sullivan: Oh yeah, absolutely.

Governor Phil Murphy: All right, thank you for 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 and good afternoon. Well, as we prepare for the July 4th holiday weekend, we expect more residents to be out in our parks, visiting our beaches and having backyard barbecues. I know we are all looking forward to celebrating, but we must continue taking precautions to protect yourselves and others. COVID-19 is still circulating in our state, and it's up to all of us to stop the spread of this virus. Don't just think about your own health, think about the health of your family, your friends, your loved ones, your neighbors. If you plan on having people over to celebrate The Fourth, keep the gathering outside, and continue to social distance to lessen the risk of spreading the virus.

When going out, don't visit crowded spaces where you cannot appropriately distance. Stay, at a minimum, six feet from others. Please wear a face covering that covers your nose and your mouth. Please wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds. Bring with you and frequently use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

Visiting an amusement park may be part of your plans this weekend. To protect customers and the staff at these parks, yesterday the Department issued a directive with health and safety standards. Some of the requirements include limiting the occupancy to 50%, requiring face coverings for staff and visitors, except when doing so would inhibit an individual's health and safety. And if the individual is under two years of age, please do not put on a face covering.

Screening staff for COVID-19 symptoms, establishing a guest flow plan, including managing lines and making walkways or stairways one way, or clearly divided for bidirectional travel with appropriate directional signs and markers. Establishing social distancing reminder signs, floor decals, and making routine reminder announcements. Sanitizing common seating areas and frequently touched surfaces throughout the day, adjusting seating on rides and throughout the park to allow for safe distancing, and installing physical barriers at ticket windows and point-of-sales stations. These procedures will help keep residents safe while they enjoy a day at the amusement park.

A critical part of containing the spread of COVID-19, as you know, is getting tested. There are more than 250 locations in New Jersey offering testing, including CVS and Rite Aid pharmacies. So residents should get tested, especially if they have been in crowded spaces.

As the Governor mentioned, we are scaling up contact tracers, so that once someone tests positive, public health staff can quickly identify their contacts and advise them to get tested and to quarantine. Local health departments across the state have done an incredible job doing this work. We have chosen CommCare as the common data reporting platform for contact tracing that will allow us to collect data uniformly from approximately 100 local and county health departments around the state. I want to thank all of the health department's for the work that they've done, and for the work they've done in implementing this technology. Camden County Department of Health and Human Services and health departments in Essex, Atlantic, Burlington, Gloucester, Middlesex, Monmouth and Salem Counties are all using this platform. The remaining health departments in the state will go live on CommCare next week. The adoption of CommCare across the state will help provide a comprehensive view of our tracing efforts.

Moving on to my daily report, as the Governor shared, we reported 1,027 hospitalizations with 216 individuals in critical care; 79% of those critical care patients are on ventilators.

We are reporting three new cases of multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children for a total of 51 cases in our state. The children affected have either tested positive for active COVID-19 infection or had antibody tests that were positive. Fortunately, in New Jersey, there are no deaths reported from this syndrome. The ages of the children affected range from 1 to 18; nine of the children are currently hospitalized. The breakdown of race and ethnicity of these cases is White 16%, Black 34%, Hispanic 39%, Asian 7%, and other 5%.

The Governor reviewed the new cases and deaths reported today. In terms of deaths, the breakdown is as follows: White 54.1%, Black 18.2%, Hispanic 20.3%, Asian 5.6%, other 1.8%. At the state veterans homes, the numbers remain the same as we've been reporting, as are the numbers at our psychiatric hospitals.

The New Jersey daily positivity as of Sunday, June 28th was 2.95%. In the Northern part of the state 2.99%, the Central part of the state 2.78%, and the Southern part of the state 3.1%. That concludes my daily report. Enjoy the holiday weekend safely. Continue to practice social distancing, wear a face covering and wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds. Stay connected, stay safe, stay healthy, wear your face covering, and get tested. Thank you.

Governor Phil Murphy: Well said and well done, Judy. I'm flying the colors here today. I want you to note that I'm acknowledging the birthday of our nation. Can I ask Ed, I'll call an audible. It's clearly different on the outside than inside, but as we open up the amusement and water parks, playgrounds to pick three areas that families will be going and taking kids there, there's been a lot of discussion over the past three-and-a-half months on what coronavirus looks like on surfaces. And I know the folks who are out there, the good news is we wouldn't be doing this if we didn't have confidence that the protocols were in place to make sure that the surfaces were as hygienic as possible. But Ed, any comments on this virus on surfaces?

DOH Communicable Disease Service Medical Director Dr. Ed Lifshitz: It clearly survives a relatively long time on a surface. Now the question is, what is a relatively long time and how much do we have to worry about it? And that depends on a lot of different things. It depends on how porous the surface is, it tends not to live as long, for example, on things like cloths or paper compared to smooth surfaces like playground type equipment. On the other hand, you'd expect it to do worse in direct sunshine, which tends to cause degradation of viruses faster.

So the short answer is, it depends. And yes, you definitely want to clean and disinfect high touch surfaces very commonly, avoid touching as much as you can, and as much as you can clean and wipe children's hands, use disinfectant.

Governor Phil Murphy: It takes a village on this too, so the proprietor of the amusement park or the waterpark or the community that has the playground has to do their part. And moms and dads and kids have to do their part as well, right? So that's the quick, wash with soap and water or have had the 60-plus percent alcohol content hand sanitizer handy, right? And those, if both sides of that equation do their job, we should be in good shape. That's giving us the confidence to be able to take that step today.

Pat, welcome as always. Any reports from the front?

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: Thanks, Governor. Good afternoon. With regards to compliance overnight, there were no issues reported to the ROIC, which is always a good thing to report. From the ROIC this morning, I had the opportunity to get on with chiefs and law enforcement from across the entire state to talk about the large scale and special events that are coming up over the next few days, including protests and fireworks and different deployments that we have. And also to thank the law enforcement community for what they've done with regard to EO compliance and protests over the last three-and-a-half months.

And as I referenced yesterday, the Fourth of July weekend can be a tragic one, not only in New Jersey, but across the nation. I just reflect back to a year ago, to last Fourth of July holiday, we had nine fatal crashes which resulted in the deaths of 13 people. Four of those crashes were alcohol and drug related. I'm just letting you know that there's going to be hundreds of more troopers out starting this afternoon from Sussex to Cape May through the Fourth of July weekend, Click It or Ticket, speed details, aggressive drivers, DWIs, patrols, in an effort to make sure that we don't have even one tragedy over this weekend, because that is not - - knocking on a door at two o'clock in the morning and telling the parents that your son or daughter isn't coming home, from personal and professional experience I can tell you, it is one of the worst things that you have to do in this profession. So I just ask that everybody stay safe and enjoy the birthday of the greatest nation on Earth. Thanks, Gov.

Governor Phil Murphy: Amen to that, the greatest nation on Earth, for all of our challenges, we remain the king of the hill. Two things, one specific to that last set of comments and one more broadly on knucklehead behavior. The specific one, you made the point yesterday. We're light years different than 5 or 10 years ago. There are plenty of different things services and ways for people to move around where they don't have to get behind the wheel. So please, God, don't get behind the wheel if you're impaired and don't get into a car with someone who is behind the wheel who's impaired.

I think, it was not based on my comments, I promise you that, but I think there's a public perception that folks have in some corners of the state have conflated two very separate observations that we've been making consistently. One is knucklehead behavior, particularly the pictures of those outside bars that we've been seeing, and we've spoken to that. That just can't happen. We've spoken to the proprietors, in some cases we've taken action, we'll continue to take if need be, aggressive action. That's noncompliant, unacceptable behavior.

That is not the reason why we have pushed off indoor dining. I want everyone to understand that. That is not the reason. The reason is number one, the lethality of this virus indoors versus outdoors so you'll see that in how it transmits, in particular. There are examples all over the country.

And secondly, what we are seeing going on in other states in indoor bars and restaurants, and that the evidence is overwHelmyng. Those are the reasons why we have pushed back indoor dining. Remember, the combination of facts as it relates to indoor activity which involves food or drink, just let's review them for a second. You're indoors. Ventilation is an issue. You're sedentary. You're in close proximity. And by definition, you can't keep this on the whole time because you've got to eat or drink because that's why you're there. That combination of facts contributes to the lethality of this virus indoors. And we've seen evidence in Florida, Texas, Arizona, Michigan, Wisconsin, California. We've seen case after case after case after case.

So in as much as Judy and Pat and I are calling out the knucklehead behavior, that's not the reason why we've pushed off indoor dining. So this question of, one size doesn't fit all. Let me tell you, indoors, you're either indoors or you're outdoors and that does fit all. Now we were going to get there. God willing, if our numbers, if the rate of transmission stays under one, Judy, if our spot positivity stays in a low single-digit, if we get the dozens of new hospitalizations as opposed to the hundreds that we were having every day, we get there. Folks doing the right thing, we'll get there.

But those are the reasons. Those are two separate admonitions. One is the lethality of this virus indoors, particularly if you're eating or drinking, is undeniable. We'll get there, but we can't do it yet. The other unrelated is knucklehead behavior outside. We need to deal with both separately. I wanted to get that off my chest. Thank you. It was not just an opportunity to use the word knucklehead, which I've been trying to – Brent, I'm

looking to your left and your right and I'm trying to figure out, should I start on the right or should I start on the left? Either way we start with you. Please. Good afternoon. Hold on one sec. Wait till, Aswan's got the mic, so he's coming in here.

Q&A Session

Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger: Good afternoon, everyone. So we saw only a few dozen new hospital admittances in the last few days and more discharges, but hospitalizations rose the other day. I just don't -- how does that work? I'm a little confused.

Two, do these new reopening today or in the next few days include indoor rec centers, dance classes and indoor gymnastics, and what about indoor pools?

Why was simulcasting at the Monmouth and Meadowlands racetrack not restarted today when sports books and the tracks are open for business?

What are your plans, Governor, for the Fourth of July weekend?

And you said yesterday you had switched the desk you used from Woodrow Wilson's desk. Where's that desk now? And how did you come to use Woodrow Wilson's desk at all? And what desk will you use now?

Governor Phil Murphy: Some of these I'm qualified to answer, and some of them I'm not. I think I want Judy to weigh in here on the hospitalizations. I think we alluded to this yesterday. If I could, we've got an extraordinary 71 hospitals in our state. Let me start with that, and they've been great partners. I think you've got a better safe than sorry mentality that has crept into the numbers. I think they are constantly, they don't want to miss. This is so lethal, they've seen the devastating impacts of this virus as close as anyone. That's my answer. Judy, do you want to add a more--?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Yeah, we talked about it yesterday, but why don't I just give you absolute numbers? Because I think once you look at the absolute numbers and realize we have 71 hospitals, we have very few admissions of COVID-positive and PUI patients. So the overall hospital census, that's patients in the beds, is 1,027. So in our 71 hospitals totally we have about 1,000. When you look at the patients that have been admitted with a COVID-positive definite diagnosis in the last 24 hours, as of 10:00 p.m. last night, it was 51. When you put in the PUIs, persons under investigation, people that come into the emergency room, perhaps with respiratory symptoms, there were 253. The conversion rate on discharge to absolute COVID patients is running, you know, maybe 80% negative and 20% positive, so the numbers are quite small. But nonetheless, we look at every single number. And we're trying to get faster testing of the PUI so that it's more clear on a day-to-day basis. So it's the PUIs that are really causing the uptick. Did that help? Okay.

Governor Phil Murphy: Brent, I know indoor pools are not -- Matt, can you address both? We can get back to you. This indoor rec, gyms -- not gyms, they're not open. Sorry, what's that?

Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger: The New Jersey Business Association, Industry and Business Association said rec centers, dance classes, indoor gymnastics, and then I think an indoor pool group or swimming group said that indoor pools, they believe you're going to reopen. I was just wanting to make sure.

Governor Phil Murphy: No, the indoor pools are not, and also could you address the simulcasts? We are in pretty regular discussion with the Racing Commission and the tracks, trying to figure out some not surprising knots in the reopening of their facilities. You may bear with us on that, but Matt.

Chief Counsel Matt Platkin: There are. I'd have to defer, we're working on updating indoor sports guidance in light of the changes today, so it depends on the type of facility that we're talking about. Some additional indoor activities may be allowed, but we have to look at the specifics. I'm not sure I fully understood the question on the tracks.

Governor Phil Murphy: There's no simulcast.

Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger: We have a reporter there today and he said that simulcasting -- sports betting is allowed but simulcasting is not at the racetracks and people there are wondering why.

Chief Counsel Matt Platkin: I'm not sure about that question.

Governor Phil Murphy: Can we come back to you on that? I'm going to be on the shore for most of the weekend, hopefully doing some outdoor dining, and of particular note, invited by Tim's former boss and dear friend, former Mayor Mike Bloomberg in his capacity as Chair of the 9/11 Museum has invited myself and the New York officials to stand with him as they reopen the 9/11 Memorial Plaza on Saturday, July 4. So that's a solemn moment and will be honored to represent New Jersey.

The desk is in storage and I took George Helmy's desk, and I'm not sure he's happy about it.

Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger: There was no press call?

Governor Phil Murphy: Yeah, I believe it was always the Governor's desk in New Jersey and it was getting repaired, but I've been using it for quite some time, but it is in storage and my guess is it's unlikely to reemerge, but I've got George's desk and as I said, he's not happy about it.

Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger: Is George just sitting on the ground and --

Governor Phil Murphy: George has gotten another desk from another source.

Chief Counsel Matt Platkin: He's standing.

Governor Phil Murphy: He's standing. We've taken, George is actually now working on the sidewalk out in front of the building. Sir.

Reporter: Governor, can you update us on the recent tri-state advisory requesting that travelers from certain states quarantine upon arriving in New Jersey? How are you guys tracking that and how many people have complied?

Governor Phil Murphy: Yeah, as I said, I'm not sure I've got a specific answer on how many people have complied. But as I mentioned yesterday, the evidence we have anecdotally, I admit to you because this is only a few days in, has been very positive, overwhelmingly positive. I don't know that I've got -- I actually sent a message to some of my colleagues as I was sitting here a short while ago, to get an update on it. Judy, do you have any anything on that, or Pat?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: All I have is that we're developing a feedback loop, so we will be able to track those that fill out a form and that will go to the local health officers. We're working on that now.

Governor Phil Murphy: As we said, we wanted to get out there quickly. This is one where, most of the things we do we have a longer runway, we run all the traps and then we go live with it. This is one because the bully pulpit really impacts this one, we wanted to announce it quickly and then fill in the details as we go forward. And again, I want to repeat for everybody, in case you're not familiar with this, if you're coming back to New Jersey or if you're visiting New Jersey from a hotspot state, and the list of states is on our website, covid19.nj.gov, it's now 16 states and you're on that list if you're a state if you have 10% or higher spot positivity rate on a rolling seven-day average, or you have at least 10 new cases per 100,000 residents on a rolling seven-day average, you're on that list. We want you to self-quarantine and get tested. And it is a travel advisory. And while we can't make folks, as a general population matter do that, Judy does have the ability and the right to be able to go in explicitly to individual behavior, and she reserves that right, and will use it if she has to. So thank you again.

No retaliation, no hidden agenda. We've gone through hell. We want to do everything we possibly can to not go through hell again. We wish those states, they're in our prayers. We wish them nothing but speedy resolution, but we can't let this back in the back door, if at all possible. Sir, you're good?

I'm going to, as we pack up here, I want to repeat something that we haven't said in a couple of days, and that is Tuesday's election day. And we have a hybrid system in place, and we take all, any concerns we hear, that we've heard, very seriously and we try to run them down whether it's with the US Postal Service with whom we're on regularly, or county clerks or other counterparts. This is a hybrid election in the sense that if you're registered either as a Democrat or Republican, you got a ballot. If you're an unaffiliated person, you got an application for a ballot. And you have two choices, either to vote by mail therefore, or to show up and vote in person on Tuesday. Each county has been required to have at least 50% capacity of in-person locations on Tuesday, and at least one location per municipality.

My strong plea is vote by mail. We're trying to balance the sacred right to vote as a central element, as the central element of our democracy and get that as right as we possibly can with, on the other hand, the public health concerns that Judy and her team want to make sure that we keep front of mind. So Tuesday, July 7 is our primary, both parties. There are a lot of folks on the ballot. I don't care who you vote for. I don't care what party you're in, but vote. And my strong request is that you vote by mail. That means you can exercise your democratic right, which all of us deserve. And secondly, you can do it in a way that best preserves your personal health.

So as I mask up, I want to say again, thank you to my colleagues, Judy and Ed and to the whole Department of Health team. I don't know where we'd be without you. Pat, to you and your extraordinary team, Jared, likewise, keeping us safe. Tim, thank you for everything you and the EDA folks have done and will do for our business community, especially our small business community. Matt and Mahen and Aswan and the rest of the team. I want to thank everybody for extraordinary efforts, day in and day out of responsible, common sense behavior. Please keep it up. We are entering the biggest holiday weekend of the year, please be safe. As Pat has asked us to, do the right thing. Use your head. Be responsible. Keep that up, folks. We're trying to save as many lives as possible here, in every respect, not just from COVID-19, but public safety as well.

Enjoy New Jersey, enjoy the things that we have begun to now overwhelmingly open up. Partake responsibly. Whatever you're doing, try to do it outside as opposed to inside, and for all of the challenges and all of the imperfections, may God bless the United States of America. Thank you.

Governor Phil Murphy

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

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