

Governor Phil Murphy

# TRANSCRIPT: March 5th, 2020 Coronavirus Briefing


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**Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver:** Good afternoon, everyone. Alongside me are the Department of Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli, our State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan, the Department of Health Assistant Commissioner Chris Neuwirth, State Police Superintendent Patrick Callahan, and Bergen County Executive Jim Tedesco.

Over the past 24 hours four additional presumed positive test results for coronavirus have been returned from the state lab and a fifth was returned from LabCorp. This brings the statewide total of presumptive positive results to 11. Commissioner Persichilli will speak directly to the status of these cases in a moment as well as to the number of persons under investigation.

Prior to this briefing, I participated on behalf of Governor Murphy in a video conference with governors from across the nation and Vice President Pence, and other federal health officials. New Jersey will continue to work with our neighboring states and partner with the federal government throughout our response. Again, I urge you to communicate to all New Jerseyans that the best way they can protect themselves from coronavirus is by practicing safe respiratory hygiene, and to stay home and call their healthcare provider if they feel sick.



If we all remain calm and informed and educated with each passing day, and just practice common sense, the risk of an individual contracting coronavirus remains low. And I am going to ask Commissioner Persichilli to give us a report.

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Thank you, Lieutenant Governor. Thank you for joining us this afternoon. We're reporting five new positive cases. The five cases, four of them were tested at the state lab and one of them was tested at LabCorp.

The first case is an 18-year-old from Clifton City, Passaic County. Onset of symptoms March 6th. I do not have the gender. The patient is not hospitalized. It is a possibility that the individual was exposed to COVID-19 on March 2nd, close contact with a known positive case in New York. The contact tracing has just begun.

The next case is a 48-year-old Berkeley Heights Township individual, Union County. Onset March 1st. The individual is inpatient at Overlook Medical Center. The exposure is reported to be with symptomatic friends from Milan, who have travelled from Milan but who apparently have tested negative for COVID-19. So, that is under investigation. Remember, we just got this information. Some of it is not complete. That's the reason but that is an unusual circumstance as it was reported to us.

The next case is a 27-year-old Little Silver Borough from Monmouth County. Onset February 29th. The patient is not hospitalized. The exposure to COVID-19 came from a conference that the person attended in Boston, a biogen conference. The person attended the conference between the dates of the 24th and the 28th of February. It is reported that 170 attendees from that conference have tested presumptive positive. And again, New Jersey contacts are pending.

The next case is an 83-year-old from Hazlett Township, Monmouth County. Onset March 3rd. The individual is inpatient at Bayshore Medical Center. Exposure to COVID-19 is unknown and New Jersey contacts are pending.

And the last case that we received from LabCorp is a 30-year-old individual from Teaneck Township, Bergen County. Onset March 3rd. The individual is hospitalized at Holy Name Medical Center and again, the exposure to COVID-19 is unknown. In addition, as of today we have 24 persons under investigation that are in the queue to be tested in our lab. As you know, we do not know what's pending in the commercial labs.

The fact that we're continuing to see additional cases is concerning but it is not unexpected. It follows the trend that we're seeing around the rest of the country and in fact the world. Based on these developments, today we will be increasing or strengthening our public health strategy to include not only all of our containment steps but to look at mitigation interventions which we began talking to all of you about in a number of these press briefings.


So, let me review the steps that we've taken thus far with containment and then we'll discuss case-by-case mitigation interventions. The first measure, as you know, was screening at the 11 funneled airports and that began February 2nd. The next level was monitoring individuals who traveled to impacted countries or who had contact with a confirmed case.


That progressed to the next level of public health investigation, and that begins once a case is presumed positive. The local Health Department is notified and begins an investigation to determine who may be at risk and to notify all of the individuals identified at risk. The local Health Departments are the ones who interview the individuals to learn who they may have come in close contact with since symptom onset, and what public places they may have visited.


Once those close contacts are identified, they are notified and asked to self-quarantine for a period up to 14 days. If for some reason they are not able to identify contacts but were at one of these public locations a public notification will be issued to inform the general public of possible exposure. Close contact individuals who are self-quarantined should remain at home, avoid having guests and visitors, and avoid close contact with others. They should not go to work or attend school during that 14-day period.

So, now it's time to consider the addition of strengthening mitigation interventions on a case-by-case basis. Mitigation interventions are focused on controlling the spread of disease. Containment on stopping, mitigation on controlling the spread. They include items such as self-quarantine which we've talked about and social distancing. Self-quarantine and social distancing are important public health measures. They help to contain COVID-19 illness that may occur in a community.

Social distancing interventions can include things like workplace accommodations, telecommunicating, school closures and/or dismissals, daycare center closures, screening visitors at long-term care facilities; or, depending non your inhabitants of the long-term care facilities and their vulnerable positions, actually restricting visitors. We have just finished a conference call with 408 long-term care providers in New Jersey to share these initiatives with them.

If you need to isolate, we're suggesting everyone be prepared. Consider what you may need if you require a 14-day quarantine. Stock up on a two weeks' supply of food and water. Make sure you have two weeks' supply of your prescription medications and nonprescription medications geared toward fever reducing. The Department of Health is available to discuss all of these situations  (<https://twitter.com/govmurphy>) case basis.

As stated repeatedly, this is an evolving situation. We're available 24/7 to respond to concerns and we direct your questions to an email address that we have set  (<https://www.youtube.com/njgovernorsoffice>) (mailto:NCOV@doh.nj.gov). And now, I'll turn this over to County Executive Tedesco.

 (<https://www.instagram.com/govmurphy/>)

**Bergen County Executive James Tedesco:** Thank you, Commissioner. Good afternoon. Today, I have instructed my administration to start to put in place a plan for mitigation. This will be in conjunction with the County Health Department and the State of New Jersey Health Department.

Mitigation is an effort to reduce the loss of life and rapid spread of the virus by lessening the impact of the coronavirus disease. In order for the mitigation to be effective, we need to take action now before the outbreak becomes a health crisis to reduce human consequences. Part of the mitigation process is to analyze the risk, reduce the risk, ensuring against risk.

As you know, accurate and timely information is critical in any large-scale event. As the coronavirus information is received by the New Jersey Department of Health and communicated to the county, we can begin identifying spread patterns and physical locations at a county-wide level. This information also helps our county health officers speaking with our local health officers as to what is happening throughout the County.

I'd like to take this time to thank the Department of Health and Commissioner Persichilli for understanding the need and importance of communicating with the County, and Governor Murphy's office for direct lines of communication that have been established.

Two points I'd like to make today: I would like to reinforce today that if anyone in Bergen or Passaic Counties are aware of any price gouging, please contact the Bergen County Consumer Affairs Department so we can immediately investigate that complaint. Today, the Bergen County Consumer Affairs teams are out doing spot checks around Bergen and Passaic Counties.

Second, the amount of people I've observed hoarding bottled water is unbelievable. As I stated last week, the water supplied by Suez Water, who is our largest water supplier in Bergen County is safe. The process Suez uses to purify the water kills bacteria and viruses. So please, there's no need to hoard bottled water.

Last, let me assure the people of Bergen County and New Jersey – we will get through this. We have been through many difficult times in the past. New Jersey people are strong, resilient and tough, but most of all we care about each other. We are Jersey Strong. Thank you.

### Q&A Session:

**Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver:** We're ready for questions if anyone has them. Yes?

**Reporter:** This morning Governor Cuomo announced that Chief of the Port Authority has been diagnosed with coronavirus. His Chief of Security was here in this room with all of you one week ago. Has [he been quarantined] and is there any concern that he could have exposed any of you?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** I am not... We have just been notified of the Port Authority Chief's positive result so we have not gotten to the point where we would determine if his Chief of Security was in close enough contact, not only with him but with all of us to be concerned. Dr. Tan, you have any...

**State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan:** Just to remind everybody about the importance of the risk assessment, because people who are not symptomatic, you know, around you are not posing a risk to exposure of any other individuals. We'd need to have more information, as the Commissioner had alluded to, just more information from that particular case patient to be able to do that appropriate risk assessment; and then, the subsequent public health recommendations with regard to whether or not individuals have to be self-quarantined or not.

**Reporter:** Commissioner, can you review for us the whole process of testing? How many coronavirus tests do we have in New Jersey right now and take us through the steps of which someone would go through to make the determination that someone should get tested? How many tests do we have? How many are we expecting from the CDC? How long does the process take and then do we have enough tests to go around?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** We'll start with the first step as a patient that presents primarily symptomatic to their healthcare professional, and an initial screening takes place. And that screening includes asking questions as to travel to China, South Korea, Italy, Iran where there's community transmission. If it's determined that that individual fits what we call the persons under investigation criteria a nasopharyngeal oral swab is taken, and it's sent to... Up till last Friday it would be 100% sent to the state lab, and we're going to talk a little bit about the differences between that process from the commercial lab to the state lab. Once it hits the state lab that's Chris' area.

**DOH Assistant Commissioner Chris Neuwirth:** Yes, so once we receive specimens each day, the specimens are processed. That process takes several hours. The specimens are then batched together and the tests are run for whichever specimens we received on that given day. To date, we have two test kits for a total of 432 tests, 216 each. Each test kit has 500 of which you can test 216 individuals, two test kits. Today, we are in the process for placing an order for a third test kit to ensure that we have that capacity. Once the specimens are batched together and those tests are run, within 24 to 48 hours we have those results available.

**Reporter:** Does that mean they're sent to the CDC and that there's confirmation?

**DOH Assistant Commissioner:** No, that's an additional step. So, within 24 to 48 hours we have processed the results. We begin a notification process through other aspects of the Department, to the local Health Departments and the healthcare providers caring for these individuals. And then, our specimens that we ran those tests on are packaged appropriately and brought via a courier to CDC in Atlanta; where then, an additional confirmatory test is done for quality control purposes, and that can take, as we've seen with our first few cases upwards of a week.

**Reporter:** I have a question about the spread. Do you see any evidence of spread at this point or is it still isolated cases?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Dr. Tan?



**State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan:** Right now we have four individuals, four cases that are associated with known COVID cases from out of state. We also have the remainder that are in the process of determining the exposure source. We probably won't be able to identify the exposure source for some of them, but at this time there does not appear to be sustained community transmission in light of what we're seeing. But again, we continue to follow, we continue to monitor what's going on. That's why it's so important in these beginning stages when we're getting this information that we focus on looking at those

contacts. And then, as we progress, as more disease might eventually become more prevalent in the community, that's when we start and continue to look at other steps and strategies to mitigate spread, as the County Executive had mentioned.

**Reporter:** [inaudible question]

**DOH Assistant Commissioner:** So, we have not yet received CDC confirmations from the first two cases. We've reached out to the CDC as recently as of this morning. We have still not received that confirmation, and at this time we are unaware of exactly what is causing that delay.

**Reporter:** [inaudible question]

**Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver:** I think that the businesses in New Jersey are well aware, and I consider the casino industry a business. Commissioner Persichilli and the Office of the Governor held a teleconference with businesses across the state. We have not imposed any limitations on businesses that operate in the state. At this stage we are simply advising business owners of what is happening in Jersey, where we are IDing cases, and describing to them the same precautions that we are advising the public. Large. And then, because they're public facilities, I think that many of our businesses are focusing in on sanitizing public restrooms and other kinds of things.  <https://www.facebook.com/governorphilmurphy> wiping down the kiosks that passengers use. So, they're o  <https://www.youtube.com/njgovernorsoffice> Bow, who's to say in the days coming, if we find ourselves in a different place in New Jersey we will revisit that conversation with businesses in New Jersey. Yes?

**Reporter:** [inaudible question]

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** The report that we have, it came through our CDS, our epidemiology center from just this morning, some brief comments from the Health Officer. So, we have not confirmed it.

**Reporter:** From which health officer?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** It would be the health officer in the county in which the person resides, which is Monmouth.

**Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver:** Yes?

**Reporter:** How close are we if at all to the potential for schools to close in New Jersey as a precautionary measure and how will that happen?

**Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver:** Commissioner?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Yes, thank you. Schools make their own decisions. They have their own policies around closures or dismissals. We're working closely with Commissioner Lamont Repollet and last week we held a conference call with all of the public, private and charter schools in New Jersey. And we're in close contact. They're calling us if they have any issues. We know of two schools that have closed for short periods of time to amplify the education of their faculty and to strengthen their disinfection procedures. Other than that, we have not heard of any other schools that have closed at this point. The school in Passaic has closed. This week there is the Jewish holiday and they decided to take two extra days to do exactly the same as I articulated with their faculty and teaching.

**Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver:** Charlie?

**Charlie Stile, The Record:** Commissioner, the Crimson University today put out an advisory saying that, urging online courses and urging students one, not to come back after spring break. I read that to mean kind of a proactive, preemptive step to prevent community spread. Is it safe considering the same action at Rutgers University which has a population that's much larger and much more mobile? And what about that argument? It seems like you're in mitigation. Should you take a preemptive step to prevent community spread? Or it sounds like you're in a position of waiting to have evidence before you take more drastic forms.

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** We're actually doing both containment and mitigation in selected areas, so it's not that we're waiting for mitigation. I reference the work of the County Executive in Bergen. We do know that some of the cases in Bergen have a relation to the cluster in Westchester, New York. So, he is taking very strong steps to protect the rest of his community and we're working with him on that. So, it depends on what we're seeing. We have 11 cases, primarily in the North; very few in the South although they're beginning. So, we keep an eye on that. I think probably this week we might have some stronger recommendations on mitigation as we see things come out.

**Charlie Stile, The Record:** What about Rutgers?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** I have not had any discussion with Rutgers at this point in time.

**Reporter:** Commissioner, it's been mentioned that the local Health Departments do the initial screening. Is there a concern or are there tests ongoing for these individuals to see if they have coronavirus? Because my understanding is, there's a lot of conjecture that a lot of people may have it and not even know it because they may really have very mild symptoms. But then, they could be passing it to other people that they're in contact with.

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** The transmissibility of the disease certainly is under scrutiny. If you're asymptomatic and you don't have close contact with a diagnosed COVID-19 patient, you would not be considered a person under investigation at this point in time. So, there's no mass testing for COVID-19. Dr. Tan, anything you'd like to add to that?

**State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan:** Just that right now the focus is on testing individuals who are asymptomatic because we have to recognize that during this period of time, just because you have a... If you are an exposed individual who is asymptomatic, who actually has a close contact with a confirmed case, if you are negative early on without your symptoms, it doesn't necessarily mean during your incubation period that there wouldn't be a period of time later where you actually subsequently develop the symptoms. And then, you would subsequently pick up that positive when you're symptomatic, if that makes sense.

**Reporter:** Wouldn't it make sense to test these people because they may not show symptoms? And then if they're constantly testing people and meeting people who may or may not be infected with coronavirus, then they would have a higher risk I would think.

**State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan:** Doing frequent testing might give a false sense of security, because just because an individual is negative who has a close contact with an individual who is a case, doesn't necessarily mean that they won't become a case subsequently. So, we have to also consider the judicious use of these tests in the context of limited resources, in the context of trying to prioritize where we want to focus our attention – for example, on those older individuals who might be hospitalized, who are at higher risk of complication and death and hospitalization. So, this all factors into the considerations for the testing. That's why, again, the emphasis has always been on the self-quarantine, about taking those everyday preventive steps that you can do in the meanwhile.

**Reporter:** Can you talk about, you're saying people should be prepared for self-quarantine. Is it your recommendation that everybody in New Jersey has two weeks' worth of medicine and food, and if so, what about people on food stamps?


**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** That's a great question, and the first thing is I think everybody in New Jersey should always have emergency preparedness supplies in their home. I can only reflect on what happened with Superstorm Sandy and some people could not get out of their homes. So, that's just a general emergency preparedness recommendation; not necessarily for COVID-19. It's good for the whole population. We're looking at, we're working with DHS and Children and Families. They're part of our Taskforce. One of their preparedness is to look at not only medication supplies but definitely food supplies for individuals that are on assistance. I don't have specifics today. We will have our meeting tomorrow. That's part of their preparedness plans.



**Reporter:** [inaudible] contact with Milan but they tested negative? Were they asymptomatic?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** I don't know. What I told you was what I know. That is a case that came in this morning, so I wanted to give you the most up-to-date information that we have. That definitely will be evolving. I gave you what I know.

**Reporter:** Just to clarify, are all 11 patients still in stable condition and is there a reason why those cases haven't escalated into more grave cases? We've seen deaths in other states and other areas.

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** I don't have the current states of the individuals. We have heard anecdotally that one of them has worsening respiratory symptoms but I don't have specificity on that. So, we're watching it very carefully because when the symptoms progress, what we've seen is that they progress rapidly. So, you could be doing very, very well and then go to bad very quickly. So, that's the concern.

**Reporter:** Commissioner, a clarification. You said earlier that everyone should stock up on two weeks' of food and water, and County Executive Tedesco is talking about people hoarding bottled water. Should we be stocking up on water? What's the correct thing to be doing there?  (<https://twitter.com/GovMurphy>)

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Well, it's for emergency preparedness. We always talk about food, enough water, sanitation supplies. That's just a general recommendation.  (<https://www.facebook.com/governorphilmurphy>)  
 (<https://www.youtube.com/njgovernorsoffice>)  
 emergency preparedness. What County Executive Tedesco is an unusual response. I can't describe why people would be hoarding water for a long period of time.

**Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver:** But back to the original question (<https://www.nj.gov/newsroom/governor/>) trying to describe and someone asked if someone is placed in quarantine for 14 days, we're urging people in quarantine not to go out into the community. So, as she said (<https://www.spea.net.com/addressing>) management purposes to have something in your pantry and to have water on hand. But we're not trying to put a run on the supermarkets for people to go out and buy water. That is the point she was making, that people who are in quarantine and we're urging them not to leave their home, let's make certain that they have just something in the house to eat and that there is water in the house.

**Reporter:** Commissioner, you mentioned the email address for questions. What's been the response to the call-in hotline? Has it been flooded? Have there been issues or have things been going well?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** The call-in hotline is quite busy. The last count I saw was between 2000 and 2500. I get the specifics every morning. And every time we announce a case we do see an increase in the call-in line.

**Reporter:** Governor, with all of this attention, and understandably so, on this situation, people are panicking. I couldn't find Softsoap in Target and Walmart over the weekend. You know, really? Softsoap? Any words of advice in terms of yes, this is a serious situation but let's not get hysterical here?

**Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver:** The Attorney General is dispatching inspectors into retail establishments across the state. When he was here the other day he placed on the record that they are prepared to use the tools that they have as the Attorney General's Office to deal with people that are price gouging. And we know that it is happening but the Attorney General is down on the ground, as are local departments of Consumer Affairs. County Executive Tedesco described to us earlier that today, as we're sitting here, his Bergen County inspectors are within the County, going into retail places and seeing if they are price gouging.

**Reporter:** Beyond price gouging though, I mean just in general, do people have to go out and buy all these things, and make a run on toilet paper and soap?

**Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver:** I think that... Listen, we're New Jersey. You know if there is one flake of snow we're going to get milk and bread. So, that's just who we are.

**Reporter:** Is there any recommendation for spring break travel, any restrictions or recommendations since this hits different parts of the country a lot more intensely than we've experienced.



**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** I think if you look at the CDC site they're talking about travel not only internationally but domestic travel. Make your own decisions but depending on where you're going, be concerned and be aware of travel advisories if you're going to be travelling internationally. Dr. Anthony Fauci, head of NIH said very clearly if you're thinking about a cruise you might want to rethink that. So, we're letting people take personal responsibility but giving them broad advisories as to areas and what they should be considering for travel. And cruises are not high on the list at this point.


**Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver:** Yes?



**Reporter:** Commissioner, do you have any details on the previous cases, the 70-year-old man from Teaneck who's [inaudible]?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** An update on their conditions are you asking or...

**Reporter:** Conditions and any details. As far as know there wasn't any detail on the man from West New York and the last time we discussed the 70-year-old man he was presumed to be [inaudible].

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Thank you. The contact tracing takes place from the local health officials. I don't get those reports. I don't know,  (https://twitter.com/GovMurphy)  (https://www.facebook.com/governorphilmurphy) an if they're updated on a regular basis?

**State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan:** They are updated  (https://www.youtube.com/njgovernoroffice) but we don't currently have the updated information.

**Reporter:** Question about the local health officials. That's the primary point of contact for someone suspected. Do you have an inventory in the state as to, or I guess a survey or analysis of whether each municipality does have a qualified person to do those tests.  (https://www.instagram.com/govmurphy/)  (https://www.snapchat.com/add/philmurphy) I mean, from my understanding some towns don't.

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** The first thing is everyone that is now an identified health official has the appropriate certifications, and they are in contact on a regular basis with our Program Director at the Department of Health. We have a group that provides oversight to the health officials. On your second point, there are some municipalities that do not have health officials, or they may have a Director of the Department of Health but they don't have a health officer. And we're trying to work and support those departments, not only in their recruitment efforts but also in any efforts that they have to implement at this point in time. Some of the public health nurses are jumping in to help with the contact tracing and the visits to the homes.

**Reporter:** Isn't there a point where that's the state's responsibility, having we the people go out and do that kind of work?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** I'm not aware if there was or... Tina, have you?

**Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver:** Yes, this gentleman.

**Reporter:** [inaudible] ...hospitalized in Hackensack. He was reported to be a healthcare worker in New York. Did you guys determine yet whether this person worked with acute cases or was he in health insurance, or what does that mean? And was there a risk to greater exposure?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** My understanding with that case, and I think it's the same case we're talking about that was interviewed on television this morning? A healthcare worker – he said he was a physician's assistant, and I got my information from, I think it was one of the shows.

**Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver:** Brenda?

**Brenda Flanagan, NJTV:** Can you talk about mitigation and just what the state at this point is prepared to do in terms of stepping in? Do you say no crowds at basketball games? Do you say this conference, you might want to rethink it, reschedule? Where do you go with mitigation?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Well, mitigation can go pretty far depending on the identification of community spread. At this point, the Corona Taskforce is meeting tomorrow and it's one of our items on the agenda – to develop the criteria of how you make the decision of how far to go with



mitigation. I point again to Bergen County, the County Executive in collaboration with us has decided that he is going to push that more – not because he has five cases but because he’s concerned that those five cases, some of them are concerned to the Westchester spread. So, you could have more mitigation in the north and none in the south. Again, it depends on the progression of the disease but it will be an agenda item for sure at our Taskforce.

**Reporter:** A question for Dr. Tan, and you might not be able to answer this, but it seems like outbreaks [for lack of a better term seem to take on a bell curve shape.] Where are we on the curve line.

**State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan:** That’s an excellent question. We don’t know, right? You know, right now we’re actively trying to monitor the cases, trying to get the intake on the cases. We know nationally we’re seeing the case count rise. So, like we say for influenza it’s unpredictable at this point so we’ll just have to continue monitoring.

**Reporter:** Do you know we’re in what phase with the number of cases [inaudible]?

**State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan:** Again, that’s an excellent question. To your point about the concept of mitigation and the concept of what you’re referring to as an epi curve, it’s a bell curve. And usually for outbreaks you tend to see a peak and then a decline. And what we’re doing is we’re trying to do with containment efforts and with mitigation in particular as we’re dealing with these, if we see larger-scale community spread is we want to flatten that curve and then prolong that. And the CDC website has some excellent information and guidance related again to these community mitigations. And if you’re interested in looking more at the modeling and the science, it’s outlined there really nicely about how to flatten that curve.

**Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver:** Okay, let’s go to this gentleman and then we’ll come back to you, Brenda. And if there is anyone who has not yet had an opportunity to ask a question, then we will take this gentleman’s question, then Brenda’s, and then we’ll wind up.

**Reporter:** Okay, sort of a follow-up to Brenda’s question to you, Commissioner, with regard to mitigation and containment. If there is all of a sudden a pocket of more activity, wouldn’t it make sense... Or how far do we go with containment and mitigation? If it’s North Jersey, don’t you want to say to people in Central and South Jersey “Don’t go in North Jersey,” or “Limit crowds” or whatever?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Well, it depends on what we’re seeing. I mean, I can just point to the measles epidemic that we saw a little way back. There were clusters, measles being the most contagious disease so far that we know of – and there were clusters but we didn’t shut everybody down. You know, you work with the progression of the disease in an area. If we start seeing outbreaks in all 21 counties, if we see exponential increase over time in those counties, yeah, we may say this is a statewide effort. But we don’t see that yet. We do expect more cases. I don’t want to sugarcoat that at all. But we also know that if people protect themselves – we have to emphasize good hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette. If you’re sick stay home and if you’re sitting next to someone that’s coughing and appears sick, and doesn’t have their own self-wisdom to stay home, you get away from them. I just need to emphasize that. It’s like the flu and it’s like any other respiratory droplet disease.

**Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver:** And Brenda?

**Brenda Flanagan, NJTV:** You said that at this point, except for what is happening in Bergen you don’t see cases of community spread. Are you seeing any pattern to the cases that are popping up in New Jersey at this point?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** The interesting thing, and we just commented on this this morning, is that we seem to have younger cases – that so many of the cases seem to be elderly. We seem to have, not children, we seem to have some younger cases – 18, 30. But I don’t see any pattern, Dr. Tan, do you?

**State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan:** Again, what we’re seeing right now in New Jersey is associated, for example, with New York cases, with out-of-state cases. They’re clustering around known COVID-19 cases, so the demographics of that might be a little bit different particular to the community that is

exposed to that case. And again, depending on what we continue to see, that will shift. We would expect that it will probably shift.

**Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver:** We'll take your last question and we'll be here tomorrow again. We're going to give you a daily briefing, so you will have an opportunity over the next 24 hours as we see what has occurred during that time period. Yes?

**Reporter:** Do you have any information about the cases in South Jersey? I understand that there are four employees from the urgent care that are now self-quarantining. The person said if there were patients in the office they would all need to quarantine. Do you know anything about that?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** I know that the urgent care centers were all notified and that they undertook their own notification of not only their healthcare workers and people that were in the waiting room when this case was in the waiting room. And they have all been notified, and it is the recommendation of up to a 14-day quarantine and if you become symptomatic to call your healthcare provider.

**Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver:** And as we close, I'd just like to, of the public information piece to communicate to the people of New Jersey, that if they have questions or inquiries, they can go to our coronavirus information page at [www.NJ.gov/health](http://www.NJ.gov/health) (<http://www.NJ.gov/health>). We maintain two toll-free numbers. If you are calling within the state, you can call 1-800-222-1222. Or if you are calling from out of state, you can call 1-800-962-1253. Thank you, everyone.



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