

Governor Phil Murphy

TRANSCRIPT: June 1st, 2020 Coronavirus Briefing Media

06/1/2020



Governor Phil Murphy: Good afternoon. Thank you for bearing with us with a later start today than normal. I want to say I am honored to be joined by the woman to my right who needs no introduction, the Commissioner of the Department of Health, Judy Persichilli. To her right, the Department of Health's Communicable Disease Service Medical Director, another familiar face, Dr. Ed Lifshitz, great to have you both. Guy to my left who needs no introduction, the Superintendent of the State Police, Pat Callahan. Director of the Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, Jared Maples. Chief Counsel Matt Platkin will be with us shortly.

I want to start, if I may, by lifting up the many peaceful and moving protests which took place across our nation, and especially our state this weekend, drawing attention to the systemic racism that exists throughout our society. I support these protests and I thank the thousands of residents who peacefully and respectfully took part. I know the pain associated with this movement is real, and it's representative of a society that has been largely unresponsive to calls for change and equal justice from Black and Brown communities. This is a transformational moment in our time. Protest is the language of the unheard, of the ignored, and the names must be said again and again and again. George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmed Aubrey, and many more before them who lost their lives for no reason other than for the color of their skin.

So too must these words, Black Lives Matter. The fact that so many came forward in peace and common ground to fight for the most basic principle of human dignity is a powerful reminder of the Black and Brown experience in America today. And the fact that so many others who do not live this reality would join them



making these protests powerful displays of our great diversity should be a point of pride for our state. People with privilege are now recognizing the pain of those without. We are seeing our common humanity.

And so I watched as an example with tremendous pride to see the Chief of Police in Camden march in lockstep with residents on Saturday, and to help them hold their banner. I spoke with the Chief on Sunday morning to express that directly. I watched with pride to see the peaceful protests in Newark, joined by many, and importantly by the city's Mayor, who himself was and remains an activist for justice, and I was back and forth a number of times both Saturday and Sunday with Mayor Ras Baraka. I was moved to see communities throughout our state, big and small, stand up and lie down for what they believe.

We will not let a small number in our state, who wish to harm our communities, distract us from the greater message lifted up by literally tens of thousands of others. New Jersey can be a leader in bringing the change we need. This administration has been committed to tackling and dismantling systemic racism, but despite our great strides thus far, we know that our work is far from over. We will continue to listen and to stand in solidarity. The pain of yesterday and the pain of today does not have to be the pain of tomorrow. The insidious effects of racism are not new to us, even in New Jersey. Racism exists here. It has held back generations of Black and Brown citizens, and still threatens the generations yet to come. Inequalities in economic mobility, healthcare support that we speak to almost every day, Judy, accessible housing and educational opportunities, and on and on and on.

And now, all across our country people are demanding transformational and systemic change in a way we have not seen in perhaps 30 years. We must listen, and we must act. The unity we displayed this weekend in New Jersey showed the world that we are ready to be the ones to help lead the way and to fight the sins of racism and the stain it has left on our state and on our nation. As I said the other day, whether it's through the passing of the tragedy and the murder of George Floyd, or the healthcare data that we report on or any of the other metrics, depending on whatever lens you look through, in this, the first year of the fifth century since slavery first came to our shores, we are still digging out.

The past few days have been a time of reflection for me, as I suspect they have been for many of us. And on the one hand, I think about folks who were nothing short of pioneers or heroes. Names we all know, Barack Obama for whom I had the honor of working; John Lewis, who my family and I hosted in Berlin for one of the most magical nights of our lives; Julian Bond, who was a dear personal friend; my partner in government who sat right where Pat is on Friday, the extraordinary Sheila Oliver. Names known to all of us, folks who have been out there, changing lives, bringing our country to a better place, for decades.

But there are names you may not know. I spoke to several of them this morning. They're of the next generation, people on our team. Justin Dews, Diana Houenou, Jerrel Harvey, late 20s, early 30s, African American, extraordinary, and I mean extraordinary talents, incredible members of our team. They are living and they spoke to, we had a call this morning and they spoke to this. They are living the dreams of their fathers and mothers. And those great names, the big ones, the John Lewis's and Julian Bonds, they brought our country along a great way. But as George Floyd's tragic death shows us, our work is not done. We need action and not words, and it can't be for a moment in time or even a year, but we have to make generational, permanent change in our state, and we will, and in our country. Justin's, Diana's, Jerrel's and I could name other names, by the way, I just happened to speak to them this morning, their futures are unlimited, literally. It is our collective job, beginning with yours truly, in this state, to make sure that we in no way, shape or form limit their extraordinary futures. It's our collective job to open up their futures, and the millions of them like them in this state and in this country, as wide as we possibly can.

Now, let's move onward. Over the past several weeks, we've been able to take our first steps on our road back. We've been able to begin our restart and our recovery through small, yet significant and meaningful steps. Steps to get all our construction workers back on the job, to allow our retail stores to serve more customers through curbside pickup, to start the process of reopening all our childcare centers and greenlighting summer day camps, to resume playing sports and to ensure that our Shore towns and beaches would be open for the summertime, among others.

We've been able to do this because we stayed true to the guiding principles we said we would, which would lead our every move. Public health creates economic health, and data determines dates. We have listened intently to every responsible voice, those who said we were acting too quickly and those who said we were

acting too slowly. We believe, as the overwhelming majority of New Jerseyans do, that we're acting responsibly, given the severity of this pandemic and the tremendous toll that it has taken in our state.

Let us never forget, we have lost nearly 12,000 of our fellow residents because of COVID-19. And sadly, we know more will succumb. More than 160,000 have tested positive for the virus, and more and more will continue to test positive. As we open, we know there is a greater chance for transmission of the virus. This is why one of our critical data points was testing capacity, and we now have robust testing in place to help us test more people and quickly identify outbreaks.

As we sit here, there is no cure. There is no vaccine. There is no proven therapeutic. The only cure, frankly, is responsibility. Responsibility on the one hand of those of us in government to get our only shot at restart right, and then the responsibility on behalf of you all, the 9 million of us who call this great state our home, to continue with social distancing, to practice safe hygiene, to wear something covering your face when you're in public.

Because this virus is among us, we will act as quickly as we can, but as safely as we must. Our economic restart will fail if we fail to instill the confidence we need among you all, our residents and visitors, that their safety and that of their families is our number one priority. Every one of you have been overwhelmingly diligent, smart, and practical about how to act in these uncharted waters. So let me add a new principle that should guide us as we move forward, not just that public health creates economic health or that data determines dates, but common sense for the common good. That's another way of saying, perhaps more polite, Pat, don't be a knucklehead. When each of us is responsible, all of us do better. In fact, Judy, when you wear a face covering, it's not for the person who wears it. It's a sign of respect for those around them, right? That is how we continue to move forward on the road back.

We want our economy back up and running. We want people to get back out to our downtowns and Main Streets, to our shops and restaurants, and to their places of work. But we will not do that at the cost of a reckless disregard for their health and safety. This is why we put in place mile markers for us to hit along each step on our road back, and to tell us when we are ready to move from stage to stage, from testing to contact tracing to strong public health and safety protocols at our workplaces and businesses. Each one has been designed to protect our people and workers, and to minimize as effectively as we can, the chance of a flare up of COVID-19.

And we're already seeing the results of this responsible planning. In our hospitals, where perhaps we get our most important and concrete data on public health, we have seen the stresses on our healthcare system significantly lessened. Key metrics on hospitalization, ICU numbers and ventilator use have all dropped meaningfully from the peak just six weeks ago, and in the all-important two-week windows we constantly review to determine whether or not new trends were emerging, they have likewise continued to go down.

This speaks to the increased ability of our hospitals to handle any new cases of COVID-19 that enter their doors. At our peak, we were seeing significant and scarce resources being pushed close to their max. It may seem like ancient history, but it was only weeks ago that we feared that ICUs would be full, with no room for the next patient. But today, as you can see in many of our hospitals, there is no more fear of running out of beds or ventilators, and please God may it stay that way. The reality is that the resiliency of our healthcare networks has not only emerged intact, but has been maintained, and I want to thank every healthcare professional, every first responder and every frontline worker for their heroic and astounding performance under unimaginable pressure.

We have just as significantly ramped up our testing capabilities. I've mentioned these numbers before. Two months ago we were maxing out at 6,000 tests a day. In April, we were able to increase our numbers to 12,000 a day; and now, we are where we said we would be and where we needed to be, with the ability to conduct at least 20,000 tests a day. And with this increased testing has come an increased focus on contact tracing. In the coming days, I and we will go into greater detail on our progress on our contact tracing program, but we are already building up from the hundreds of contact traces currently on the ground. And just as importantly, we're building up our capacity for safe and accessible places for those who will test positive to go, to further protect their families and communities from the virus, if they so need one.

But the build out of our testing program is something we should take great pride in. And today, we can say affirmatively that New Jersey leads the nation in the number of daily tests recorded per capita. We are literally the top state in the nation in terms of daily testing per capita, thanks to everyone's hard work. In the span of one week, we've gone from fourth to first; in the span of two months, we have gone from planning to reality, and we're not going to rest on any laurels. We are going to keep building to remain number one. We set our testing goals just a few short weeks ago, and then we met and exceeded them, and now we lead the nation.

So here's the truth. Public health creates economic health, and data determines dates. And because we are following these guidelines today, I can announce that we are ready to move to stage two of our restart and recovery. And assuming that we do not see a precipitous backslide that would put the brakes to our plans, and we reserve that right, we will enter stage two on Monday, June 15, two weeks from today. And by the way, today's June 1st, Happy 19th birthday to my Charlie Murphy.

As we have looked to set dates, we have maintained close and regular contact with industry associations and individual industry leaders, small business owners and restaurateurs, as well as with our Restart and Recovery Commission, and our Advisory Councils. Almost invariably, we have heard this: give us guidance, then give us a week or so to prepare, and we'll be ready. That's a conversation we have had, almost literally, on countless occasions. So here we are. Later this week, Judy and her team at the Department of Health will have the necessary guidance ready. And once that guidance is ready, our businesses will have the time they need to prepare, to determine the staffing levels and to call back workers, or to stock up on inventories or whatever it might be.

As the first step of stage two, and let me remind everybody, look at stage one for a second. We didn't do all of that on one day. We did that in a range of days, and we're going to do something similar in stage two, and I would suspect as well in stage three. So as the first step in stage two, and in strict adherence with the guidance from the Department of Health, Judy and her team, our restaurants will be able to welcome diners to outdoor spaces, and our non-essential retail stores will be able to welcome customers back inside effective Monday, June 15.

Furthermore, our salons and barbershops can serve their clients again on Monday, June 22, and then in the period, I would hope sooner than later following those openings, our gyms and health clubs will again provide spaces for residents to work out, albeit at reduced capacity, so we're going to come back to you with a specific date soon on gyms and health clubs.

Again, repeating this statement I said a second ago, differently. Entering stage two does not mean, just as it didn't when we went into stage one, that we flick a light switch. This will continue to be a phased in restart based upon a careful analysis of inherent risks and the ability to safeguard public health. The easier it is to have strong protocols in place or to ensure reduced densities of customers, the sooner that business can reopen. The harder, on the other hand, the harder these metrics are to achieve, the more time we'll take to get it right, and to make sure everyone has it right before we give a green light. Again, it's public health creates economic health, not the other way around. And just because the calendar says June 15, doesn't mean that everyone should just go back to what they were doing and the way they were doing it pre-COVID. For example, those businesses whose workers can work from home will be expected to keep their workers at home, as one example.

Again, let's use common sense for the common good. Only a successful, by the way, an obvious point, only a successful stage two can get us to stage three. Social distancing will continue to be the watchwords of the day, as will face coverings, Judy, right? Those high-risk individuals and vulnerable communities, especially those with comorbidities and/or compromised immune systems, will still be asked to take extra precautions and to stay at home whenever possible. As I said before, the virus is among us and saving lives is still priority number one.

We still face challenges. We're now showing this data in a little bit of a different way. We're still seeing more people testing positive than many other states, though certainly this is a byproduct of our testing, more and more people per capita than, as I said, every other state in the nation. There are still more residents in our hospitals with COVID-19 per capita than any other state. We are still experiencing an outsized impact of lives lost. These are all data points that we continue to push hard against, and they are a reminder that while we

are ready to move forward, we cannot do it blind of the reality around us. Stay with this, Mahen, if you can. Again, we're presenting this in a different way, and I'll just repeat it on this one particular day because it's a new look.

New cases per day among the 50 US states, we're number 14. Patients in the hospital – again, these are per capita, by the way – we're number one. Deaths per day, thank God we've slipped to number four, and I hope it continues to slip. But overall, the public health metrics tell us we are ready to enter stage two of our restart, and ready to begin restoring our economic health. The data has determined that we can get doing so starting on June 15.

With that, let's turn to the overnight data. Yesterday we received an additional 509 positive test results, and a total now statewide cumulatively, 160,918. Here is the trend line of the new cases. Spot positivity from specimens collected May 28th was 3.5%. That, I think, is the lowest that's been, Judy. Looking to our long-term care facilities, 33,118 positive cases, and the numbers of lab-confirmed deaths associated with our long-term care facilities is 5,106 blessed souls lost. The only thing we'd say is that trend line continues to go in the right direction.

In our hospitals, we closed the weekend with 2,344 patients reported being treated for COVID-19. Our field medical stations had 21 patients. This is the breakdown of hospitalizations regionally. Number of patients reported in either critical or intensive care was 646. Ventilators in use was 469. There were 36 new hospitalizations yesterday, while 160 live patients left our hospitals. I would just call timeout on this, as we usually do on Mondays or Tuesdays after holidays and say, we'd love to think that it's going to be 36 and going down, but we know these numbers are usually distorted Friday through Sunday, so. But the most important thing is when you add it all up, distortion or not, more people left than went in.

Here are yesterday's numbers charted across regions. These are the numbers we will continue to watch. If you go over the next two weeks as we prepare to enter stage two of our restart and recovery, should we see current positive trends reversing, we will take corrective actions as necessary. However, given the course we've been on and our expectations of all of you to continue your extraordinary hard work and partnership in getting us to our goals, I firmly believe that we are going to stay on track.

Today as we do sadly every day, and I can't wait for the day when we don't do this, we have to report the loss of another 27 blessed souls from our New Jersey community to COVID-19 related complications. Our statewide total stands, look at that number, 11,721. May I say this folks, 11,721 in four years of fighting on two fronts in Europe and in the South Pacific, New Jersey lost 12,865 blessed souls in World War II. The toll of this virus is historic by any measure.

Let's remember several more of those we lost. I want to begin with, speaking of the Greatest Generation, Samuel Domenick. He was 94 years old, a Newark native originally, the son of immigrants and a proud member of our Greatest Generation. He joined the US Navy in October of 1943 and six months later, was shipped out to North Africa as a gunners assistant on the USS Catoctin. On June 6, 1944, a day that all of us know, D-Day, Sam was among the sixth wave of troops to storm Normandy Beach. Two months later, back aboard the Catoctin, Sam was part of the Allied invasion of Southern France. During the battle, the ship was hit by a German air raid, and Sam was injured. He survived, but always spoke of the 30 crewmates who were killed that day.

Upon returning from war, he met the love of his life, Honey, while in Asbury Park, and they married in October of 1949. They moved to Indiana so Sam could get a mechanical engineering degree, but they came home to New Jersey to raise their family, eventually settling in the Ford section in Woodbridge. He was active in the community and especially in the Ford's Clara Barton Boys Baseball League, coaching his son's teams. He was known by many, including our dear friend, the Speaker of the General Assembly, Craig Coughlin. He retired from his engineering career in 1983, but then started a limousine business that kept him busy for another two decades, Sam was an avid New York Yankees fan. He had met Yogi Berra during his war days. He also loved New York Giants football, horse racing and bowling. He is now reunited with his beloved Honey and their son Steven. He leaves his other son Jeff and his daughter Susie, and I had the great honor to speak with each of them and Jeff reminded me that we had met on December 7th last year at an arthritis run. Not just Jeff and Susie, but their families, including nine grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. May God bless Sam's memory, and we thank him for his service to our great nation.

Next up, we remember Linda Auman, and there she is with the love of her life, her husband, Jim. Linda was from Warren. Born in Morristown, Linda graduated from the Muhlenberg School of Nursing in 1966, becoming a registered nurse and would go on to earn her bachelor's degree from Uppsala College in East Orange. Linda dedicated her life to her profession and to helping others, especially the elderly. She spent many years as the Head Nurse within the adult medical daycare center at Plainfield Muhlenberg Hospital. Linda would pass on April 16 and sadly, only six days later, her husband Jim, right there to her left, a longtime ESL educator, passed away at home.

Linda's sister said it was, I think on the death certificate, cardiac arrest but, Judy, you won't be surprised by this, there was lots of speculation by her sister that he himself also had COVID positive, although he was not tested and that may well have contributed to his passing. They were a perfectly matched couple, as you can see, including a matched couple of opposites. Linda was short and outgoing with a confidence and self-assurance that few could challenge. Jim was the tall and quiet one, the gentle soul who realized early that it was best to follow his wife's advice. They never had kids who grew up, but they did have a young blessed gal, Sara Elizabeth, who only was with us for a few days. But they also reveled in the lives of their niece and their nephew and love being among family and friends.

Linda and Jim also shared a love of reading together and traveling together, especially to the family cabin in Maine. Linda was 74 years old, Jim was 73. They were together for 44 years. And again, they're survived by Linda's Sister Nancy, with whom I had the great honor of speaking. Nancy herself wants to get up to that cabin in Maine this summer. They're also survived by their niece, Lori and their nephew James and their families, which extends to several great nieces and great nephews. They are together forever. May their memories bring comfort to all who knew them. God bless you Linda and Jim.

And finally today, we honor another proud member of our Greatest Generation. Look at that smile. Armit Harrison, Sr. of Hamilton, right here in Mercer County. Armit was 99 years old. After Pearl Harbor, Armit enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. He was a forward scout observer for the Fourth Marine Division, meaning he was one of the troops taking on the dangerous work of going ahead to survey the enemy lines. He would see action in the Pacific Theater, in both the Marshall and Marianas Islands, and was awarded the Purple Heart after being wounded by Japanese small arms fire during the Tinian Invasion in the summer of 1944. Armit believed his injury saved his life, as the division's next mission was the invasion of Iwo Jima.

By the way, I spoke yesterday to his son and daughter-in-law, his knees were obliterated, and yet in his 40s he took up skiing, and he became a very good skier and skied until not that long ago, when folks thought he was more in danger not of a problem he would have engendered, but of getting hit by some knucklehead on a snowboard or something. After the war and after he had recovered from his injuries, Armit married his childhood sweetheart, Charlotte, and started a career in business, first taking over his father's retail milk distributorship. He and Charlotte would raise four sons together, Armit Jr., Christopher, Daniel and Brian, and again I had the great honor of speaking with Brian and his wife Angela. Brian recalled his father as, "Always the gentleman who retained his sense of humor even though he was a long suffering Phillies fan." At least he saw them win two World Series. Armit was a longtime member of the Hamilton Square Baptist Church, and a volunteer with Meals on Wheels in the Trenton area soup kitchen, among other organizations. He also took up traveling and was an accomplished Alpine skier, as I mentioned.

Charlotte passed away six-and-a-half years ago. They had been married for 68 years. Armand leaves his four sons and their families including seven grandchildren, and four great grandchildren. He's also survived by his sister Helen and several nieces and nephews. May God bless you, Armit, and may God thank you and bless you for your service to our great nation.

Three more of the nearly 12,000 New Jerseyans we have now lost to COVID-19. We honor their lives today and every day as our flags remain at half-staff. But even in our grief, we take tremendous pride and joy in the many New Jerseyans who continue to work every day to help us get through this emergency, and through whose commitment to getting the job done, we are now ready to move to stage two.

One of them is this guy right here. Take a good look. That's Matt Finn, Monmouth County. Matt's 34 years old, and one of our residents with special needs. He's worked at the Stop and Shop supermarket in my hometown, Middletown, for 13 years. If you go there, you probably know Matt. He's one of the workers out front corralling shopping carts and making sure they're properly taken care of for the next shopper. While wearing a mask

and gloves presents some difficulties for Matt, he knows what he needs to do to keep the people who go to his store safe. He's proud to be among our essential workforce, and is just one in a family of nurses and police officers. So to you, Matt, and by the way, I'm surrounded by one of each when I say that, so to you, Matt, we're proud to have you on our front lines. Keep safe and keep being a leader in our community. And so everybody, be like Matt. Wear a face covering, just as he is. Be safe. But most importantly, remember, we can only get to stage two on June 15 if we continue to stand as one community.

The next big step in our restart and recovery is just two weeks away, and we're ready to begin moving forward. All the metrics we need to follow from our hospitals are where we need them to be and keep trending in the right way. We are ready because this progress is being seen across our state; we're ready because we are not just hitting, but exceeding our goals for the number of tests being recorded. We are ready because our positivity rate, as you can see, keeps falling. We are ready because the data says so and it's all because of you. Keep it up, folks. With that, please help me welcome the woman who needs no introduction, the Commissioner of our Department of Health, Judy Persichilli.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Thank you, Governor and good afternoon. Well as the Governor shared, residents have done a really good job at social distancing, and this has helped reduce the spread of the virus in our state. As more of our state opens up, we must continue to take safeguarding precautions. So once again, I encourage you, stay home if you're sick. Wash your hands frequently during the day for 20 seconds. Avoid touching your eyes, your nose, your mouth, especially with unwashed hands and with unwashed gloves. Ensure you are safely distancing from others, at least six feet; 10 feet if someone is coughing; and if someone sneezes, just run in the other direction. Wear a face covering that covers your mouth and nose. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing. Clean and disinfect frequently-touched surfaces. Keeping focused on safety will help us continue to make progress in the right direction.

As for my daily report, as the Governor shared, our hospitals reported 2,469 hospitalizations, with 522 individuals in critical care, of which 72% of them are on ventilators. There are a total of 31 cases reported now of multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children. No new cases were reported yesterday but since Friday, we're reporting five additional cases. There have been no deaths. The ages of the children affected range from 1 to 18; 21 out of the 31 have tested positive for COVID-19, six are still currently hospitalized. The breakdown of race and ethnicity of these cases are White 23%, Black 27%, Hispanic 39%, Asian 8% and other 4%.

The Governor shared the statistics on our new cases and deaths. In terms of deaths, the breakdown of deaths by race and ethnicity is as follows: White 53.3%, Black 18.5%, Hispanic 19.4%, Asian 5.4%, and other 3.4%. At the state's veterans homes, among a census of 652 residents, there have been 385 residents tested positive and one new death has been reported, for a total of 145 deaths. At our state psychiatric hospitals, the numbers remain the same.

The daily percent positivity as of May 28 for New Jersey overall is 3.53%. The North is 3.22%, Central New Jersey 2.98%, and Southern New Jersey 5.41%. I want to share some of our testing plan results with you. We are testing, as you know, the most vulnerable population, communities of color, the incarcerated, the uninsured, seasonal workers, those requiring longer term mental healthcare, the elderly and the frail. In the month of May, long-term care we tested 109,000 individuals; 44,000 residents and 65,000 staff. The residents have returned a positivity of 10%. The staff is 4%, with 14% still outstanding. The FQHCs have tested over 29,000 individuals, 29,068 tests were performed, of which 15,357 were uninsured. They're returning a 19.9% positivity. Our correctional facilities have tested 17,544 individuals, returning a 13% positivity. Our veteran homes have instituted universal testing of all three homes. The two homes of Menlo Park and Paramus have returned 16% positivity. 1,294 of our seasonal workers have been tested, returning an 11.6% positivity, and in our psych hospitals, 1,209 of our patients have been tested, returning a 17% positivity.

So that concludes my report. Thank you for your adherence to social distancing guidelines. It has helped slow the spread of COVID-19 in our state. So stay connected, stay safe and stay healthy. Thank you.

Governor Phil Murphy: Judy, just to reiterate something I referred to earlier, whether it's the metric through the tragic killing of George Floyd or whether it's through the disparate health data that you report every day along racial lines, we may have made a lot of progress; as a nation and as a state we have a long way to go.

Thank you very much for that today and every day. Pat, this is not a normal Monday, given that we had, I think 30 different, overwhelmingly peaceful protests in the state over the weekend, a couple of exceptions. But those truly were exceptions. I think you gave me a list of at least another nine that were announced today. We'd love to get both your quick sense of COVID compliance, but maybe focus if you could, for a minute, on those weekend, largely really moving and peaceful protests. And also, any reflections you have as a senior leader of law enforcement, not just in our state but in our country. Thank you.

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: Thank you so much, Governor. Good afternoon. The compliance with regards to the Executive Order was really overwhelming, again. Rather than go through the handful of those, I think speaking to the events in New Jersey over the weekend, to the Governor's point, there were more than 30 organized protests, only two of which did not end peacefully and those were in Atlantic City, where the ROIC received reports of 12 arrests from yesterday. And in Trenton, right here in Trenton, where 27 arrests were reported to the ROIC.

But I think it's important to point out that throughout all of those events, the close collaboration between the organizers, between clergy throughout the state, between law enforcement, the Governor pointed out the collaboration of Chief Wysocki down in Camden who I spoke with Saturday prior to that march. And he pointed to what he thought was going to be successful, and he was right because he had the clergy, the organizers and law enforcement meet out ahead of that, and his leading by example and standing in solidarity with his communion, I think resonated not only throughout New Jersey but throughout the country with those faith-based leaders that I had the honor of speaking with throughout the weekend.

With regard to the weekend phone calls, I probably couldn't even count, maybe upwards of 100 calls over Saturday and Sunday, a lot with our faith-based communities, National Action Network representatives, NAACP, law enforcement, of course. I think with the goal of one, and our communication has been phenomenal about just letting them talk and offer me their perspective. One of the most powerful calls I got was from one of our African American Commanders in the New Jersey State Police, who was honestly struggling with being black and being in law enforcement, was a perspective that I hadn't really been in tune to, and how does he explain to his wife and his teenage children? And not only him, but other black troopers in law enforcement? How do they explain to their children what's going on? And what he explained is that struggle to sometimes feel the need to choose between your race and your profession, which I hope that their race and their profession both serve as a tremendous source of pride for them.

So this afternoon, after this press conference, I am meeting with African American troopers from various ranks throughout the division, just to one, to listen to them more than anything else. I could probably never offer a perspective that comes close to theirs, but I think keeping that line of communication and having them to the extent they can, explain what they are experiencing both at work and at home, I trust will make us all better for it. Thank you, Governor.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you, Pat and thanks for your -- I know you didn't get much sleep this weekend, and thank you for everything. I mentioned three young stars -- Justin, Diana and Jerrel -- who are on the ascent, in the early stages of the ascent of their career, and I don't know where we'd be without them. And again, our job is to make sure they have extraordinary futures as wide open potential as any in our country. But we've also got some folks who have been in there and are now, Reverend Derrick Green example recalled to us this morning, speaking, giving a lecture right after the Rodney King reality in 1992. I don't know where we'd be without him, particularly as it relates to our faith communities. Deb Cornavaca, another veteran in so many respects in our state, and I can't thank you all enough, the leadership on either side of me who shows up every day as we find our way through seemingly one evolving crisis or challenge into another. So thank you all.

I think let's start here if that's okay, because Matt, you're there and I don't want you to injure yourself going across the room. Mahen, are we at one o'clock tomorrow, is that right? So unless you hear otherwise, we've got a fair amount of moving parts this week, it feels like maybe a little bit more than normal, so we've got a lot of stuff that we're juggling. I've already mentioned that I'm not going to marry to a particular day, but guidance on a lot of what I announced is coming later in this week, so bear with us. And when we have that guidance, we will probably speak to it, I would guess Judy, not just post it but we'll speak to it, at least the highlights. So if you could give us a little bit of a break in terms of the specifics on some of this until we have that guidance.

But you heard the dates that we're putting out there, the markers. And we're, you know, this is non-essential retail, outdoor dining, June 15th; salons, barbershops, June 22; and I hope gyms and health clubs very soon, either in that window or shortly thereafter. So we'll start over here. Dustin, is that you? Good afternoon.

Q&A Session

Dustin Racioppi, Bergen Record: That's me. Good afternoon. Understanding that you're going to put out the guidance, can you give any sense of what these businesses can expect in terms of social distancing, capacity limits, that sort of thing?

What's your reaction to President Trump calling Governors weak in their handling of protests that broke out over the weekend, and is urging that Governors dominate or you're going to look like a bunch of jerks? Did you or any of the other Governors pushback and suggest there might be another way to deal with protesters, without further inflaming the anger? What do you consider the appropriate approach? And will you send in the National Guard to places like Trenton and Atlantic City tonight?

Has anybody filled Chris Neuwirth's position? And have you learned if anyone else in your administration has a second job? And can someone, maybe Matt Platkin, explain what the rules are about state workers holding outside employment?

Governor Phil Murphy: I know for sure, just to answer one question, Matt does not have a second job. He has no time for that, so. Listen, we'll come to guidance. Judy may I say the following? It's going to look a lot, I would suspect, like the guidance for essential retail, right? So it's going to be capacity, social distancing, markers on the ground, maybe some plexiglass stuff, and I would think restaurants with outdoor dining will have some of the elements that we've spoken to. Social distancing, the distance between tables, pardon me, probably temperature checks or something like that on the way in, masks, gloves of employees. My guess is more paper menus than not, but I'll leave that -- that's to come.

Listen, I think as it relates to your question about weak versus dominate, all I'll say is this. It was a call that was very heavy, if not entirely, about law enforcement and dealing with the vast minority of the folks who have been out there protesting. I would have liked to have seen a lot more about social injustice and systemic racism in America and how we got to this point, and where do we go from here? I actually reiterated what Pat said a few minutes ago, and spoke with great pride about what we had seen to date in New Jersey. And for anyone to think that this is over at 3:20 on Monday, June 1 is kidding themselves.

But talking, you know, lifting up the moment, the extraordinary turnout of peaceful protesters, folks who are doing every responsible thing, who were in there for the right reasons, who are sick and tired and fed up, mad as hell and not going to take it anymore in that first year of the fifth century since slavery came to our shores, that we still see a black man basically murdered right before our eyes. And that's where I think our focus has to be.

I think any decision you make, I'll certainly speak for myself, as it relates to the National Guard is you make it if the case is compelling. And between the State Police, under Pat's extraordinary leadership, county and local, and also the cross-relationships, you know, Essex County when they knew they had the Newark protest on Saturday did what you would guess, and they alerted neighboring counties that they may need some help, which by the way, they did not. And so we think -- I don't want to put words in your mouth, but I think we think - I'll say I think that we've got the capacities that we need right now.

I've got no comment one way or the other on the vacancy at the Department of Health, I assume a vacancy exists. I don't know. I don't have a good answer about anyone else who may have a second job. But there is a process, and I don't think I addressed it quite as crisply as I could have when you all asked me about at the end of the week. And Matt, you may want to go through that, or I'm happy to go through it. But you basically, someone has to declare themselves and seek basically a waiver or an exemption for it, I think is the right way to put it.

Chief Counsel Matt Platkin: Yeah, that's correct. There are certain classes of employees that can't have any outside income. And then for others, they have to get Ethics approval as well as through the State Ethics Commission. And for employees who have to fill out financial disclosures, they would have to disclose that outside income, if approved, on their annual financial disclosure forms.

Governor Phil Murphy: And that's, I want to caution to say that's a general comment in terms of the rules of the road, not specific to any one individual. Thank you. Mike, is that you? For some reason, I think – I don't know why. Maybe it's the mask. Nice to see you.

Mike Catalini, Associated Press: Good afternoon, Governor. You too. Can you address the fact that the protests that we saw over the weekend were unfolding at the same time that your Executive Order was in place, ordering people to stay home? Should people at home, should they be going to these protests? I mean, you spoke about how important they were? I wonder what your advice would be to people?

And do you have concerns that some of the vandalism that the state saw in Atlantic City and Trenton last night, do you have any indication that it will continue or that it will be unfolding in other places, and what will you do about it, if so?

Governor Phil Murphy: Yeah, I would say on your first couple of points, Mike. It's one thing to protest – I don't want to make light of this and I'll probably get lit up by everybody who owns a nail salon in the state. But it's one thing to protest what day nail salons are opening, and it's another to come out in peaceful protest, overwhelmingly, about somebody who was murdered right before our eyes, and is yet, if that weren't enough, yet another data point of the trail of data points that highlights systemic racism and the stain that slavery still leaves in our country today. I put those into different orbits.

I will say this, there were a lot of masks being worn, which is encouraging. And I would say to anybody who goes out, you have the absolute right to go out peacefully and rightfully protest, but please be smart about your health. And I think, in some cases, masks, in fact, were distributed. I think, Matt, you said to me in Camden and Newark, I believe at least, and maybe others, masks were distributed. I'll leave it, the decision to go out or not go out, as long as you do it responsibly, safely and peacefully that's a decision I would say, in this particular instance, I would leave to the individuals.

I think of this less, and I'm not making light of so-called vandalism. I think of this, and this is a vast minority of actors, and a vast minority – I think we had 30. Of the 30 protests, Pat, 28 of them came off literally without incident. I think I view those as attacks on our communities, and so it's not just a window or it's not just a door. A community is a living thing. People live there, they work there. They buy their groceries there, their neighbors are there. I think it's a real, living reality. I view the attacks less of material concerns and I don't make light of the material loss but more and frankly, in a bigger sense.

Whether or not there's more of it, we hope there isn't. Pat, the Attorney General and others have spent the past week, at this point, working their tails off toward that objective. Anything you want to add to that, Pat?

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: No, over the weekend. It was another that public safety, public health, I think those goals, never more did we see that over the weekend. And the law enforcement constantly exercising discretion, to the Governor's point. Although we would hope that people would stay home in this instance, if they come out and are peaceful, the discretion of law enforcement I think is key as we move forward throughout the days ahead.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you, Pat. Thank you, Mike. Can we come down to Elise. Is that all right?

Elise Young, Bloomberg: Hello. Is there any evidence that those who were involved in the weekend violence had ties to either Antifa or far right groups? Did the people who were arrested tend to live in the communities where the violence took place? And what are the charges they face? Thank you.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you, Elise. Pat, you've got some color on that. Do you want to jump in?

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: I do not. We will know that deeper dive into the arrests. I do know that most of them were from within, were local. I know there's a lot of stories out there from out of state, that was not the case for us over the weekend. We're drilling down into that data as well. But even the arrest in Atlantic City, if I'm not mistaken, just about all, if not all, were from Atlantic County, Elise. And as far as the charges, range from criminal mischief to, I think that was probably the overwhelming charge, but I could also have some more specific details from our County Prosecutor's office for you on that.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thanks, Elise. Do you have anything, sir? You're good? Matt, we'll come across, as I usually do when you're here, don't pull a hamstring coming in there. Ian.

Ian Elliott, NJTV News: Governor, can we get an update on the efforts to hire contact tracers, including the timing of the RFQ and number of individuals who responded online about these jobs? Have any of these individuals been hired and put to work yet?

Given the importance of isolation and quarantine, what facilities are now being considered for these purposes, and how many are currently operational?

Finally, how many active cases of COVID-19 are there? There are almost 161,000 total cases, but how many are out there now spreading that the public might need to worry about? Thank you.

Governor Phil Murphy: I'll leave the last one to the experts. I would just say if you could bear with us on contact tracing. This is, by the way, over and above the already contact tracing that exists in our county and local health organizations. So beyond that, I promised this on Friday, and I said give us around 10 days, I'll still stick with maybe a week or so, to answer, to address explicitly in the same level of robust detail as we did testing a couple of weeks ago. If you could bear with us on those, and that includes isolation and quarantining.

Judy or Ed, what's your guess on active positive cases today?

DOH Communicable Disease Service Medical Director Dr. Ed Lifshitz: I can't give you an exact number. I mean, that is not knowable. I feel very comfortable in saying that clearly there are a whole lot less now than there were two weeks or four weeks ago. There are all sorts of different things that go into trying to figure out that number but it is much lower than it has been, but it certainly isn't zero.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you. Why don't we stay in the back and then we'll come down front? Please.

Reporter: Good afternoon. Governor, I understand last week you and the Colonel said you were walled off from the investigation into the May 23rd officer-involved Parkway shooting of Maurice S. Gordon. However, it has now been more than a week since that Bass River shooting, and not even preliminary details have been released of the circumstances surrounding what happened to the vehicle Mr. Gordon was in and being pulled over, and him being shot by State Police. When can the public expect at least preliminary details of the shooting to be released?

And on the subject of the new law you signed directing the Attorney General's office to take over investigations of such officer-involved shootings, there are investigations, including one in the Sunbury Village section of Pemberton Township, that no OAG conclusion has been released for 11 months now. Is there a deadline for these investigations to conclude, and the results to be given to the public? And if so, what is it? And are you concerned at all about the vacuum created by the lack of info being released, allowing for, you know, rumor mills to go unimpeded? Thank you.

Governor Phil Murphy: Yeah, I'm going to probably disappoint you mightily with my answers here, because the Attorney General is overseeing this, and I'm not, nor is Pat, and so I apologize. I've got no good answer in terms of when. But I promise you, there's a commitment to sooner than later and transparency, for sure. I don't have any details on the Pemberton case, so if you can allow us to come back to you on that, I would appreciate it. Thank you.

And by the way, I'm not concerned about the vacuum being filled up, as long as the process is being followed. I should say this; I'm sure as heck glad that I signed that law and we worked with community leaders, faith-based leaders, leaders in law enforcement, to get to a really good place. And thank God we did, and we'll let the process run from there, if we can. I think we'll circle this way. So we'll go to Brent, and then Dave could take us out today.

Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger: Are you worried at all that these protests are going to cause a spike in cases? That's one thing I hear a lot of people concerned about? Do you have specific data for what makes all today's announcements safe? And what does this mean for the broader stay-at-home order? What happens if there's a spike in cases? Do you pull this stuff back? How do you know you're leading the country in testing, because John Hopkins' dashboard says we're still fourth? And what does stage two mean for motor vehicle commissions? I saw they were on the list, but with summer coming, teenagers want to know when they can start driving to work and things like that.

Governor Phil Murphy: I got some of them, by the way, at home. Let me start on that one, motor vehicle commissions, I don't we don't have any news for you, but that's something I would

Governor Phil Murphy: We start on that one, motor vehicle commission, we don't have any news for you, but that's something I would think we're going to be able to come to you soon. I would think that's -- that's part of stage two, and give us a couple of days on that. Go back up top, I mean, listen, we're concerned about people's health. Again, we're not out there protesting when the nail salon is going to open. Please, if you own a nail salon, don't come at me. Nothing personal, as compared to the death, tragic death in full daylight, a life loss that did not need to be, in any measure, lost. I think we have to respect the right for folks to peacefully protest, but I would say, I mentioned already, there were a fair amount of masks so I would ask folks, please cover your face and keep your distance as best you can. That still does matter and we want folks to do the best they can at that.

Just the continued reduction, Brent, in the data. The metrics that we look at, that Judy and her team look at, have been going in the right direction. They continue to go in the right direction. You know, we want to be safe, more safe than sorry. I can't hang my hat on one number or a particular benchmark other than the fact we've made, when you look and you're 70%, 80% off of peaks, you have confidence that you can move forward, particularly for things that you can either indoors manage capacity, or outdoors, period.

Would we pull back or what would that look like? Yeah, we would. I just hope we don't have to. As I've said, we've driven, we're going through hell and back here. We're driving down a one-way street. I don't want to put the car and bring it back up that street. But what would it look like? It would sadly look like what it looked like a while ago. You know, not that many weeks ago. It's part of the reason why, and I think Judy and Ed and Tina Tan have made this point. I know I have. If you bat 1,000 and you do everything right, this is the sort of virus that is going to come back at us. The question is, do you have the testing, tracing, isolation trifecta in place to contain it, to basically put a wall around it? And the answer is, we believe by June 15, the answer is going to be affirmatively and resoundingly yes. And that's an important sort of insurance plan, if you will, that we do.

Mahen has sent me the answer on your testing questions, I will read the answer to the tests. Johns Hopkins website is based on total tests of all time; the ranking that we share today is on a rolling seven-day average, and we are number one, and I intend to stay number one, by the way. Thank you, Mahen. Thank you, Brent. You good on that, or anything you want to add? You all right? Dave, today you get to take us out.

David Matthau, NJ 101.5: Thanks, Governor. So, here we go into stage two in a couple of weeks. You've mentioned that we're going to have more testing, more contact tracers are continuing to be hired. Can you give us even a conceptual idea? Perhaps you and the Commissioner who needs no introduction could discuss what is going to, if this inevitable spike takes place, which you have said even if we bat 1,000 it's probable. What is this going to look like? Is this going to be, I know we broke down the hospital's North, Central, South? Is this going to be breaking down the state this way? Will it be by region? Will it be in a particular neighborhood? Do we have any idea how this is going to play out? Will you have to issue an Executive Order do you suppose, Governor, about if there needs to be a pullback in a specific area, how this is going to be handled?

And then second and final question, some are already saying that the stage two entry is too slow. Senator O'Scanlon put something out minutes ago, complaining about this. What's your reaction to that?

Governor Phil Murphy: I already, I beat you to the punch on the second one. I said, some people think literally, we're going too slow. And there's another group that thinks we're going too fast. Declan is a good man. We're doing it the way we're doing it. And it's based, I believe, very responsibly on the data. And we're trying both to get the economy on its feet and to keep people alive. That's the balance that we try to achieve every day.

I'm not sure there's a specific, I mentioned this a second ago. It's part of the reason why resiliency is the sixth mile marker, and that includes not just addressing the racial inequities that we discuss almost every day, but it's also the bed capacity, ventilator capacity, healthcare worker capacity, medicine capacity, PPE capacity. We still today don't have enough PPE as a state or as a country; we've come from nowhere to probably as good a place as any state in America, but it's still not where we need. I don't know, Judy or Ed, if you had, maybe more to the point, so we know if there is a flare up, we know what we need to do to surround it. We also know what we need to do if it gets into the patients, get into the healthcare system so we need capacities in there.

And you've seen a chart we've started to show the past few days, where we're going to be vigilant about keeping those capacities. But Judy or Ed, what's a flare up look like? And what are the early sort of moves on the chessboard we make?

DOH Communicable Disease Service Medical Director Dr. Ed Lifshitz: I always start with when you talk about having spikes, you know, we expect to have spikes, but spikes aren't what we had back in March and April. I mean, those were floods. So certainly the hope is that as these spikes happen, we can react faster, we can do better testing, we can do that contact tracing around it, and you could prevent those spikes from becoming these huge forest fires that envelop the whole state. So basically, that's the general conceptualization is, you know, you find it faster, and rather than spread spreading throughout a town or county, yes, you may get the family members, you may get a few people around them. But very quickly, you can circle around, separate those people out, isolate them, and so forth.

And exactly what would then trigger shutdowns in different areas? I think it would depend, is the answer. It would depend on how big these spikes were, it would depend on where they were at. It would depend on whether it was going through a school versus a hospital versus a long-term care facility. I don't think there's a single one size fits all answer.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you. I normally would be saying I'm going to mask up, which I will do in a second. But I want to underscore one more time a point that I made earlier and that your questions, not all of you but many of you, have addressed. And that is, not surprising, I don't begrudge the interest in questions along the lines of community destruction, acts of violence, the small number so far, knock on wood, of bad apples and their behavior. I don't begrudge that at all. I can understand it.

But I do want to plead with you all, both in the press, our colleagues, and most importantly, everybody listening, this has been overwhelmingly, as it should be in New Jersey outrageous in terms of the death of this man, outrageous as yet another data point that screams out the systemic racism that remains in this country, but also an embrace, almost by everyone, that peaceful protesting is the way ultimately we get to the better place, and that we work together, we find common ground. We do it in the memory of those who have been lost, and also for the futures of those, for the Justin's, Diana's, Jerrel's and others like them in the younger generation that's on the rise. I would just say, let's focus on the overwhelming amount of folks who are doing the right thing.

And again, if you are going to protest, I do want you to be healthy. And I know Judy would want me to say that, so with that, I will lead by example, as will Judy. We've said it, I think every day since we've been at this table, we thank you for everything you've done, each and every one of you Without the extraordinary efforts on behalf of millions of folks in this state, we would not be able to be making the further set of announcements today. Keep doing a great job and be safe, be careful. If you keep it up, there are many more steps yet to come.

Again, I want to thank Judy and Ed to my right; Pat, Jared and Matt and the team. We'll be back with you at 1:00 p.m. unless you hear otherwise tomorrow. Godspeed, God bless.

Governor Phil Murphy

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