

Governor Phil Murphy

# TRANSCRIPT: April 22nd, 2020 Coronavirus Briefing Media

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Holding a COVID-19 briefing. WATCH:



**Governor Phil Murphy:** Good afternoon, everyone. Happy Earth Day. I'm joined by the woman to my right who needs no introduction, the Commissioner of the Department of Health, Judy Persichilli. To her right, someone else who does not need an introduction, our State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan, thank you for being with us, ladies. And the guy to my left who does not need an introduction, the Superintendent of the State Police, Colonel Pat Callahan. Pat, thank you. Director of the Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, Jared Maples is with us. Is Parimal here? We've got to put an APB out for Parimal, if you can find him.

Judy and Pat and I, among others were honored to be joined earlier today by Commanding General, Lieutenant General Todd Semonite of the US Army Corps of Engineers to tour the new bed spaces being constructed at East Orange, which you can see here, East Orange General Hospital, and at New Bridge Medical Center in Paramus. There you see the Paramus setup. The Army Corps is providing tremendous assistance at both, and I just want to just give a huge shout out to the Corps. General Semonite, who you've seen at White House briefings. We've spoken before about Major General Jeff Milhorn, who is in charge of the region in which New Jersey sits, and Lieutenant Colonel Dave Park who's in the Philadelphia branch, and has been leading the efforts to build our capacity. Truly remarkable, I think we'd all agree with that, right folks?

Including the three field medical stations, and in these two instances, expanding and establishing, in fact, wards where there were no rooms before. In fact, one of the floors we toured in East Orange was a former sort of general workout room, and you'd never know it today. And a lot of beds, 250 beds were added in East Orange. We toured 30 at New Bridge, but they're going to put another 100 in operation in tents, I think as early as next week or two weeks from now. That's another 130 on top of 250, that's 380 beds. We'll come back to that capacity question in a minute.

Let's get, as we've been doing lately, to the numbers early on. Today we're announcing 3,551 new positive test results, pushing our state totals to 95,865. And sadly, with the heaviest of hearts, this does not get any easier, we must also report the 314 additional blessed souls were lost since we last were with you, meaning that a total of over 5,000 now, 5,063 of our fellow New Jerseyans have passed due to COVID-19 related complications. I said since we were last with you, I don't mean that literally. We're reporting that, however, an additional 314 deaths since yesterday.

We continue to see that the curve of new COVID-19 cases remains significantly flat and you can see that. But again, while we consider this a positive step in our fight, we're not even close to even considering claiming victory. We need this curve to meaningfully start to decline and to do so over a sustained period of time before we can begin considering the implementation of any sort of a reopening strategy. And remember this question, or this chart, pardon me, is the number of confirmed positive cases. This begs a question as to what element of the total denominator, what part of all of us in this state who may be infected, are reflected in these numbers? Again, the numbers are now almost 96,000.

We must keep our strong social distancing policies in place. This will continue to be the case for the next several weeks, at least. And by the way, we'll show you in a minute, it's working, so thank you. Keep it up, because it is working. All of you have taken these steps to heart and are being models for your communities in practicing social distancing. Those are the reasons we can see progress now on this map, and here we go.

Now don't be alarmed. I know the first thought is, well wait a minute, we've back slid. It turns out the shading is different because the colors have been changed to reflect longer doubling times. And again, this is the amount of days it takes to double the rate of infection by county. As of yesterday, we had gotten to the point where we couldn't show you any more nuance in the colors across counties and today we can. What you see here is in 14 of our counties, and that's shown in the light, sort of pale orange, the rate has slowed to doubling, that is to between 14 and 30 days. And then the darker orange is 7 to 14 days in the seven counties that are slightly darker. This matches the progression of COVID-19 we anticipated and I think, Judy and Pat, we spoke about yesterday and which we are seeing. We need to push like never before to get every county to be the lightest possible shade.

As we mentioned yesterday, the progression of field medical stations, Secaucus, Edison, Atlantic City was not by accident. It was to in fact sync up as best we could plan with the reality in terms of the cases. As of 10:30 p.m. last night, there were 7,210 residents hospitalized for COVID-19, of whom 1,983 require either critical or intensive care. There are 1,570 ventilators in use, and Judy will give you more color on all of this, and our field medical stations are treating 84 patients. I think largely, Judy, in step down circumstances, but you can get into that. Importantly, for the 24 hours preceding 10:00 p.m. last night, our hospitals recorded 745 discharges.

Now, putting these numbers into context, let's turn to three more graphs. First, the overall number of patients in critical or intensive care remains stable, as does the number of ventilators in use. As I noted yesterday, we need these numbers to begin to decrease before we can move to our next phase, but not seeing any significant increases over the past week, I think Judy and Christina would agree, is a good starting point.

New hospitalizations dropped yesterday, but that just means we had good news for one day in a row. Let's hope it stays that way. We also need to see this number begin a sustained decrease. This is and will remain perhaps our most important measure of progress, as the rate of new hospitalizations has a direct correlation to the number of new positive test results.

Finally, we see the number of discharges versus the number of new admittances. Today, the lines are intersecting again with more discharges than admittances, and that's a good thing. These last three charts are all very real numbers. They're not estimates or abstract. This is the reality that our 71 hospitals are living right now. I've come back to the point several times in the past several days, this data is invaluable to us because it measures, in real terms, the ability of our healthcare system to be able to get ahead of COVID-19 and then to stay ahead of it.

And again, I want to come back to positive test results. And again, the women to my right have forgotten more than I'll ever know. We're testing, I think we're the fourth-highest tested state in America. We are testing more and more each and every day. But it is not a definitive answer as to the question, and no one knows this right now, how many folks in total may be infected? We don't know that. We can guess but we don't know that. We know to the person how many people are hospitalized, how many people are in the ICU, how many ventilators are in use, and sadly, how many people are passing because of COVID-19. Those are the hard, fast, realistic and at times sadly, all too often, grim numbers. Those are real. Those are real and that's the basis upon which Judy and team make a lot of the decisions and we do, as we look forward to seeing where this is going to take us.

As we look toward, for instance, a reopening strategy which we are working on finalizing now, one of the first things we need to be prepared for is the spike in new cases that will surely come when we do reopen. We will continue to be data driven as we prepare for what's to come. Our number one mission remains unchanged: to save lives, period. So this data isn't just invaluable in letting us and you know where things are today. It's also invaluable in telling us where we're headed in the future.

However, as I noted, that future will come with fewer members of our New Jersey family with us and we mourn with everyone who has lost a loved one due to COVID-19. I'd like to remember three more of those we've lost.

John Carreccia, there's John. He was born in New York City but called the Ford section of Woodbridge Township home for the past 40 years. For three decades, John worked for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey at Newark Airport and the World Trade Center, retiring his operations supervisor in human services. Since his retirement, he remained active and was serving as the Chief of the Woodbridge Township Ambulance and Rescue Squad. John was also active in the life of St. James Roman Catholic Church in Woodbridge. He's being remembered by his family, friends and colleagues as quote, "A leader, teacher and mentor." John was 74 years old. He leaves behind a big, incredible family. Two daughters, Toni and Roseanne, and a son John with whom I had the honor of speaking yesterday afternoon, and in turn, their families. He was blessed with 10 grandchildren and three great grandchildren. He's also survived by his sister Pat and her family, and his former wife Roseanne, and we keep all of them in our thoughts and prayers. God bless you, John.

The next one, the guy who is known to many, Kevin Kurdyla. Kevin was born in Newark, a high school football standout at Eastside High, earning All-County, All-City and All-State honors. He turned down the opportunity to go elsewhere for college ball and attended Rutgers University. And in his four years, the Scarlet Knights would go 32 and 13, and Kevin would earn a ticket to the Rutgers Hall of Fame. He was an undrafted signing with the New York Football Giants in 1981, but injuries shelved his NFL career and Kevin went to work with the production team at the Star-Ledger. According to one former colleague, he never missed a day of work. He leaves his wife of 35 years Lynn, with whom I spoke yesterday and you can only imagine, and his daughters, Jennifer and Samantha, and they're all there before us, among so many others. His daughter, Jennifer, summed up her dad this way, and I quote her. "His laughter, integrity and entire presence were larger than life, and he will be deeply missed." God bless you, Kevin.

Retired Paterson Fire Captain and member of Wayne Fire Company No. 3, John Ferrarella. By the way I asked his family, I wanted to make sure I get this pronunciation right, and they said, "Think Cinderella." John, there he is right there. He was 70 years old when we lost him one week ago. A Paterson native, he called Wayne home for the past 20 years. A member of Paterson's John F. Kennedy high school class of 1968, he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps and served our country during the Vietnam War, earning an honorable discharge in 1975. He would join the Paterson Fire Department and play a role in developing the city's EMS system and would later serve as the EMT Basic Program Coordinator at Passaic County Community College, and as an instructor at the Bergen County Law and Public Safety Institute. Right up to the end, literally, John remained active as an EMT for the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority. To his wife, Patricia, with whom again I had the honor of speaking and their three children, John, Matthew and Justin, and Justin answered the phone and I didn't realize it was Justin until it was too late. Justin, I apologize. And their families and loved ones, you are all in our thoughts and we thank John for his years of service to our state and to our nation.

We remember them as we do every person we have lost to COVID-19 and our flags remain at half-staff in their collective honor and our collective grief. We remember them all. God bless each and every one of them, and let us never, ever allow this to become abstract. Yes, we talk about charts, and numbers and models and trends, and we must. You want us to do that, we have to make decisions based on the data, the science, the facts, as best we can. But each and every one of these individuals was an extraordinary precious life lost in our New Jersey family and let us never forget, not just the toll in total, but the toll by name, each and every one of these individuals. God bless them all.

Turning to a couple of other topics. We had a good leadership meeting with our senior staff last night with Senate President Sweeney and Speaker Clafin covered a whole range of topics. It was a good catch-up meeting. We've been meeting pretty regularly, speaking by phone or meeting regularly over the past number of weeks. This morning, I spoke with Governor Andrew Cuomo and as we continue both our regional partnership with the seven states, and I'll come back to that in a second, and our tri-state partnership with New York and Connecticut in particular, our three states are working on a contact tracing program that includes not just necessary human components, but also a technological one, as well. This discussion, I might add, before we get a lot of questions, is in its very early stages, but we all recognize that robust contact tracing, in addition to that testing protocol, is vital to any serious reopening efforts.

And again, New York and Connecticut Governors Cuomo and Lamont, I want to give them a shout out for consistently being with us in New Jersey, with me personally as we have shut our states down and they'll be with us as we reopen. But I mentioned the broader regional council of seven states and again, that's New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, but also Pennsylvania, Delaware, Rhode Island and Massachusetts. We established that regional council over the past couple of weeks. Each state contributed three members, Chiefs of Staff plus two designees. We're honored to have Rich Besser and Jeh Johnson along with George Helmy be our representatives. That Regional Council just met this morning for the first time. Some of you have been asking me about that. They had their maiden meeting this morning.

And importantly, this is real and I'll give you one metric to describe how real this is. That regional council will meet twice a week for the foreseeable future. And in addition to that, the Chiefs of Staff for those seven states are now meeting virtually, obviously, twice a week. We mean it as it relates to doing things first and foremost for New Jersey, but secondly, in coordination with our regional partners and thirdly, with a strong, robust federal role alongside of every step of the way.

On testing, a list of more than two dozen publicly accessible testing sites is available at [covid19.nj.gov/testing](https://covid19.nj.gov/testing), as you see, and there are many more that your primary care practitioner can point you to as well. We have a total now of 86 testing sites statewide. As I said, we started as a nation with both arms tied behind our backs, and a fraction of the resources we needed. And we have cobbled it together in New Jersey to become the fourth-most tested state in America behind three states that

have a lot more people, by the way: California, Florida and New York. But we're still not remotely where we need to be or will have to be in order to have that healthcare infrastructure in place, and that confidence that we're going to need to get the state reopened.

Yesterday, the Office of Emergency Management received a shipment of 500 ventilators that the state purchased, and those have been inventoried and are now ready for distribution and use by our hospitals. We procured these ventilators to ensure, to the very best of our ability, that every New Jerseyan who needs a ventilator has one. This also, however, puts us in position to be better prepared for potential spikes as we look to reopen, and for spikes that many predict may continue through fall or into winter.

I want to take a quick timeout here and ad lib, and Judy and Christina will correct the record as I'm sure Pat will. First of all, you've asked, on a number of occasions, have you been able to find ventilators other than from the Strategic Stockpile, and/or from states that contributed to us? And again, I want to give California and New York a huge shout out, through the Strategic Stockpile. This is the first day I could say definitively, they're in the house. We bought them. They're ours and we don't have to give them back. We've been scrapping at this literally every single day, so this is an important day.

Importantly, though, the point that I referred to when I looked at Judy, and we discussed this, Lieutenant General Semonite and I discussed this specifically this morning, and we've discussed it with you in some of our prior sessions. Are we going to need the East Orange beds next month? I hope not. We might, but I hope not. Are we going to need any of these ventilators over the next weeks or months? We may. Again, I hope not. We've got to monitor this thing is it sort of travels through our state and again, this is largely up to us, folks. The extent to which we keep that map with those new colors with those days that it takes to double and those numbers go up in terms of days, that means the likelihood of using those beds or those ventilators goes down. At New Bridge today we were applauding the extraordinary healthcare workers who were waving to me and to us through the windows. They need relief from the bullpen. The extent to which they'll get that relief not only is dependent on the amount of volunteers, over 27,000 I think at this point, but also up to us. If we keep the curve flat, the infections stay low, hospitalizations stay low, ICU unit hospitalizations stay low, demand on our heroic healthcare workers stay low.

But here's what we're all also worried about, is what if this thing comes back? And the folks, the experts, the two to my right in particular, obviously not just you But State Epidemiologist Christina Tan will tell you that this is the sort of virus where the likelihood of it coming back is pretty high. We don't know that, but if you look at the H1N1 experience, if you look at the Spanish influenza experience, and this is what I was discussing with Lieutenant General Semonite today, is we may need the capacities that we are preparing for, whether it's beds, ventilators, surging and healthcare workers, we may need them even if we do everything right. If we get it exactly right, we may need this down the road. So not only might we need this in the current surge, but we may well need it say in the fall or winter of next year, and we want to make sure we are as prepared as humanly possible for that eventuality.

Switching gears, today I will be signing legislation requiring our hospitals to report to the Department of Health demographic and racial data for all individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19, who have been admitted, and who have died, as well as the number who have tried to get tested, but were unsuccessful. This information will include age, ethnicity, gender, and race for each of these individuals. The data, once we start getting it, will be publicly reported daily by the department and we have already updated our online dashboard to reflect this.

This information will be critical for us to fully understand the impact that COVID-19 has had on our diverse communities. As we could already tell from the preliminary data that the Commissioner reports that this emergency has had an outsized impact on our communities of color. I wish to thank explicitly the main sponsors, Senator Ron Rice and Assemblyman Benji Wimberly for their sponsorship of this bill. They are both dear friends and equally fierce advocates.

Next, as you likely know, Congress is preparing for final passage of another COVID-19 support package, this one totaling nearly \$500 billion. Well, we are grateful -- and we are -- for the additional relief and assistance that this bill will provide for our small businesses and our hospitals, and for the support it will give for building up our testing regimes, all of which is good, I cannot overlook the fact that it is absent of any direct assistance to the state, or any state. There is talk that this direct state assistance will be part of the next federal bill but I will not let up and advocating forcefully, often, directly for this until we see that bill on the President's desk and, in fact, signed by the President.

I also cannot be clearer that the choices we will have to make absent federal assistance are dire for our state and our recovery. We are dealing with an unprecedented public health crisis that will be followed by an unprecedented fiscal crisis; one that experts believe will dwarf the Great Recession. Without substantial and direct financial assistance from the federal government, along the lines, by the way of what Senator Bob Menendez and Senator Cassidy of Louisiana have proposed in bipartisan legislation, the programs that we care deeply about and which we will lean on will be at risk.

We cannot do this alone. We are fighting COVID-19 every day on the frontlines and have taken unprecedented action to slow its spread. We cannot have this fight lead to an inevitable set of draconian cuts that will hurt our ability to help get our people back up off the mat. We need the federal government's help to avoid this fate. And by the way, this is not just a New Jersey matter. This is a near universal reality from my fellow governors, Democrats and Republicans alike.

At the risk of sounding partisan, and I'm not saying this to be partisan. In fact, if the words were spoken by a Democrat, I would be equally as forceful. But I'm jaw dropped, I'm taken aback. My breath is taken away. I have almost nothing to say to what I read that Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky said earlier today, that in fact, it wouldn't be necessarily a bad idea for states

to go bankrupt. I'm paraphrasing him, but this is in fact what he said. "It's actually worked out pretty well for some cities over time." Really? This is the time, in a moment of crisis unlike any our country has faced, in at least 100 years, to suggest it's a good thing for states to go bankrupt?

I would say two things in reaction, Senator, and I'm not sure you're watching; I suspect you're not. Number one, come on, man. That is completely and utterly irresponsible. There's no level of responsibility associated with that and I don't care what party you're in. Encouraging, engendering explicitly, almost hoping for bankruptcies of American states in the midst of the biggest healthcare crisis this country has ever faced is completely and utterly irresponsible.

Secondly, as usual, he's dead wrong. Because that won't happen. We won't go bankrupt. You have my word we won't go bankrupt. But you know what will happen? We will gut the living daylight in every state in America out of the services, the exact services that our citizens need right now. We will just cut, cut, cut and cut. We won't go bankrupt, Senator, but we will leave our citizens in the lurch at their most profound hour of need, we will leave people on the beach alone, helpless. That is what will happen in New Jersey. And I might add, Senator without having spoken to your Governor, that will happen in Kentucky. You have my word. So watch your words, sir. This is no time for bankruptcies and wishing bankruptcies. This is the time for the federal government, and I was encouraged by what President Trump tweeted yesterday, and we're going to hold the federal government to this. This is the time to stand up on a bipartisan basis and be there for the states in America, not just for the state's sake, but for the American people. Please, God.

Change gears, back over to Judy. Good luck following that, Judy. Once again, I want to give some shout outs to the people and communities who are coming together to help us all get through this as one, unlike the irresponsible words that I just referred to, overwhelmingly people of all stripes, of all parties, of all walks of life have come together in our state to do the right thing, and God bless you for doing it.

First, I want to recognize New Jersey's strong and growing Chinese American community. United Chinese Americans has donated more than 10,000 N-95 masks, 10,000 surgical masks, 80,000 medical gloves, 2,700 protective goggles, and 400 protective gowns for our frontline healthcare workers. I want to give a special shout out to West Windsor Councilman Yingchao "YZ" Zhang, who was instrumental in organizing this equipment. Hats off to you, YZ.

From Metuchen, Lori, who is behind the camera, she's taking the picture. With her mother-in-law Haifa and her sister-in-law Amal, have put their sewing machines to use to produce cloth face coverings that they're donating to JFK Hospital and throughout the community. The three women are spending up to 12 hours a day on this project and so far have made and distributed close to 4,000 pieces. And just so you know that these are coming from good hands, Haifa teaches sewing classes at Edison's Masjid Al-Wali where I've been on several occasions. So to Lori, Haifa and Amal, thank you and keep up the great work.

And, not too far down the road in neighboring Woodbridge, 11 friends, I think they're all there, from Colonia High School have banded together to create Colonia Cares. Through their website, they're selling yard signs and t-shirts with all the proceeds being turned into gift cards from local businesses, which are then being donated to a local food bank, as well as to Woodbridge Social Services. Now get this. They only started on Saturday and I believe today's Wednesday, and already they've sold 500 pieces from their website. Wow. So to the crew at Colonia Cares, Harrison Brenly, Emily Christie, Jordan Dirkhak, Mia Kruseman, Carrie Leshaque, Nate Momenti, Emily Melendez, Victor Perosi, Antonia Pierce, Jack Riley, and Jose Roberto, we salute you. These are just three of the many, many good news stories across our state, so please continue sharing them with every New Jerseyan through our social media, hashtag, #NJThanksYou.

Finally, one last plug. I encourage everyone to tune in at 7:00 p.m. tonight for the Jersey for Jersey fundraiser for the New Jersey Pandemic Relief Fund. As I said, Jersey for Jersey will feature some of our state's global talents, and I mean global. Bruce Springsteen, Jon Bon Jovi, Tony Bennett, Jon Stewart, Whoopi Goldberg, Charlie Puth, SZA, Danny DeVito, Halsey, Chris Rock, Kelly Ripa, Chelsea Handler and Saquon Barkley, among others. But I'm also touched to mention that the surviving members of Fountains of Wayne will be performing with Sharon Van Etten, herself by the way, a Bellville native and graduate of North Hunterdon Regional High School, in a special tribute to band cofounder and Montclairian, Adam Schlesinger, who we lost to COVID-19. It will all be broadcast live on I think virtually every single local television station, and on radios up and down the state, and streamed online. And the best part is 100% of the proceeds will go to help those impacted by COVID-19.

And by the way, while I'm at it, another way to support New Jersey Pandemic Relief Fund is tonight's 9:00 p.m. Jersey takeover on HQ Trivia, featuring only in New Jersey trivia questions. Pat, get ready. So download the app and play along. For every player during the Jersey Takeover, \$1 will be donated to the fund. So everybody tune in, 7:00 p.m. for the extraordinary fundraiser and 9:00 p.m. for HQ Trivia. And before I turn things over to Judy Persichilli, in a very small way, but in a very specific way, not only do we talk about discharges, but people who had it got sick and got better. Or folks who had mild symptoms, and who get back in the saddle and are able to pick themselves up, it is a particular treat for me that our General Counsel Matt Platkin is back in the house with us today. With that, please help me welcome the person who needs no introduction, the Commissioner of the Department of Health, Judy Persichilli.

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Thank you, Governor. Good afternoon. As the Governor shared, today we visited two additional alternative care sites, East Orange General and New Bridge Medical Center. Those sites will help alleviate pressures on our hospitals. Last night, I'm pleased to report that the Secaucus field medical station, that was the first site that we put up, served its 200th patient. To date, they've discharged 135 of those individuals that have been at the site. They are

recovered individuals. All of them had COVID-19. I want to thank all the staff there and those working at the other sites, they're providing a tremendous service not only to patients and to the hospitals right now, but we are convinced that we will need them in the fall as well.

Today's report, our hospitals reported 7,210 hospitalizations last night, remaining flat with the prior three, four days. There are 1,983 individuals in critical care and 1,570 of those individuals are on ventilators. That is 79% of the ICU patients are on ventilators. That is the lowest percentage we have had in over four weeks. Six hospitals reported that they were on divert last evening, four of them were in the Central region and as I shared yesterday and the day before, we're seeing the increase in the cases in the Central region, and a flattening of the cases in the Northern region.

I was asked yesterday about the map, what are our regions? What do they entail? The Northern region includes the following counties: Sussex, Passaic, Bergen, Warren, Essex, Union, Morris and Hunterdon. The Central region is Somerset, Middlesex, Mercer, Monmouth and Ocean. And the Southern region is Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, Salem, Atlantic, Cumberland, and Cape Mae.

Today we're also reporting 3,551 new cases for a total of 95,865 positive cases in the state. Sadly, 314 new deaths are reported today by the Department for total of 5,063 fatalities in New Jersey. The breakdown of deaths by race and ethnicity is as follows: White 49.3%, Black 22%, Hispanic 17.2%, Asian 5.4%, other non-Hispanic 6.1%. Underlying conditions remain the same, cardiovascular disease at 59.7%, diabetes mellitus 41.5%, other chronic diseases 30.8%, chronic lung disease, asthma, emphysema, COPD 19.9%, chronic renal 15.7%, neurologic disability 15.3%, other 13.7% and cancer 11%.

I was asked the other day about whether we were continuing services for our cancer patients, and all of the centers that we contacted have continued to take care of cancer patients for their continuing services and screenings, particularly for breast and cervical cancer. There are 438 long-term care facilities in our state reporting COVID-19 cases, for a total of 11,608. And 2,000 of our COVID-19 deaths, 2,050, have been reported from these facilities. As I reported yesterday, we are reconciling some of the data. This is self-reported and many – not many, some – of the long-term care facilities have shared with us that their death reporting seems to be not correct, so we are giving them an opportunity to reconcile their reporting. That will go through Communicable Disease Service and we will make sure, by death certificate, that we are counting all of the deaths appropriately.

The CMS surveyors are still at Andover. They will be writing their report and then they post their report once the full report is finalized. The department continues to work with the New Jersey Department of Military and Veteran Affairs to support their response to the outbreaks that are concerning in our veteran homes. Forty-three staff are on site today at Paramus and with the additional staff they've received, they are reporting that they are adequately staffed. Additionally, in conversation with the leads that are at the Veterans Association, they have identified a need for improved infection control training, improvements in the use of PPE. They are developing a communication plan for families that needed to be shored up. And, they have noticed that the housekeeping products, they were running low on housekeeping products and they were not following specifically the CDC disinfection guidances.

Additionally, they found, due to the high degree of dementia patients, that they had difficulty cohorting dementia patients that need to be in isolation. That is an issue, a problem that we have heard from many of our dementia facilities. So they're working on innovative ways to encourage patients that need to be in isolation to stay behind closed doors.

The total census of all of the homes, the veterans homes today is 741, 183 of those residents have tested positive and there have been 80 residents that have died, who were identified as COVID-19 positive. Of the 1,331 staff members working on those sites, 98 have tested positive. There have been no deaths among the staff. Ancora, one of our psychiatric hospitals, is reporting their first death today of a patient from COVID-19.

In terms of the lab reports, according to the data from this morning, of the labs that are sending us COVID-19 results, 172,612 individuals have been tested, 76,818 have returned positive for a positivity rate which is pretty much holding at 44.50%. That completes my daily report. As always, I thank you for staying home, maintaining social distancing, staying connected, staying safe and staying healthy. Thank you.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Judy, thank you for that and for everything. A couple of quick follow ups. Just counties, positive cases, the same six continue to be the big ones, so in order: Bergen, Hudson, Essex, Union, Passaic and Middlesex right behind. I made this point in our visit, Pat and Judy, in Bergen County today at New Bridge. Bergen County, if you were to put up its fatalities of 876 lives lost would be more than most countries in the world right now, so let's not forget the toll. And by the way, Essex literally has now barely just today eclipsed Bergen's toll. So you'd say the same thing about Essex, and sadly, some of the other counties up there, Hudson would be not terribly far behind.

Race, just to say I'm thrilled that I'm signing that bill. It'll allow us, it's going to require the hospitals to report in with a regular rhythm and with a lot more texture on not just race, clearly, but a lot more demographic information. Again, race has been particularly concerning to Judy and me and our teams, in the sense again, explicitly on the fatalities, the African American numbers continue to run consistently 50% higher than the overall representation of a state. I think you began to give us a sense yesterday, at least on testing, that the Latino numbers were meaningfully higher than the representation of the state, which started to square a little bit of that circle that we couldn't figure out between New York City and New Jersey.

May I just add one point to the dementia issue? My mom was like that in a nursing home. She passed, sadly, in 2008, but we lived it. You've not only got, and it's not just the veterans home. I think you've made this point, right? In so many of these long-term care facilities when you've got a high percentage of blessed souls challenging dementia, Alzheimer's, etc., you've got that on a regular day, you've got that reality. You add then this virus to the mix, not only do you throw gasoline on a healthcare fire in terms of underlying conditions, but you're operating with a lot less staff than you need because of infections of staff and/or self-quarantining. That combination is turning out sadly, tragically, to be a lethal one in a lot of the long-term care facilities, not just the veterans homes, so thank you for everything. Pat, over to you with any PPE, infrastructure, capacity updates. Compliance, as always. Thank you.

**State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan:** Thanks, Governor. I'll start with the compliance. Overnight, Newark issued 29 EO violations. Metuchen Police Department issued one EO violation and charge somebody with obstruction. In Union City, two members were cited for operating a supermarket. They had 50-plus people inside the store with no social distancing. In Plainfield, the subject was cited for operating a car dealership, claiming to be doing curbside auto sales, but in fact had customers inside the building. In Bridgeton, a subject who was harassing citizens for money was cited for a violation and arrested and also found to be in possession of a crack pipe. A subject in Blackwood was cited for four counts of burglary, had broken into four vehicles. He also was found to be wanted out of Camden County. In Lakewood, eight subjects were cited for using a closed school in violation of the EO, as well as nine members in Lakewood at a separate event were cited for gathering at a wedding. One other subject in Lakewood was just cited for causing a disturbance while the police and Prosecutor's Office was trying to conduct their investigation. In Fort Lee, a bias harassment charge was made against a subject who was harassing a Jewish customer within the store. In Morris Plains, a subject was charged with attempted aggravated sexual assault for attempting to meet an 11-year-old in a park in Morris Plains.

And just one thing, and sometimes I don't recognize them enough, I had my weekly phone call with the 21 County OEM coordinators. There's probably not a day goes by that I don't ask them or the state doesn't ask them to do something. And that's from sheltering, to distributing PPE, to assisting with long-term care. I think now testing, that we're going to ask them to help us survey the metrics of those 73 sites. So I just wanted to recognize them because 24 hours, they always open up their emails and see another request coming from State OEM on behalf of all of us to try and coordinate this effort. And day in and day out, all of them step up and do their job to support this effort. So I just didn't want today to go by without mentioning them, Governor.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Thank you. Amen to that, Pat. And by the way, it's a group of folks who I have met virtually overwhelmingly, until two months ago, based on bad weather. This is a group of folks that I would find myself invariably having contact, either directly with them on a conference call, of which there haven't been many, but I've been on some, or more often than not, through you in the war room at The Rock, typically dealing with snow, ice storms and whatnot. But just to hats off to everybody.

A word I would use to describe, Judy's team exemplifies this, the State Police, the whole of government, the word would be nimble. In addition to incredibly long hours, incredible professionalism, bravery, heroism by our healthcare workers and first responders and other retail, longshoremens, NJ Transit operators, folks who are at the point of attack, it's folks who historically were doing something over here and they find themselves they're doing, they've picked up a new side vocation or profession over there and no one's complaining. They're just doing it. This group is a good example of it. They weren't in the PPE acquisition or distribution business two months ago, ever and now they're up to their eyeballs.

If you all could keep this to just a short handful of questions, that would be a big help for us, if you don't mind. John, we'll start with you.

Q&A Session

**John McAlpin, Bergen Record:** Have you made changes to the two public testing centers in Bergen and Holmdel, allowing non-symptomatic people to go there?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Let me just hit that one before we go on, the answer's no. It turns out, whether we wanted to or not, we actually need a federal HHS waiver because FEMA is our partner. We may have given an impression on that that was innocently not what the facts are. But I will repeat what I said yesterday, the entire testing regime with an eye down the road toward what it needs to look like for a reopening is something that we're reviewing from top to bottom. Sorry. I meant to say it earlier and I forgot.

**John McAlpin, Bergen Record:** On the nursing homes and the numbers that you're now giving for that, can you talk to the families and some of the residents that see these numbers and say that they don't connect with what they're seeing in their homes? There's some confusion here. Can you speak to what people should be taking away from these numbers?

And on hospital discharges, where are the people going? Are they going home? Are they going to other facilities? Are they going to hospice? Are they going to hospice in the same hospital systems?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** That it? John, bless you. Setting a great example. Do we not, Dan or Matt, do we have a page up in terms of specific to – I don't mean complaints, per se, but probably complaints as it relates to long-term care? Have we added that feature to the website? We're working on it? May I just say that's one thing I've been meaning to say for a couple of days.

Just, let's accelerate that if we could. We wanted one place for folks to be able to go to. Judy and I have talked about that and we want to get that up, and that partly answers where I would hope folks could go.

But there's no question there's an unevenness, and that would be charitable -- charitable -- of communication to loved ones, next of kin, about the state of play. We've heard far too many stories, where I called and no one picked up, or I asked and didn't get an answer. Some operators are doing the right thing and playing ball but some still are not and it's extremely, not just frustrating for us, but it's crushing for a loved one. But, Judy, please.

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** First on the discharge disposition, I do not have statistics on that except for the ones that come to the field medical services, but we can probably get that. I'll work with the Hospital Association, because every discharge, every patient that leaves the hospital, a discharge disposition has to go on their chart, so we might be able to get that for you.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** That would include to some of the step down facilities?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Well it would be step down, skilled nursing, nursing home, skilled nursing, rehab, hospice, all of the ones that you identify, John, so it's a good question. We just have to see where we can get that information, because it is collected.

As far as the data on long-term care, what we're hearing is that there was a problem with addition, positive employees were also counted with positive residents, so the number looked higher. Then there was a suggestion that that happened with the mortalities as well. We really have to sort through that because we do not have a significant reporting of employee mortalities. That's where I have heard the issues being, Tina has been all over this as well. But we will reconcile it, but directionally I said it yesterday, I'll say it again today, it's correct.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Judy, let me ask you. I have a friend whose sister just got out, a healthcare worker, she went straight home. But she's got intensive physical therapy, a nurse's aide. How would we characterize that? Would you characterize that as having gone home or would you characterize that in a different way?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** That would be a discharge with community housing.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Because that's the case, I assume, for some --

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** I would bet most people, when they recover, if they have been in ICU, if they have been on a ventilator, usually need some follow-up care. We're looking at that pretty critically, because the damage to the lungs and the kidneys seem to be more than was originally expected. We have checked with the renal dialysis centers to make sure that they have adequate PPE to determine whether they're seeing a significant increase in the patients that they're seeing. And they shared with us two days ago, that things are pretty cool. They have not reported any significant uptick or issues, but we're keeping a close eye on that.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** This is one thing that I know a lot of folks out there are living this. I asked my friend, how would you describe her? And he said, incredibly weak. Incredibly weak.

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** And we're keeping an eye on oxygenation, that's the lungs that are getting affected. It's a COVID pneumonia. The post-hospital care is going to be as important as in hospital.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** John, your questions lead though to a very good point is very few people are walking out scot free, skipping out of the hospital, right? You've been nicked up here. Thank you. Hey, ma'am.

**Stephanie Faughnan, TAPInto Barnegat/Waretown:** Hi Stephanie Faughnan, from TAPInto Barnegat/Waretown.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Where are you from, Stephanie? Sorry, where?

**Stephanie Faughnan, TAPInto Barnegat/Waretown:** TAPInto Barnegat/Waretown. A lot of people ask questions about recoveries. There are some that are thinking the recovery number is confirmed cases versus deaths. Obviously, we know that's not the case. I've read the CDC definition and part of it seems to have to do with swabs, two negative swabs after. Is that part of the issue, why we're not reporting recoveries? Because we don't have enough swabs to do that, or?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Anything else or is that it?

**Stephanie Faughnan, TAPInto Barnegat/Waretown:** No.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Thank you for that. We'll go back. Judy or Christina.

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Do you want to talk about swabs?

**State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan:** The definition of recovered is actually a very squishy term in general. There isn't a case definition for recovered and that's actually something that CDC might be looking at to standardize, because as the Commissioner has mentioned in previous weeks, whenever we get this question, it's really, you know, how exactly would you define that? You know, we have many individuals who are never hospitalized. The reference related to the swabs relates to potential strategies to consider discontinuing isolation. There are two different strategies: a test-based versus a non-test-based strategy and that's more for the purpose of releasing individuals from isolation from a healthcare facility.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Matt, if you can move one way or the other. Matt Platkin, I don't want to put you on the spot, but you're a good example of this in the sense that it was both, if you don't mind, both a number of days but also a rigor in getting two negative tests. Is that fair to say?

**Chief Counsel Matt Platkin:** That's correct.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Thank you for that. Good to have you back, by the way. Sir.

**Reporter:** Hello, Governor. I have one from John Mooney at NJ Spotlight. Administration reported at the start of this that more than 100,000 students were without necessary technology for remote instruction. Do you have an update on that figure? And either way, what can you say with confidence about the situation in schools regarding technology access, and concerns that large numbers of students still don't have the same educational opportunity as their peers?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Is that it? Thank you for that. That was from John? Is John okay, by the way?

**Reporter:** I don't know.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Okay, because John was here as a regular, John was here every day until we closed the schools and I haven't seen him since. It occurred to me the other day. I think, in fairness, I need to get back to you in terms of a more data-driven answer. Dan, can you help me out there? I want to go to the Department of Education. The standard answer, first of all, it's very hard to bat 1,000. Anyone who has a kid right now who's remote learning is living that. And it depends also on the age of the kid and the grade that they're in, in terms of the relative richness of the experience. But the standard concern that we had, that we spoke to, again, remember food security was a big one. Secondly, it was access to devices, per John's question. There was a paper-heavy answer to that in the districts where we had a disproportionate amount of kids who didn't have access to devices. I know it was raised in Trenton, at least early days, there was unevenness in that respect.

The answer to that was preprinting packages. I think they said every 30 days, as I recall, preprinting to get these packages to the kids. That's the generic answer. That's the hope-for answer that that's working. I think for the most part it is, but if you could bear with us or tell John to bear with us, and we'll have someone give you an update on it. Thank you. You're good, in the back? You good, sir? Dave, we're down to you in the front here. Matt's coming around here.

**David Levinsky, Burlington County Times:** Let's see. Could you clarify for us Governor, the two FEMA sites are not now testing asymptomatic people, but is that the plan? Do you feel that's important? You know, it was interesting, you mentioned for the first time yesterday, I believe, that we will need to test asymptomatic people. That's part of the whole relook at the testing. How significant is that?

Beyond the reopening, which is everybody, of course, is sort of excited about that idea and of course we know it's weeks away, but could you talk a little more about the spikes in the future? Because, you know, that obviously, is a concern, even beyond the reopening. Will we continue to maintain the field hospitals? What kind of a future do you envision?

And then on the comments by Mitch McConnell, how do you really feel, Governor? Any further comments that you'd like to make with regard to the President's position on this? And why you feel it's un-American to take the kind of position, apparently, that Senator McConnell has taken?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** If I get this wrong, I'm going to say a couple of things and then turn it over. I'm going to have you answer the Mitch McConnell question, Judy.

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** I have no words.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** The two FEMA sites by direction from HHS are for symptomatic folks. That is a fact and I think we need to get a waiver, Matt, am I right, if we pursue that otherwise. I think probably more, and that will continue to be the case. And so therefore the number, and Christina could give you how she analyzes this, the overwhelming number of tests that we've done, which is why the positives Judy's referred to, which has really stabilized, by the way. In fact, it even went down a couple of tenths of a percent in 44.5% at this point is overwhelmingly of symptomatic people.

The technical answer is it's got to stay symptomatic. They have a strong edict that the asymptomatic folks have to step aside, let's sit them out of folks getting in and getting tested. We've been sympathetic and supportive to that.

But having said that, and again, this is where Christina will need to come in and correct the record. We have to be able to test a broader population, not just symptomatic folks, and it needs to be a rapid return test. So it's not just – it's two dimensions. It's not just the amount of tests you're doing. It's getting them back a lot faster than historically we've been able to get them back. By the way, not just in New Jersey, anywhere in the country. I'll let Christina and Judy come in on that.

Spikes in the future, again, I think I'll let the science should be the guide but that relates to your field hospital question. As I mentioned earlier, even if we bat 1,000, based on everything I've been told and we've looked at, the chances are likely if not highly likely, this comes back again. So what are we going to do to make sure that we're prepared for that? And having those capacities of ventilators per today's news and Pat, thank you for the lift there, the hospital beds and getting HHS to grant us the money that we need to keep that fresh, whether it's a field medical station. And General Semonite said to me today, if you get the economy back up and running, it may be hard to keep Javits or the Exposition Center in the Meadowlands completely

field if you've got finally an economy getting back on its feet. We may have to, we may want to, but you certainly could do that at East Orange General, which is what we saw today, which is a single-purpose healthcare facility. Again, I'll let the folks who are the experts come in.

But our hope is A, we don't need this capacity in the near term, although we've got it if we do need it, but as importantly, we have it for the medium or longer term. I don't think I called him un-American. If I did, I'm not sure I'd take it back. But I don't think I called him that, it's just completely irresponsible and it's not how it will play out. What I've said is – and the other thing is, and by the way, I'm not on the ballot this year, but a lot of people are I might add, including him. You're not only going to leave people on the street in the lurch with no services, you're going to probably double unemployment in the country. Because the only reason unemployment isn't double what it is, is because for the most part, state and municipal workers – by the way, we need government more than ever before. This just in, for a little headline. Look at the amount of people who are laying it out every day, Department of Health, State Police, these folks could not be working harder if they tried. How about Department of Labor trying to field all these unemployment claims requests? Just to pick several examples. So in addition to leaving people in the lurch, you're going to double unemployment. That number is off the top of my head, but I'm probably about right for that.

The last thing we should be doing is leaving states in the lurch. The good news, again, he tweeted this yesterday and I take him on his word. I had a private conversation or private confirmation rather, not with me, although I raised it with the President as well and he didn't say no to it, is I believe the President is in a better place on this. And he's going to have to be, because it's not optional. The states, if we are going to continue to serve folks who are unemployed, small businesses that are bust, folks who are sick, or God forbid, dying, there's no other way around that. We have got to be there for them and the federal government has got to give us the wherewithal to allow us to continue to do that.

On the non-McConnell related stuff, Judy or Christina, the FEMA sites, and/or Pat, spikes in the future, testing asymptomatic folks, Christina, etc.

**State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan:** Related to the asymptomatic testing, as we've always been saying for the last four weeks that there's always some limitations with the asymptomatic testing because of the issue of potentially not capturing an individual, you know, when they might be potentially incubating the illness. But that said, we are thinking about opportunities where testing might be valuable in expanded settings. So for example, the efforts with the long-term care facilities in the south might represent an opportunity where those testing results, especially in those less-impacted facilities, actually might make a difference. Because ultimately, you know, it all ties back to, everybody's focused on the testing, but it's what you do with the information and what you do with the information so that you can take action on it. That's actually the approach that we're taking down in the south, is something that also from a national level that many other less-impacted areas, less-impacted long-term care facilities are looking at as opportunities arise.

And as far as spikes and illness are concerned, we tend to look at trends. We don't look at the day to day per se, because we recognize that there are always, you know, there could be some dramatic artifacts in the day-to-day data because, for example, there might be a weekend or a holiday that might be involved that might delay some reporting. That's why we monitor for respiratory viral illnesses, just in general, in normal times. In pre-COVID times, we would monitor that all year round, just to make sure that we have an understanding of what that baseline is. We would expect to continue to do that moving forward in the future as well.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Thank you. Dan Bryan just reminds me, John, back to your question. Although I still want to add the page at covid19.nj.gov if you agree with that. Long-term care facility complaints, you can go on nj.gov/health, that's our basic health website or the hotline is 1-800-792-9770. That'll still be available even if we do add a page here, but I'd like to add a page if we could here. Thank you for that. Let's go to Elise, and then we will go back and come to Matt and we'll wrap it up. Elise, good afternoon.

**Elise Young, Bloomberg:** Good afternoon. Speaking of unemployment, all of my questions are related to the unemployment system. Can you update us on claims processing? Have there been improvements to the bottlenecks? Have you hired programmers? Do you have any stats on how many claims are waiting to be processed? A reader sent me a question about the pandemic unemployment assistance for self-employed independent contractors. He says he applied on March 29<sup>th</sup> and he hasn't received a payment yet. Is there any particular tie up with that program? And that's it.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Okay. I think we're gonna probably have to come back to you on some of this. Dan, will you help me out with this? But there has clearly been improvement. If you're still on the phone and you can't get through or you're trying to log on and you can't get in, and you're frustrated, I don't blame you. Just because the general numbers are better, but they are better, there's no question about it. I had, either in this forum or in the leadership meeting, Matt, I recalled a couple of things. One is they had been through 60% of the claims as of Monday and hope to be at 80% by Friday. Does that sound about right? We'll come back to you if that's different. Programmers, I believe that they have augmented their team, but I'll confirm that with you. Numbers waiting to be processed, I don't have that number. But that's related to whether or not I'm right about the 60 versus 80 and I think I'm approximately right. I may be off by a day or two.

And we heard explicitly yesterday, that independent contractors and I'm not sure I understand why, and we'll get you an answer, is a particular challenge. I don't have a good answer as to why it is. But it is. Matt, do you have any color on that?

**Chief Counsel Matt Platkin:** We'll get you the answer, Elise.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Yeah, I'm not sure I understand why but that is a particular challenge for the system, as opposed to the broader issue. Will you make sure we come back to Elise? Thank you. Sir.

**Kyle Mazza, UNF News:** Kyle here, Governor. Thank you again. Leader McConnell tweeted, going back to him, "I'm proud of Congress's bipartisan agreement. I'm just sorry the Democrats shut down emergency support for Main Street in a search for "partisan" leverage that never materialized." So there's this back and forth from Democrats and Republicans. I wanted to get your reaction to that.

Also, are you committed to working with him on any legislation or on anything going forward after you made those comments? What if his reaction to you is negative in terms of what you said in this briefing? Thanks so much.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** My pleasure. Hard to know how they could get more negative. There is asymmetry here in my risk appetite right now. It's hard to go lower than we're going lower, if he's implying he wants to bankrupt states. We are constantly open and I said this today, I said it yesterday. Look at Senator Menendez hooking up with Senator Cassidy in Louisiana. I'm not sure how often they hook up to co-sponsor bipartisan legislation. My guess is it's not every day and it's a big step and it's a big statement and I think most folks have said responsible things and they've left their partisan affiliations at the door. Which is why I said, I would be saying this about his statement whether he was a Democrat or Republican, a Martian, a Communist, whatever it is. It's irresponsible, and it's wrong.

Would I be willing to work with him? 100% What would that look like? \$500 billion direct state assistance from the federal government to states, measured in the formulas in the right way such that New Jersey gets its fair share. I will work 24/7 with him or anybody else to get that passed and signed by the President. Thank you. Matt.

**Matt Arco, Star-Ledger:** Hi, Governor. We continue to hear from nursing home workers and administrators who say the state data released this week on the number of those who have died or tested positive for COVID does not present an accurate picture. While the Commissioner addressed the issue briefly yesterday, does the department know why there have been so many discrepancies in the reporting? Has it been resolved? Has the matter been resolved going forward?

Curious also if you were separately counting long-term care staff members who tested positive for COVID. And real quick, Colonel, wondering if we have an update on the number of police officers who have tested positive and those who are in self-isolation?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Matt, on the first question, I think we've been pretty clear that the numbers are directionally accurate, even though there may be some discrepancies. Is that fair to say, Judy?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Yeah, I think I answered the question. There's an indication that employees that tested positive and residents that tested positive, that that number was combined. So then we asked the same question about deaths, but it has not been reported to us that we have had an overwhelming number, or even one death, from the long-term care employees. That doesn't mean there wasn't any, it means I have not gotten a report of that. But I can't imagine it would skew the death report significantly. Now I know CDS is now taking the reports and comparing them with the death certificates, trying to get confirmation, generally, on deaths.

**State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan:** We hope that we're going to be implementing a new type of survey because again, just to reiterate the points, these are data points that we get from the facilities that the local health departments, that the department gets. It's based on what we get. We're going to try a separate type of strategy to get that information.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Again, you know, Judy, I don't want to overstate this. People will think we got up on the wrong side of the bed here, but it took a long time for these operators to finally put forward the information that we, loved ones, and others, members of the media, to your credit, have been asking them to do that. Secondly, directionally, we believe the numbers are overwhelmingly directionally accurate, even though there may be some specific discrepancies, is that fair to say?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** That's correct.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I know the police question you had Matt, but I forget your second piece here. I apologize. Maybe that was it? Thank you, Pat Callahan.

**State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan:** As of this morning, Matt, 701 law enforcement statewide tested positive and as of this morning as well, 871 are out statewide, quarantine.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Thank you, Commissioner. Thank you, Dr. Tan. Thank you very much for everything you're doing, Colonel. Thank you, Jared, Matt, good to have you back and the rest of the team. As of the moment, there is at least not one that we know of in terms of a Whitehouse VTC tomorrow. Unless Dan or colleagues let us know otherwise, we're back together at 1:00 p.m. tomorrow. Is that accurate? And if that changes, we'll let you know.

And again, I would say not only do I thank you for your patience and for coming out every day, I would just say to everybody out there, we have clearly come an enormous distance. We are clearly headed in the right direction. Everything overwhelmingly tells us that. But with the same level of conviction, I can say and Judy will correct me if she disagrees, and I know she won't, we're not there yet. We're not there yet. Just because hospitalizations have stabilized or critical care beds have stabilized or ventilators have stabilized, we're not there yet. And if that weren't enough, to lose 314 blessed souls of our state is a sobering reminder that even when we see those curves start to come down, you've got folks who were infected some number of weeks

ago, who are losing their lives in these days. And so please God, keep every one of those precious lives and their families and friends and communities in your prayers. Keep doing the right things, wear your masks, stay home, stay away from each other, wash your hands with soap, keep the faith. That's importantly, this is the fight of our lives, but keep the faith because we will win this fight. Not without casualties, we've seen thousands already. But we will get through this assuming all 9 million of us do our part. We will get through this together, stronger, as one New Jersey family like never before. God bless you all. Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.

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