

Governor Phil Murphy

TRANSCRIPT: March 27th, 2020 Coronavirus Briefing Media

03/28/2020

Holding a COVID-19 briefing. WATCH LIVE:



Governor Phil Murphy: Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for coming.

I'm joined by the woman to my right who needs no introduction, the Commissioner of Health Judy Persichilli; to her right, Department of Health Communicable Disease Service Medical Director Dr. Ed Lifshitz – Dr. Lifshitz, good to have you with us back; to my left, State Police Superintendent Col. Pat Callahan – Pat; Director of the Office of Homeland Security Jared Maples is with us. We'll get right to the numbers and we've got a lot of ground to cover, so if you could please bear with us.

Since our briefing yesterday, we have had 1982 new positive tests, bringing our statewide total to 8825. In addition, we have lost another 27 precious souls of our fellow New Jersey population to COVID-19-related complications. We have now lost a total of 108 precious lives. We mourn with these families and indeed with our entire state every precious life that has been lost. God rest their souls. As usual, Judy will be giving you more color on the details of these both positive cases as well as general information about the lives that we have lost.

My thoughts and indeed our thoughts are also with the women and men in our hospitals, working valiantly to save lives, and I can only imagine the emotional toll on them as well when they lose a patient. In fact, it isn't easy on any of us. These aren't abstract numbers. These are our neighbors, our family, our friends, all of us. We are in this together and we mourn together.

But I reiterate, we have expected with a very heavy heart that this would take an increasing toll on our state. In terms of the lives lost, they're lost and we can't bring them back, and that is as stark a reality as any of us have to face. And that obviously strikes all of us, particularly those closest to the folks who have been lost deeply.



But we have also said, and we've expected all along the testing results that we are seeing. We have been preparing for this since January, literally weeks before – many weeks, I think about a month, almost a month and a half – before we had our first positive case.

Before I speak more about testing, I want to announce that I have authorized the advanced payment of more than \$140 million to our healthcare providers to ready them for COVID-19-related expenses, including from our active efforts to significantly and immediately expand their capacity. We must ensure their viability to meet the challenge this emergency has imposed.

Now, on testing, we know so much of our chances for success in ending this emergency relies on expanding testing. We have the lab capacity in New Jersey, and we have taken concrete steps to increase our specimen collection capacity. And that is an all-hands-on-deck process from the Department of Health, our federal partners in at least two of these sites with FEMA, our local Health Departments – county and local; our healthcare systems and of course our private sector labs.

The metric that we have been focused on from day one and that everyone must be focused on is the rate of positive tests among symptomatic individuals. Quite frankly, in a perfect world I suppose we'd do it, but for the experts to my right, quite frankly attempting to test every single person would give us data that in the context of fighting a pandemic, and particularly given limited capacity, would be useless.

Let me put it this way – we need to know we're testing the right people and not wasting tests. Testing the worried well, the so-called worried well and the asymptomatic would be an inappropriate use of our testing supplies, an unnecessary stress on our labs and on our healthcare workers, and would not provide us with the critical data that we need to get out in front and to stay out in front.

Our best metric, and Judy and Ed will get into this shortly – our best metric for ensuring that our testing resources are being appropriately dispersed and that our greater medical resources are being put to their best and highest use, especially our healthcare workers, comes from testing the right people – those who are symptomatic. The fact that we have among if not the highest positivity rates is a good thing, and it shows us that we are using our limited resources to their highest and best use.

In case anyone is wondering whether or not we've aggressively expanded our testing, this is a list of where you can get tested in the state, right now in New Jersey, okay? So, as you can see, there's about 20 to 25 different locations and options. But again, who are we testing is the most important variable here? And we have decided from moment one, thanks to the input from the team to my right, that testing symptomatic people is the most important cohort; and secondly, allows us the best chance to understand the dimensions of this virus and therefore what we're going to do to break the back of it. That has been our commitment from day one. I'll put our aggressive testing of symptomatic individuals up against any other place in this country if not this world.

And while I am on the issue of testing, I want to remind everybody that tomorrow – and Pat will correct the record here if I get this wrong. Tomorrow, Saturday March 28th, both the Bergen Community College site and the PNC Bank Arts Center drive-through site will be reserved for symptomatic healthcare workers and first responders – police, fire and EMS – with valid credentials only. And I think after Judy speaks, Pat, there'll be a couple things I'd love you to address, including asking you to speak to what this means in terms of the credentials that will be accepted. These sites will each open tomorrow at 8:00 AM. The general public will not be able to access these sites tomorrow.

Starting next week, these sites will reopen for the general public and begin operating on a staggered schedule. So, on Sunday, March 29th, the day after tomorrow, only the Bergen Community College site will be open and it will be able to test 500 people starting at 8:00 AM – 500 symptomatic people starting at 8:00 AM. And then, on Monday March 30th, only the PNC Bank Arts Center site will be open, again at 8:00 AM for 500 tests for folks who are symptomatic. I'll use these briefings to remind everyone of which site will be open the following day, and we'll also make this information available online at our all-in – as you can see behind me – website, www.covid19.nj.gov (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov>). And through that portal, by the way, you can take a self-test for symptoms of COVID-19. Again, only those exhibiting symptoms will be tested.

In the meantime, I continue to urge everyone in the strongest possible terms to continue practicing social distancing and to stay at home as much as possible. I know we are coming into spring and the weather is really nice today, it was beautiful outside coming in here. So, the temptation is to get outside, who could blame you, for a walk or a run. But even as you do, it is essential that you practice social distancing. Even if you're doing healthy activities you can still spread coronavirus, so keeping that six-foot distance is crucial and be mindful of that. So, I hate to break the news here – this is not the time for a pickup game of basketball, for example. If you're outside, stick to activities that allow you to keep that crucial distance between you and others.

Today, and I will hold this up as another exhibit – with your logo on here, Judy, I might add – we're going to be providing all essential retail businesses with further guidance for ensuring social distancing within their stores while they remain open. I ask all essential retail businesses to review this guidance, again on www.covid19.nj.gov (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov>) and apply these practices in your establishments.

I spoke earlier today or exchanged notes earlier today with Marc Perrone, who I mentioned his name already in one of our prior sessions – the leader of the UFCW Union which is one of the largest if not the largest retail union in the country. And again, Marc expressed an important point which we've raised here before, which is you've got healthcare workers and first

responders, and not too terribly far behind you've got folks who are doing the essential work in supermarkets and pharmacies, who are coming into contact with folks. And they just, because of the limited supplies we have nationally have less personal protective equipment at their disposal, etc.

So, this directive from Judy and her colleagues walks through best practices including density, keeping densities at these retail operations as low as possible; keeping that six-foot distance possible – not possible but mandated; to make sure that there's a hyper-hygiene, much more regular hygiene in terms of hand hygiene and wiping down surfaces, etc.

In addition, while there has been broad compliance with my executive orders, we're still hearing a few too many reports of essential businesses that are failing to implement social distancing – in fact, more than a few too many reports. This is especially crucial for our warehouse and manufacturing personnel, again, like our retail brothers and sisters, who are on the frontlines of our supply chains. And these businesses must do everything they can to provide protections against the spread of coronavirus. Social distancing is especially important for them and no one should be expected to go to work if they are sick.

And again, if you see a nonessential business which continues operating in violation of my orders, please reach out to us again, at the same general website – you can see it behind me – www.covid19.nj.gov/violation (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov/violation>). And again, you're going to see within that website lots of different pages you can go to. We need everybody to do their part to slow the spread of coronavirus.

Pat, not now but if you wouldn't mind again after Judy finishes we'd love you to... We've had largely, broadly-speaking good compliance with no gatherings but we still have had a few exceptions. And if you wouldn't mind after Judy going through a couple things, a little bit of overnight data and also some of the stuff that you guys are doing to push back on that.

Now switching gears, a couple of just quick highlights here. Again, our corporate citizens have stepped up in a big way and continue to do so. You heard me mention Merck the other day, a couple hundred thousand of N95 masks. Had a great reach out from Apple and they are stepping up in a big way. I want to thank in Merck's case CEO Ken Frazier who's a New Jersey icon as is Merck; Apple, Tim Cook and New Jersey's own Lisa Jackson.

Our friends at UBS who have a huge presence in Weehawken are stepping up with some N95s – thank you to the team, UBS, Tom Naratil and his colleagues. Thank you. Johnson & Johnson, stepping up, Judy, with 10,000 pairs of healthcare goggles that we desperately need. Alex Gorsky and I were back and forth – again, a huge iconic New Jersey institution and a great leader. Goldman Sachs has stepped up again; I mentioned them earlier. They have now come across with another 80,000 N95s now for a total of 175,000 N95s, and they are scouring their client system to see if they can unearth any ventilators. And by the way, John, we've found no – since your question we've got no evidence of anybody in New Jersey right now making ventilators, not that we would not like that to happen.

South Jersey Industries Mike Renna sent me a note this morning, stepping up – in their case cash to both relief funds as well as directly to nonprofit hospitals who need the financial support now more than ever. I want to thank Mike and the South Jersey colleagues. Again, there's lots of great examples of this. That's just a recent list.

I've done since we last saw you a couple of group calls, in each case with Judy I might add among others. Yesterday, I think we had 119 out of 120 legislators on a call yesterday, both sides of the aisle; a very good chance for Judy and myself and Pat and others to sort of bring the legislature up to speed. They've been great, by the way. I just exchanged calls, I didn't get him, with Steve Sweeny coming in here. Both sides of the aisle and they had a lot of really good questions and really good suggestions.

Judy and I this morning, along with Human Services Commissioner Carole Johnson did a call with AARP organized by their leadership. I'll raise my hand and say I am a member, and I was told there were 15,000 people on that call this morning. And so, to our seniors who were on that call and/or who are watching now, we have your backs. And we know this is a particularly anxiety-provoking time for you all.

I also got a really good note from Kevin Slavin, who you folks may know is not just the CEO of St. Joseph's Hospital but also Chairman of the New Jersey Hospital Association, and some really good news that his colleague that he mentioned a couple of weeks ago – I think two weeks ago today – Jim Pruden is on the road to recovery. He's been off the ventilators for a few days and he gave me permission to say that. So, that's really, really good news to hear.

So, and we'll keep switching gears here. As we've discussed over the past several days, we're also working with our Level I hospital systems and the US Army Corps of Engineers to standup three field medical stations at The Meadowlands Exposition Center in Secaucus, the New Jersey Convention Center in Edison and the Atlantic City Convention Center. In fact, I think, Pat, this is right – Captain Kilcomons I know is at the helm here on your side. State Police personnel and Meadowlands Exposition Center staff and union contractors I believe are unloading the first 250-bed field medical station onsite as we speak. So, this is happening. We told you this would happen quickly and in fact it is happening quickly.

Having said all that and Judy has spoken to this, I just want to add my voice to it, we are very mindful of the need for trained medical personnel to help us ensure proper staffing as we build out this new capacity. We are a state that is blessed to have countless dedicated and committed healthcare workers, doctors and nurses and everyone in between. And they have enough on their plates and we know we need to call for experienced backup. We need to go to the bullpen, as they say in baseball.

Today I am adding my voice and putting out a call for volunteers with qualified medical training and experience who wish to join our fight against coronavirus. This isn't just for New Jersey residents either. We're looking across our nation for help. Retired nurses or doctors, nursing and medical students, EMTs, former members of our Armed Services Medical Corps, any of the above, all of the above – if you have training we need you. If you're willing to join our fight please go to www.covid19.nj.gov/volunteer (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov/volunteer>). And you can see that behind me. Again, www.covid19.nj.gov/volunteer (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov/volunteer>) to sign up.

Our Office is also working directly with our business partners regarding possible transportation and lodging arrangements for those coming from outside our area, so stay tuned for more on that. But again, I repeat, if you have medical experience and wish to pitch in to help us get through this emergency, please sign up at www.covid19.nj.gov/volunteer (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov/volunteer>). And I cannot thank you enough in advance.

Additionally, we continue accepting donations of personal protective equipment or PPE that our frontline public health and safety responders desperately need. This includes N95 masks and gloves and everything in between. If you have PPE to donate, please reach out to us again through our one-stop portal www.covid19.nj.gov/ppedonations (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov/ppedonations>). Again, www.covid19.nj.gov/ppedonations (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov/ppedonations>).

And a reminder to all businesses and non-hospital healthcare facilities in possession of PPE – this is not an ask, this is an order – that you're not using that PPE for critical healthcare services, you have until 5:00 PM today to submit information to us regarding your inventories. This reporting was ordered and I expect full compliance. Again, this is for businesses and all non-hospital healthcare facilities that are sitting on PPE. We need you to report your inventories to us by 5:00 PM today. And again, you can see businesses lining up on their own, volunteering compliance and for that we will never forget.

And for the healthcare facilities, particularly those, Judy has reminded us, who would have otherwise been doing elective surgeries – which tonight we are suspending indefinitely – there are PPE in those locations and additionally there are ventilators. We need all of that to be registered by today. Again, this reporting should be done through our online platform and by going directly in this case, www.covid19.nj.gov/ppereport (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov/ppereport>). Thank you for that.

As you can see, we have a lot of information that we are trying to get out while also trying to get a lot of information in, and this is why we created www.covid19.nj.gov (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov>), to be a single point of reference for everyone throughout this crisis. Putting this site together has been a whole of government approach, and it has also allowed us to form great partnerships as I mentioned with our private sector partners as well. Quarterbacking this process has been the Office of Innovation led by Chief Innovation Officer Beth Novek and her tremendous team.

Additionally, we have received a generous ad grant from another corporate citizen Google that will allow us to more readily and proactively push essential information out to New Jerseyans through Google's search platform. This means we'll be able to reach exponentially more people and not just those who are coming to the www.covid19.nj.gov (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov>) portal. I'm going to ask in fact Beth Novek to join us at a future briefing, if that's okay with you, Madame Commissioner, Colonel, to give us a little more on how the Office of Innovation is working to keep New Jerseyans informed. But I thank her and her entire team for their hard work. And again, I urge everyone with questions to go to that website, to make this portal their very first stop with questions, concerns, comments. Again, it's www.covid19.nj.gov (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov>).

I know there are many New Jerseyans worried – switching gears, by the way – many New Jerseyans worried about being able to make their mortgage payments next week. I and my team understand and fully appreciate your concerns, and we have been speaking directly with mortgage lenders and many others about solutions. We are working tirelessly on this and I look forward to having a full announcement on this tomorrow.

Speaking of which, a program note for each of you here and everyone watching at home – tomorrow our briefing will be live, not on the telephone, at 1:00 PM here in person at the War Memorial. As of now, on Sunday there will be no in-person briefing but we will report out testing results and other information to you all electronically. And I commit to you personally, if for whatever reason there is something material that happens in between Saturday's briefing and when we would otherwise give you the readout of the information on Sunday that is material, I will personally likely get on the phone with you. But at the moment, we will keep Sunday to an electronic distribution of an update on test results. Please God no, but we expect fatalities and that will be done electronically.

And then, one other program note, starting on Monday we will be back here daily at the War Memorial beginning at 1:00 PM. So, we're going to move, assuming we don't run into the President's or the Vice President's video calls, we're going to move our press briefings daily from 2:00 PM to 1:00 PM beginning I guess tomorrow theoretically. We're going to be here at 1:00 PM tomorrow, but we will also on our weekdays move to 1:00 PM.

Before I turn to Judy, two sort of other things that struck me particularly today. I read, if you haven't read it there's a fascinating piece by David Brooks in the New York Times that talks about on the one hand the gravity, the severity, the fatality in so many respects, the loneliness of what we're facing – not just as a state but as a nation right now and all that goes with that. Sort of the weight that's on everyone's shoulders, that knot in your stomach where all of us would like to know more than we know right now – where's this headed? How long is it going to last? When's it going to stop? Is it going to impact me directly or a family member or a friend?

But it was also striking, and this is emblematic of something that I've been feeling and I've said in a couple of interviews over the past 24 hours. At the same time, it also feels like this grave moment is reaching deep into our souls and our better selves, and we are – even if it's in a virtual way, even if it's those examples from Milan of singing from balconies or the meet-ups that folks are having through social media, the virtual connections that we're making – it's also calling out our better angels. And in a way, it is beginning to make some of the big fights that we've had over the past number of years if not decades look trivial by comparison to the fight before us. And there's something, as grave as this is, as tragic as the loss of life is, as real as the knots in our stomachs and the weights on our shoulders, there's something cathartic about that. There's something that's uplifting about that.

And so, I would just say that we understand that. We understand both the anxiety but also the fact that we are coming together like never before. And I would just say as a practical matter, particularly to somebody who you know is alone, literally alone, one thing we could all do today – and maybe let's do it each day over the weekend, is to touch somebody that we haven't been touching lately, whether it's a phone call, whether it's an email, whether it's a wave through a window. Keep the social distancing, by the way, we can't violate that. But to find a way to touch somebody who is alone, who's been off by themselves, and to make sure that they know that you're here for them.

The second, I mentioned this earlier, that Judy and I and Carole Johnson spoke with, I'm told 15,000 members of AARP, of which I am a member. I don't readily admit that but it's true. And I mentioned at the end of my remarks, I said, "Listen, this is a war." And I said, "We all know what the ingredients are to winning a war," and I referred to WWII. And it struck me as I was saying that to this particular group, and I think I acknowledged it – Judy can correct me if I'm wrong – that we were speaking to folks, if they were 80 or 85 years old or older, and we've got a lot of them in New Jersey, thank God, this wasn't abstract. They lived it. They might have been on the young side but they lived it.

So, I was born in '57. I know this from my dad, my uncles, my aunts, my grandparents, but we've got a lot of folks in this state and Judy and I spoke to a lot of them this morning who were there and who saw with their own eyes what it takes to win a war. And it doesn't take panic. That's the last thing we need. And just as equally so, it isn't business as usual. We're in a war footing. It takes being smart, aggressive, proactive, lots of courage, an incredible worth ethic, stick-to-itiveness, and understanding that WWII wasn't a sprint and neither is this war. We're going to be at this for awhile, please God, not the length of time we were at WWII but we're at this for awhile.

And they know, 'cause they lived it, and we all know by reflection from their experience that we also have to stick together. We can't ever turn on each other. We rise and fall as one. And as I've said here before, New Jersey's the most extraordinary American state because at the one level, we're the most diverse state in America; and at the same time, we are as together as any other state in America as one family.

And let me conclude by saying what I've said before, not just for those blessed seniors but for everybody. Unequivocally we will get through this. It won't be tomorrow – I wish it were; it won't be unscathed. We've already seen over 100 precious lives lost. It won't be without mistake; I'm sure we'll make them. But we will come together like never before, assuming each one of us, all 9 million of us does our part. We will come through this unequivocally as one family stronger than ever before.

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. Good afternoon.

As part of our planning, the Department has been modeling when the peak of COVID-19 cases will hit our state. This type of modeling is a projection. It's based on available data at the time and some assumptions, such as the percentage of population adhering to the social distancing strategies that we've been stressing. It helps us plan both for bed capacity and distribution and use of resources such as ventilators.

Predictive modeling relies on several assumptions that actually change daily: the impact of social distancing implemented in stages across the state, the number of positive cases reported daily, the number of cases in our hospitals and their length of stay by critical care and medical/surgical beds, along with the number of positive cases in the hospital and cases under investigation.

So, what do we know right now? We know today that in this state we have run 24,843 tests with 8296 tests reported as positive, for an overall positivity rate of 33.4%. We also know that as of yesterday, 1080 patients in our hospitals have tested positive for coronavirus, and an additional 1872 patients are awaiting results. The backlog of testing due to the overwhelming volume of requested tests is being reported as high as seven days. That's the time between having the test specimen collected and getting a result. As a result, we're getting positive tests right now from individuals tested almost a week ago, so it does not take into account our social distancing interventions. So, therefore, any projection at this point in time is suffering from the lack of that information.

Right now, we are really relying on those at the bedside to help us understand the needs of the patients. At this point, we are working with hospitals to understand their critical care capacity, especially in the northern part of the state. Given the limited information that we have, our expectation is that by mid-April we will be seeing an increasing demand in critical care beds.

We looked at what effect social distancing can have on flattening the curve. We're still looking at that. When we look at projections, if we do nothing versus taking aggressive social distancing steps the Governor has implemented, we can see a real difference in the need for hospital beds and equipment. So, social distancing, as the only tool we have in our toolkit, reduces the transmission of the disease; it reduces the rising cases and flattens out the number of hospitalizations at any one time. Flattening the curve will protect vital health resources such as beds, personal protective equipment, and medical devices. It will also reduce the impact overall of COVID-19 on our residents.

As the Governor mentioned, today we're reporting 1982 new cases for a total of 8825 cases in the state. And sadly, 27 deaths have been reported to the department. They are in the following counties: 7 deaths from Bergen County, 4 from Middlesex, 3 from Somerset, 3 from Monmouth, 3 from Essex, 3 from Ocean, 2 from Morris County, 1 in Hudson, and 1 in Gloucester. One death was associated with a long-term care facility. We now have 55 long-term care facilities reporting at least one COVID-19 positive case. We offer our thoughts and prayers and condolences to the families who have lost their loved ones.

The county breakdown overall of new cases is as follows: Atlantic 5, Bergen 265, Burlington 24, Camden 21, Cape May 1, Cumberland 5, Essex 181, Gloucester 7, Hudson 140, Hunterdon 11, Mercer 18, Middlesex 127, Monmouth 126, Morris 44, Ocean 81, Passaic 88, Salem 1, Somerset 34, Sussex 10, Union 48, and Warren 6. We're still gathering more detail on about 739 of these cases.

As a reminder, as the Governor shared, the suspension of all elective surgeries and invasive procedures performed on adults goes into effect at 5:00 PM today. Given the shortfall in personal protective equipment, it's imperative that we work with our partners in healthcare to strategically preserve supplies and equipment for emergency purposes only.

We know it's concerning that cases are rising in our state, but as we've said repeatedly this was expected. Our goal is to slow this increase, but again, we need all of your help. Please follow social distancing guidelines. This is what you can do, this is your contribution, your donation so to speak to actually saving lives. I can't think of a better calling. It is vital that we work together now to lessen the impact on our state. Thank you.

Governor Phil Murphy: Judy, thank you. I'm sure we're going to hear a lot more from you during questions. Just may I make a couple of observations and tell me where I've got this wrong, and Ed, feel free to come in. You've got about one-third positive, two-thirds negatives. Those are overwhelmingly, Ed reminded me not entirely but overwhelmingly symptomatic individuals. Again, that's the most valuable cohort right now for obvious reasons at one level 'cause they're sick, and at another level it gives these folks, the epidemiologists, the weapons that they need to do everything we can to get our arms around this.

Secondly, you said it. I want to make sure everyone hears it – because of the delays now in the testing laboratories, even the commercials that are scaled up and have high-speed scaled, these are tests that we're reporting today that could be from as much as a week ago, right? And while we have been aggressive on social distancing, probably as aggressive as any American state, we really shut the garage door six days ago. So, we went from 250 persons gathering to 50; we then went to zero, etc. So, I would think as a nonmedical expert a week from today would be an interesting window on what happened.

County numbers, just as I usually give them to you, total cases: Bergen continues to be at the top of the heap with 1505; Essex second at 826; Middlesex third – 640; Monmouth fourth at 634; Hudson at 594.

Judy, you mentioned positive cases in 55 long-term care facilities. Just to remind everybody, the denominator is 375. And a couple of days ago that was in the high-teens, went up to the 40s yesterday, now 55. That's something we are particularly – I don't want to speak for you here but we're all particularly focused on that, because we've seen in other states, Washington State in particular, that was a source for an enormous amount of illness and death.

And lastly, completely unrelated – forgive me – I think I left off Ralph Lauren. Patrice Louvet who's their CEO reached out to me. He's a good friend. Ralph Lauren made a huge move not Nutley, New Jersey, they made a commitment. They opened up their offices several months ago and he came to me today and we're tracking this down. They're prepared to step up in a big way. So, on the list of corporate citizens who have been doing their share I want to add, I don't think I mentioned Ralph Lauren earlier.

Pat, any comments on any one of... At the PNC and Bergen Community tomorrow you've got to be a healthcare worker and/or a first responder. You've got to show your proper ID to that effect. Secondly, anything on the field hospital that your team is helping construct? And thirdly, anything on the overnight compliance? Matt Platkin has joined us in the back of the room, Chief Counsel – he may have something to add on that as well. Thank you.

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: Thank you, Governor. With regards to both sites, Bergen Community College and PNC tomorrow, that is for symptomatic – and I stress that again. I spoke with over 760 police officers on a conference call today and stressed that again to them. The union leadership is aware of that.

Symptomatic healthcare workers and first responders, police, fire and EMS with valid credentials: the proof that you're a Jersey resident and any identification that indicates you are, what hospital you work at, any employee ID which I think is standard now and has been for the past ten or 20 years quite frankly. And the same for any police, fire, EMS, all of those personnel are properly credentialed and that would be sufficient enough to get you in. And I stress that symptomatic piece as well as you always do and as Commissioner Persichilli always does.

With regards, again, as I spoke a few days ago, that entire Hospital Capacity Relief Team as we're calling them, another HCR Team – we're big on acronyms in OEM – that is underway. And again, we used the words in short order. Again, I think within a week or so, thereabouts, I think we're going to see that first site up in Secaucus in The Meadowlands erected.

And as far as the overnight goes, we had throughout 12 counties we had what we would refer to as 26 compliance checks resulting in five actual charges, ranging from creating false public alarm, criminal mischief, as well as obstruction. So, as the Governor also stated, a vast, vast majority of everybody in the state is doing their part as it pertains to the aspects of what's outlined in the executive orders.

I think I need to stress, if you don't mind, about the phone call that I had earlier today. I think the question's probably come up a few times with regard to Ocean County and particularly Lakewood. The Attorney General and myself got on with the community leaders including the Deputy Mayor, Rabbi Kotler, a few other folks and the Attorney General and I stressed to them that one, we too agree and can report to you that knowing that 99.9% of the residents of Lakewood – and again, throughout New Jersey – are complying with the aspects of this.

Lakewood is a city of I think 110,000. Also the Chief of Police was on as was the Ocean County Prosecutor, and it was the most valuable 45 minutes we spent, because not only did I ensure them that today we would talk about how compliant they are; the incident that happened the other night was one not of somebody's complete disregard. It was one of education, thinking that he was able to spread attendees at a wedding across three backyards, trying to keep it ten and under. And it was an education thing, so that was a lesson for those on the call today, that we've got to make sure that we have the messaging there. And that's why I'm saying this.

But lastly, what I also assured them of is that it will not be tolerated that anything, whether it's Lakewood or any community, anyone, anybody really that gets discriminated against – whether that's bias, harassment. If this fuels any type of antisemitic behavior, whether that's on social media, whether that's graffiti, whether that's verbal harassment, that that will not be tolerated. And the Attorney General and I assured them that those people, if caught, will be prosecuted to the fullest extent allowed by law. Thank you, Governor.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you, Colonel. And that last point, there is still a lot of education which we accept. There are some people who are willfully flaunting the rules of the road but there aren't many of them, and that number has to go to zero. And we will be, and Pat has been explicit about this, as was the Attorney General earlier this week – we will be unwavering in enforcing that.

There's some amount of education in fairness. I hope that also goes to zero very quickly. And then lastly, this last point that Pat brings up, we cannot tolerate one iota, one speck of blaming this community or that community for this or that. Just completely unacceptable, not tolerated, will not be tolerated and will be enforced aggressively, whether it's online or in person. So, thank you for that; thank you, Judy and Ed. Brent, we're going to start with you if that's alright.

Q&A Session:

Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger: So, as per usual, my usual line of questioning. So one, is there any update on how many people have been hospitalized for this or have recovered at all, or more info on age range or specific locations? Also, why isn't testing necessarily up to what other states have been doing? What needs to be done with that? Three, so what... If a business isn't complying, they are staying open and they're on the nonessential list, what kind of charges will they face and have you given any charges for that?

Governor Phil Murphy: It's possible you didn't hear me on the testing piece but I'll be clear as a bell. Not up to snuff on other states, that's assuming that per capita testing is your way to figure out all you need to figure out to keep people safe. That's not the case. The experts to my right will remind us that the most important datapoint we can get are positives among symptomatic individuals. And we have stressed every step of the way – and I don't know, Ed, if it's 99% but I'm going to guess it's 99%-ish of the tests we've done in this state, there'll be a few exceptions but there won't be many, have been folks who are symptomatic.

So, we're not... I'll put our testing approach up against anybody's but this notion that per capita, let's get everyone tested in the so-called worried well, I guess if we had unlimited supplies I would be signed up for that. We don't. In addition to the fact that that's the most important datapoint these folks need we also don't have unlimited supplies. So, I'm unequivocal about where we are in testing.

I think you addressed the hospitalization, Judy, but over to you for that. And then, Pat, we're going to come back or Matt Platkin – if someone goes online to www.covid19.nj.gov (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov>) and says, "My business or business X isn't compliant," what happens at that point? So Judy, can you hit hospitalizations? I think you hit hospitalizations, didn't you?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Yeah, I talked about the hospitalizations currently. I think you're asking over time.

Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger: So, how many people have been hospitalized over time and how many have recovered? I don't know if you have that.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: I could probably figure it out. Maybe I'll have it for Monday 'cause I only have at a point in time. I get it like at the end of every week, but starting Monday at 11:00 AM every day the ROIC, the command center will be getting updated information so we'll have a better picture of what it looks like. You have to make an assumption that absent the deaths everyone else is recovering or on the road to recovery.

Governor Phil Murphy: So, Judy, you had 1080?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: 1080 positive cases.

Governor Phil Murphy: That were in a hospital bed.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: That are in a hospital bed. But additionally many more that are PUIs.

Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger: What is PUI?

Governor Phil Murphy: Person under investigation for this as opposed to other stuff. 1080 persons who have tested positive are in a hospital bed as of last night or as of yesterday afternoon?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: As of yesterday afternoon.

Governor Phil Murphy: And that's out of a total... This is not a perfect relationship but just keep in mind again, I think you heard from Judy and Ed I know would... Each datapoint that's relevant is sort of you're filling in a piece of a puzzle. And if that weren't enough, it's iterative. So, what they know tomorrow will allow them to project in a different way than what they know today.

But I'll just compare two datapoints if I may, Judy? 1080 positive persons in a hospital bed as of yesterday afternoon, and then the total number of positive cases that have been tested of 8825. So, that's a comparison. Those are two numbers I think are worth at least acknowledging, is that fair to say?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Yes.

Governor Phil Murphy: Pat, if somebody goes in, business is not compliant, what are we doing with them?

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: Just to the point the other day, the fact that we didn't realize the volume we were going to get when we set up that phone number. And what people need to realize, that now when they file those complaints, that that is not a 9-1-1 dispatch center. So, depending on the nature of that, that may require a law enforcement response. I think between the Office of the Attorney General, where the Consumer Affairs function is built into there, that both, I think either/or or both response, depending on the nature of it, is how quickly we go out there and inspect that to one, verify it; and then two, take the appropriate action to charge them with violating the terms of the executive order.

Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger: And are they being charged with certain crimes or...

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: We haven't gotten to that point so the only crimes that I'm reporting at this juncture are the ones of the gatherings that are intentionally disregarding it. And that's the, again, the disorderly conduct, creating false public alarm, obstruction of justice. There's that guidance that the Attorney General put out to law enforcement that kind of gave you that menu in concert with the Assistant Prosecutor designated to help with that charge, depending on the nature of the crime.

Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger: So, you're still investigating businesses? There's no charges yet for businesses?

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: To my knowledge, no.

Governor Phil Murphy: Matt, are you aware of any charges?

Chief Counsel Matt Platkin: I'm not aware of any charges with this process. [inaudible]

Governor Phil Murphy: So, one suggestion, Mahen, if I can ask, I'm not sure what day is the appropriate day to do this but perhaps early- to mid-week, let's give folks here – we're Money Ball folks. Let's give folks here amount of complaints, nature of complaints, etc., that have come in through the website if that's okay?

Again, we are... Let me say in the strongest possible terms, I'm not sure what the action will be in each case but there will be action if folks don't comply, and this is both work from home as well as social distancing within the workplace. Thank you.

Michael Aron, NJTV News: So, these are more questions from our viewers on NJTV News, specifically one of our viewers is a lawyer and some of her clients have their license suspended and now would like to seek testing for the coronavirus. Is there any way that they can get their license restored even though MBC offices are closed to the public? And then we have a couple other questions: viewers are asking if the normal treatment for stay-at-home Vitamin C and zinc is effective against COVID-19. Some articles suggest taking Advil makes the virus worse. Do we have any further data on that? And not everyone has the luxury of having a primary care physician, and if they're in that position what is their plan of action? Excuse me, I just got another question: what number of patients do you predict will need critical care beds by mid-April?

Governor Phil Murphy: Okay, let me just start with the top one. If you're a lawyer and your driver's license is suspended or your license to practice law?

Michael Aron, NJTV News: The lawyer has clients who have had their licenses suspended by the court. She has no answers for her clients besides go to the MBC; MBC offices are closed.

Governor Phil Murphy: This is a driver's license?

Michael Aron, NJTV News: Correct.

Governor Phil Murphy: Okay. So, we've given... I'm going to go out on a limb and say this. Let me just make sure that I repeat what has been said. The more important question is are they symptomatic.

Michael Aron, NJTV News: I don't know that.

Governor Phil Murphy: Okay, so they've got to be symptomatic or all bets are off. Assuming they're symptomatic, I'm gonna say they can show up and they can explain their situation and God willing they'll let them through. I don't think that's going to be the majority of folks that we're dealing with. But my advice would be, if you're symptomatic go get a test.

I have nothing to add on Vitamin C, zinc, Advil at a minimum. Please.

Medical Director of Communicable Disease Service Dr. Ed Lifshitz: COVID is a respiratory virus in many ways similar to other respiratory viruses that people are familiar with. People get colds every year, people get flus every year, and for most people this is treated essentially the same way, what we call symptomatic or supportive care. That really means staying home, mainly because we don't want you infecting other people, and stay away from other people because that's the most important thing. And as far as taking care of yourself, all the general types of things that we would say if you're sick you should be doing, that your mother probably told you to do years ago – rest, fluids, those sorts of things.

Whether zinc or Vitamin C have any effect, I'm not aware of any studies that suggest they do. In low quantities they're unlikely to harm and certainly if people wanted to try them I would be fine with that.

The question came up about Advil, which is ibuprofen which is in a class of medications known as nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs which include other medicines, brand names such as Aleve is in there as well. There have been some suggestions that these medicines could conceivably worsen the course of COVID as an illness. At this point, I would say it's way too early to say that for sure. If anything, the effect is likely mild. I would not be particularly concerned, but if people are concerned they could switch to a different class of medicines that include acetaminophen, which is commonly known as Tylenol instead.

Governor Phil Murphy: Judy, I don't have a primary care physician. What do I do?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Call your local Federally Qualified Health Center.

Governor Phil Murphy: Okay, and how about critical care beds?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: We are asking all of our hospitals to look at their current capacity and try to increase it by 100%. So, if you have ten critical care beds we're asking you to have 20, and we're guiding them through that process. I met with three of the leaders of our major systems this morning and they shared that all of their hospitals have either completed that process or started it. So, our hospitals as I've said in the past are extremely resilient in that regard and I think they'll meet the demand.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you.

Reporter: Governor, we received calls from landlords who are trying to do the right thing by their tenants who are not working during this crisis by not collecting rent. But yet, they still have property tax bills, mortgage payments on those properties. Is there any sort of relief for those landlords who are trying to do the right thing?

Governor Phil Murphy: Yeah, I believe I mentioned this earlier. Matt, correct me if I'm wrong here but I think we'll be in a position tomorrow to talk to you about explicit plans as it relates to mortgage relief. And we'll want to make sure, and I applaud the landlords who are trying to do the right thing. And we'll make sure that it's symmetric, that it's as you would hope it would be – if you get relief over here, then you're prepared and able to provide relief over there.

I spoke to Sheila Oliver, and by the way, she's doing an incredible job at the Department of Community Affairs. Under her leadership, we just got another slug of HUD money for vouchers for low-income renters. Renters are more complicated and we won't have as crisp an answer for you on that tomorrow, but we will on the mortgage side. And that's a big piece of this because most folks, if they're renting, are renting from somebody who has a mortgage on that property. So, if we could provide... So, it's either direct mortgage relief – I own a house, I've got a mortgage, I need relief; or I'm renting from somebody who's a landlord who's got a mortgage. And so, more on that tomorrow. Thank you.

Charlie Kratovil, New Brunswick Today: Charlie Kratovil, New Brunswick Today. Thank you for the opportunity, Governor.

Governor Phil Murphy: Charlie, I meant to say when you were here last weekend that I have a son named Charlie so I'm clearly going to remember your name.

Charlie Kratovil, New Brunswick Today: Thank you, Sir. So, last weekend I asked you about whether you think the Board of Education members' terms should be extended in the cases where you've delayed the elections? I'm still waiting to hear back. I have been told to circle back with your office next week but today I want to ask about another question in the same vein, the NJ DSC made recommendations to county party chairs to delay the County Committee elections by an entire year. The sort of logic behind that was kind of silly given your changes you made to relax the petition requirements. And now, Hunterdon County Democrats have taken advantage of this epidemic and have cancelled the elections entirely. They're telling voters they won't get to vote for this office until 2022. Will you take a stand against this disenfranchisement?

Governor Phil Murphy: I'm going to ask Matt to weigh in here in one second. I've got nothing new for you on the Board of Ed, although if I promised you I'd have something for you by next week I apologize because I don't. And I thought on the County Committees, we had said we're going to leave it up to the counties, Matt? Am I not right about that?

Chief Counsel Matt Platkin: It's not that we're going to. It is up to the counties. It's a county party election.

Governor Phil Murphy: So, it is their jurisdiction. I'm not sure that I've got anything to add to that.

Charlie Kratovil, New Brunswick Today: I mean, it's your party; it's my party as well. Do you have a position on delaying the elections an entire year or even cancelling them entirely and doubling the length of people's terms?

Governor Phil Murphy: Yeah, I would say this, I'm the titular head of the party but I'm not running a particular county. And so, this is a county jurisdiction question. I think we've shown, I mean I think we've shown with the decisions we've made on both loosening the petition requirements, going to vote by mail, and then moving the March and April elections into May that we're both acknowledging the reality of what's before us as well as making sure that democracy proceeds. And that's sort of where I would be and will stay with. Elise? Thank you.

Elise Young, Bloomberg: Hi, four questions: what is the progress at the FEMA hospital sites? And am I understanding correctly that The Meadowlands will open first? When do you expect to have patients in beds there and will they be virus-related patients only? And on ventilators and PPE that you've asked for, what's come in and what's outstanding, and do you have any expected delivery dates on any outstanding ventilators? Third, what is the timeline on the release of the bioethics guidelines? And finally, can you explain the changes in the testing sites' operating hours? That's the FEMA-run testing sites. Was this the plan all along as other sites were opening, that you were going to cut back in Paramus and Holmdel, or was it more a matter of limited test kits available and limited lab capacity?

Governor Phil Murphy: Let me jump in, Elise, if I can on a couple of these, and then pitch them to my colleagues on the left and right. You're going to hear from Pat or Judy, the FEMA hospital sites, The Meadowlands is the first one that's going up. And I think it's in a matter of a week, right?

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: I would say a week or so.

Governor Phil Murphy: A week. I'll leave it to Judy to address the patients there. Ventilators, our ask of the feds I believe I said 2500 yesterday; I meant 2300. And 4.5 million N95s as I recall, those were the two big items. There were other items on that. We've had no assurances yet, nothing back on that ask although we're not, as you probably heard from the corporate donations and other things that we're doing, including flat-out buying them, which is another option we haven't spent a lot of time talking about. We're not waiting just for the feds although we do need them.

Bioethics, Judy can address but let me just repeat what I said yesterday. We are, all of us and all of our teams, committed to saving every single life we can in this state. So, this is an example of something where we would be abrogating our responsibilities not to prepare for that awful potentiality. But the fact of the matter is we are going to do everything we can to save every life that we can.

In terms of changes at the sites, Elise, we have always thought privately and felt strongly – and tell me if you all disagree with this – that healthcare workers and first responders by the very nature of their jobs, responsibilities and heroism, deserve a window into this. And I said this, I think erroneously right when the Bergen Community College site was opening up that we were going to commit to that. Well, it took me a little bit longer but we are committing to it.

In terms of the one day, one off, that is somewhat an acknowledgment of the raw materials that we have from the feds, there's no doubt about it, both the specimen collection piece as well as PPE; as well as, as Judy has spoken articulately about, we've only got so many healthcare workers – which is why I made my plea today to expand. And as we have, I said this already, we're going to meet a fork in the road sooner than later absent a huge influx of workers or equipment, or some great innovations that come to fruition. We're going to have that balance between going testing to going care.

But if you heard what I said, I believe I said that each of the sites when they're open will be at about 500 tests per day. That's basically going one day off, one day on; being smarter about manpower but accomplishing the same amount of tests. Right now they're at around 250 or 300 a day, we're going to do 500, the same amount, but we'll be able to do it at one location on a Monday, a different location on Tuesday. That's a lot easier for us on both manpower and raw materials.

Anything you want to add on patients in the field hospitals, Judy, and/or bioethics?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: The Meadowlands field hospital will be a general hospital; it won't be COVID-only. The Edison hospital will be put up as a COVID-only because it will have full negative pressure.

And the bioethics, you met I guess in the beginning of this week Dr. Eddy Bresnitz who, as some of you know, was formerly a State Epidemiologist. He's come out of retirement to step up with us and put together a Medical Professional Advisory Committee, and members of that committee will have a number of guidances to review. And one will be the ethical decision making or a value-based decision making model that the subcommittee from the Medical Society has put together.

And the other will look at overall editing space standards of care. We have to, with the overall patients, the hospitals are telling me they're concerned about the quality of care and the standards of care. And we want to make sure that no matter what we do, that we give safe care. So, they'll be helping us with all of that.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you, Judy. Pat, real quick, you had something to add?

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: Just two things. Today marks the eighth day in a row that those FEMA testing sites have been up, and some of those folks are driving two plus hours. So, that's eight days in a row of some of 18-hour days. So, I think to the Governor's point to the relief of that staff, I think the Commissioner and I both agreed we need to keep those folks protected. And to the sites, as I'm sitting here, the team that's up at The Meadowlands just texted me and said they expect that to be open next Friday barring any issues. So, you're hearing that right from The Meadowlands Exposition Center. Thanks, Gov.

Governor Phil Murphy: John?

John Mooney, NJ Spotlight: Can we talk about this April surge? Is that the peak of cases in mid-April? Will you have enough intensive care beds available in mid-April? If it's not the peak, when do you expect the peak to hit? How long will this last? New York City is talking about moving some of its COVID patients to other hospitals in the region. Will any of them be coming to New Jersey? And at some point the number of ventilators, Senator Menendez says you guys requested 2500 and were given 4. By mid-April, will you have enough ventilators on-hand to hit your expected need? And I have a question about construction. Governor, construction is an exempted business right now, allowed to continue. Is there any thought to changing that and ending construction as a permitted use?

Governor Phil Murphy: I guarantee you, hospital construction will remain essential. Judy, do you want to address the surge?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Yeah, surge and peak are two different things. A surge is when we expect to see an influx at a point in time into the hospital. Peak is when we expect to see the peak of all cases of positive COVID. We believe we'll be fine handling the critical care surge. As I shared, three of our CEOs from the largest systems are prepared for that, and that will hopefully be in a couple of weeks so we can deal with it and see how all of our plans are working; which we believe they will be fine.

Ventilators are another story. As we discussed yesterday, we believe right now we have enough ventilators. If a surge results in more individuals needing ventilators than our projections, we certainly need to get ventilators in reserve. So, that's what we're working on with the 2300 request and we will push that. It's what we need. We have 2000 ICU beds; we've suggested we need one ventilator per bed. I've suggested we increase our critical care beds by 100%. 2000, so we need 2000 ventilators, 300 as standby.

Governor Phil Murphy: Probably 'at least' I would add to that. Nothing new – Pat and I were just talking, John, about whether or not we were going to do a check-in with Pete Gaynor who runs FEMA, the Administrator today. And we're also, not only are we trying to uncover every stone, we're literally trying to buy them. And I forget how much they cost per, is it \$20,000? Is a ventilator \$20,000, does that sound right, Matt? I think it's about \$20,000 per ventilator, so that's something we're also looking at.

Construction, nothing to report at this time. I know New York tweaked their construction allowances. We're constantly looking, and this is iterative as you can imagine, whether or not we are, you know, whether or not there are holes in the cheese here that we need to fill. And we will continue to evaluate that, and if there's anything new to report we'll come back to you.

John Mooney, NJ Spotlight: Healthcare testing at the two FEMA sites, are there any other specific sites in New Jersey for symptomatic healthcare workers?

Governor Phil Murphy: Do you know of any?

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: I don't think completely dedicated to it, but I know of first responders and symptomatic healthcare workers that are getting checked on that list of 20 or so sites.

Governor Phil Murphy: Mahen, can we let folks know at some point afterward, other than what we're doing in both Bergen Community and PNC? Is there any other priority given to healthcare workers and/or first responders at testing? Real quick.

John Mooney, NJ Spotlight: The unemployment website, lots of reports that it's crashing. People are having great difficulty registering and signing complaints.

Governor Phil Murphy: Which?

John Mooney, NJ Spotlight: The unemployment. Any update on that, any ability to beef up the system?

Governor Phil Murphy: I don't. I don't and that's the last thing we want to have happening right now, because we want folks who are in desperate hours to get... Mahen, could you also come back on that one on the Department of Labor website? Elise, anything? You good? Charlie?

Charlie Kratochvil, New Brunswick Today: So, on the last topic, I just want to be clear the disenfranchisement is bipartisan. In my county the republicans have postponed. And again, based on a bogus concept that it's the petition requirement that's onerous. So, a question to you, Governor, how does it make sense to move forward with both presidential and US Senate primaries for both parties but to cancel these small, low-level elections? It strikes me as a dangerous precedent, do you agree?

Governor Phil Murphy: I literally, don't get mad at me, I've literally got nothing to add.

Reporter: Yeah, one more thing with the landlords who are trying to do right by their tenants, you alluded to mortgage forgiveness. What about property tax forgiveness? Will they at least be allowed to postpone their property tax payments?

Governor Phil Murphy: Looking at that, I will just say this and the DCA is looking at that with Matt and George Helmy and our teams. We're bleeding money as you can imagine by the boatloads right now so I've also got to be careful. In a perfect world I'd be telling everybody, "Listen, holidays for this, holidays for that." I've got to make sure we keep the lights on so nothing really to report there. You good? Real quick, thank you.

Michael Aron, NJTV News: Following up on modeling and projection, do we have a firm number of what we're expecting the peak of people who will need critical care beds to be?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: I don't have that today but after a little bit more experience with our testing and our positive rate and our hospital utilization, we expect to have that. But I don't have it today. There's too many inputs that we need a little bit more time.

Michael Aron, NJTV News: And we've gotten reports that casinos, while operating online gambling, dealers are not encouraged to participate in social distancing while they're on the clock. What would you say to casino workers who are being brought in to work but are not given the supplies and the space to do social distancing?

Governor Phil Murphy: They should go on that website and make note of it. There's no one who should be going to work right now in a firm where there isn't a both work at home policy as well as social distancing that's enforced, period. Brent, anything?

Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger: The former Mayor of West New York Felix Roque says he has a database of international medical graduates willing to step in right away with hospitals. But they need to fast-track their licenses. Do you know, is that something you'd be willing to do or have looked into?

Governor Phil Murphy: So, Felix has reached out to me personally on this. I think it's going to depend on the specifics of the situation, and Judy, I'm not sure I've got an expertise in this area. But obviously, you used the word 'safe' and we just want to make sure, we have waived... Am I right in saying we've waived for the other states in the United States to come in? And I suspect that we would do that on a case-by-case basis for non-US, right?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Yes, we'll take all the help we can get as long as we can identify the safe care that has to be done.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you. Sir?

Alex Alejandro Roubian, NJ2AS: You said you wanted to say something before I...?

Governor Phil Murphy: Yes, I'd say two things. I've got nothing new to add on the gun stores, and secondly, your brothers here have made note that you're not necessarily a properly-credentialed member of the press. And I have no issue with the second amendment, I have no issue with your advocacy but this is a press availability. And I want to just say that upfront. But I also want to say I'm a good guy, I'm going to give you a chance to ask your question.

Alex Alejandro Roubian, NJ2AS: Well, the press association which I have been working with for the past two years, and I am an accredited member of the press. Your personal office declined my press credentials.

Governor Phil Murphy: That is not without dispute, Sir, I just want to say that with all due respect. What's your question?

Alex Alejandro Roubian, NJ2AS: Alright. Thank you, Governor. Once again, Alejandro from the New Jersey Second Amendment Society. We know this is not a critical issue for you at this time as people are struggling to buy guns in New Jersey. On Monday the Attorney General told us in this very room that closing New Jersey gun stores was consistent with federal guidelines and the guidelines of other states, and that New Jersey is acting in compliance with federal guidelines. We are hearing that there may be an eminent directive from the Department of Homeland Security labeling gun stores and manufacturers as essential businesses. Are you and the Attorney General going to be consistent and comply with federal directives should this come out or will you defy them?

Governor Phil Murphy: I have nothing to add. I want to thank everybody for being here today, particularly the folks up here with me – the Commissioner of Health Judy Persichilli, Dr. Ed Lifshitz. Thank you both for extraordinary leadership. Col. Pat Callahan for your exceptional leadership. And to everybody out there watching, it's a Friday – do you even know it's a Friday?

One day turns into the next and I just want to say this – we get it.

We are all in this together. It's not fun but I am convinced beyond the shadow of a doubt that what we're doing will work. And it won't be as fast as we'd like, it won't be without a price that we'll pay. We've already lost 107 precious lives in this state. But we will succeed.

And the order, we believe with all of our hearts, since January we've been making every decision based on data, science, fact, medical and health inputs. And everything we see tells us we break the back of the coronavirus together, largely through social distancing and bolstering our extraordinary healthcare system and our extraordinary healthcare workers.

I wish it were tomorrow or next week. I don't see any scenario where this doesn't bleed meaningfully into May. I hope I'm wrong about that, and if I am wrong I'll be the happiest guy in New Jersey if not America. But I know with just as much certainty we will win this. We'll break the back of that curve, we'll break the back of that virus and then we can responsibly begin to open up our economy and our society, get back on our feet again and get back to being ourselves as one New Jersey family.

We're all in this together. God bless you all and thank you.

n="">

Governor Phil Murphy

[Home \(/governor/\)](#)

Administration

[Governor Phil Murphy \(/governor/admin/about/\)](#)

[Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver \(/governor/admin/lt/\)](#)

[First Lady Tammy Snyder Murphy \(/governor/admin/fl/\)](#)

[Cabinet \(/governor/admin/cabinet/\)](#)

[Office of Health Care Affordability and Transparency \(/governor/admin/affordablehealthcare/index.shtml\)](#)

[Boards, Commissions & Authorities \(/governor/admin/bca/\)](#)

[Internship Opportunities \(/governor/admin/internship.shtml\)](#)

[Governor's Residence - Drumthwacket \(<http://drumthwacket.org/>\)](#)

Key Initiatives

[Economy & Jobs \(/governor/initiatives/#Economy\)](#)

[Education \(/governor/initiatives/#Education\)](#)

[Environment \(/governor/initiatives/#Environment\)](#)

[Health \(/governor/initiatives/#Health\)](#)

[Law & Justice \(/governor/initiatives/#Justice\)](#)

[Transportation \(/governor/initiatives/#Transportation\)](#)

News & Events

[Press Releases \(/governor/news/news/562022/approved/news_archive.shtml\)](#)

[Photos \(https://www.flickr.com/photos/govmurphy\)](https://www.flickr.com/photos/govmurphy)

[Public Addresses \(/governor/news/addresses\)](#)

[Executive Orders \(/infobank/eo/056murphy/approved/eo_archive.html\)](/infobank/eo/056murphy/approved/eo_archive.html)

[Administrative Orders \(/governor/news/ao/approved/ao_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/ao/approved/ao_archive.shtml)

[Direct Appointments \(/governor/news/appointments\)](/governor/news/appointments)

[Advice and Consent Appointments \(/governor/news/acappointments\)](/governor/news/acappointments)

[Statements on Legislation \(/governor/news/statements/approved/statements_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/statements/approved/statements_archive.shtml)

[Administration Reports \(/governor/news/adminreports/approved/archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/adminreports/approved/archive.shtml)

[Transition Reports \(/governor/news/reports/approved/reports_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/reports/approved/reports_archive.shtml)

[Press Kits \(/governor/news/press\)](/governor/news/press)

Social

[Facebook \(https://www.facebook.com/governorphilmurphy/\)](https://www.facebook.com/governorphilmurphy/)

[Twitter \(https://twitter.com/GovMurphy\)](https://twitter.com/GovMurphy)

[Instagram \(https://www.instagram.com/govmurphy/\)](https://www.instagram.com/govmurphy/)

[Snapchat \(https://www.snapchat.com/add/philmurphy\)](https://www.snapchat.com/add/philmurphy)

[YouTube \(https://www.youtube.com/njgovernorsoffice\)](https://www.youtube.com/njgovernorsoffice)

[TikTok \(https://www.tiktok.com/@njgov?\)](https://www.tiktok.com/@njgov?)

Contact Us

[Scheduling Requests \(/governor/contact/scheduling/\)](/governor/contact/scheduling/)

[Contact Us \(/governor/contact/all/\)](/governor/contact/all/)

Statewide

[NJ Home \(/www.nj.gov\)](http://www.nj.gov)

[Services A to Z \(/www.nj.gov/nj/gov/njgov/alphaserv.html\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/gov/njgov/alphaserv.html)

[Departments/Agencies \(/www.nj.gov/nj/gov/deptserv/\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/gov/deptserv/)

[FAQs \(/www.nj.gov/faqs/\)](http://www.nj.gov/faqs/)

[Contact Us \(/www.nj.gov/nj/feedback.html\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/feedback.html)

[Privacy Notice \(/www.nj.gov/nj/privacy.html\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/privacy.html)

[Legal Statement & Disclaimers \(/www.nj.gov/nj/legal.html\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/legal.html)

[Accessibility Statement \(/www.nj.gov/nj/accessibility.html\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/accessibility.html)

(//nj.gov/opra/)

(https://my.state.nj.us/openam/UI/Login)

(https://tech.nj.gov/)

Copyright © State of New Jersey, 1996-2023
Office of Governor PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625
609-292-6000