

Governor Phil Murphy

TRANSCRIPT: March 22nd, 2020 Coronavirus Briefing Media

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Governor Phil Murphy: Chelsea, thank you. Chelsea's our operator today and our emcee, so thank you for that.

There'll be three speakers on the speaking program but obviously we've got others with us should other questions arise. I'm honored to kick things off. We'll then go to Health Commissioner Judy Persichilli, and then to the Director of Homeland Security Jared Maples. We've got Col. Pat Callahan on with us, Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver and others with us. And I want to thank each and every one as well as the rest of our public health and safety teams who are available to answer your questions.

After we do our brief remarks, we're going to take questions. But please, I know there are a lot of interested citizens out there. We have to limit the questions to media only. We will be back with you live tomorrow. That will be, unless you hear otherwise, at 12:00 noon at the War Memorial in Trenton. The reason that'll be earlier is because we have a VTC with the President and Vice President right after that. And again, remember as we've said already, when it's earlier in the day we may have less visibility into the overnight numbers so please bear with us.

I'll speak for myself, and I know Judy and Jared and Pat and the Lieutenant Governor – and I can't thank the Lieutenant Governor enough for her partnership. I know we're all sort of beating on similar drums here but I've been spending my time since we last spoke checking in with a lot of the hospital CEOs to see how they're doing up and down the state; basically going through a rotation, Kevin Slavin in particular representing the Hospital Association as their Chair in addition to his leadership at St. Joe's. And you know, hearing the not surprising concerns, anxieties, asks that we're hearing out of the healthcare systems; spending a lot of time talking. And I want to thank the leadership up and down the state.

I want to thank as well fellow elected officials. We've had an enormous amount of back and forth both within the New Jersey Delegation as well as with other fellow governors around the country.

I've just been told you've got some static coming in from this line, so please bear with me, Chelsea. I'm going to come back into you on a separate line so please bear with me. We'll be right back. [brief pause] We're back.

Again, thank you everybody for joining. I won't repeat what I've already said. I just was in the middle of sort of giving folks a sense of how I'm spending my time – a lot of hospital CEOs. I had a good healthcare, a smaller group, union discussion on Friday night which I meant to say yesterday; lots of time with elected officials both in our delegation and around the state, at the county and local level as well as around the county among other Governors. I just had an exchange a short while ago with Governor Newsome of California by example.



The four big themes to me continue to be PPE, and Judy will talk more about that but that is a constant topic of concern and question, and we are doing everything we can. Col. Callahan along with Judy and their teams, including by the way big shoutouts to the private sector who are stepping up. I mentioned some players already earlier in the week; I want to add Prudential to that list who have really stood tall among others who are just coming out of this moment of crisis as extraordinary citizens.

Healthcare systems themselves – Kevin Slavin committed on behalf of all the healthcare systems that they were all-in on helping us develop at the ROIC a statewide inventory, get a real sense of timelines. We're continuing to ask the federal government for support. I did that on national television this morning. We'll do it again, obviously constantly with our elected officials at the White House.

The second big theme is testing. You'll hear more about that from myself and Judy in a minute. Thirdly is beds, and that's a lot of the work we're doing with the Army Corps of Engineers. Obviously, remember folks, our two big initiatives are one, flatten the curve so we can take pressure off the healthcare system and smooth this in a much more manageable way; but at the same time not taking any chances, making sure that we've got the capacity that we need in the healthcare system.

And then, the other big theme is federal money. Again, I mentioned this on national television earlier. Just this region alone – New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut – we think collectively we need \$100 billion of direct cash assistance from the federal government. There's deliberation going on in Congress right now. The number needs to be really meaningful if we're going to continue to be able to be there for our workers, small businesses, healthcare workers, folks who are infected with this virus.

We're at the point of attack. We need the back and fill from the federal government to help us fill the massive amount of programs which are not surprisingly leading to a bleeding of cash and an impact on the economy for individuals, for companies and for the state itself. So, those are the big themes.

We are reporting today 590 new positive test results. Our statewide total is now 1914. I repeat, this is what we expected. This is not a surprise. We knew, especially as we opened up testing that we would have bigger numbers. And as we collect more specimens and then process those tests, that's exactly what we're seeing. Some of this is community spread without question but the big up here is as a result of the testing.

And again, folks, I want to make sure everybody understands. We understand the anxiety; we appreciate it. Who could not be anxious at this time? But the more data we have, the more we understand about the raw data the better we will be able to crack the back of this virus sooner or later. And we will do that together as one New Jersey family.

Sadly, we're reporting four additional deaths, bringing that total to 20 in New Jersey since the onset of this coronavirus. And our thoughts and prayers are with these blessed souls and their families, God rest their souls. Judy will have more color on both the 590 positive results as well as the four deaths. We do have our first, if I'm reading this right, we have our first case, sadly I might add, of a positive case in Salem County which means coronavirus is now, as we had expected, in all 21 New Jersey counties.

I want to reiterate my thanks to every New Jerseyan who is doing her or his part in helping us flatten that curve. Let me repeat what we said in stark terms yesterday. All residents are to stay inside if you do not need to be out. Until further notice, all nonessential retail businesses are to remain closed, and all employees who can work from home must work from home.

Residents who are unsure of what businesses are closed by yesterday's order, and that was effective 9:00 PM last evening, or who need phone numbers or who have questions about coronavirus should all visit our new information and resource portal at www.covid19.nj.gov (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov>). That's www.covid19.nj.gov (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov>). And again, we hope that that will be over time the most robust all-encompassing information source for residents up and down the state.

Tomorrow, the drive-through testing site at PNC Bank Arts Center in my home county of Monmouth off of Parkway Exit 116 will open at 8:00 AM. It will be open daily from 8:00 AM until it reaches capacity. As we have experienced in Bergen County, which was again open for business today, we will have a similar experience in Monmouth County at the PNC – which is we have been allocated... And I want to thank our

FEMA Region 2 partners for working with the State Police, Department of Health, National Guard, local and county officials to help us get each of these sites up and standing, which has been a terrific feat over the past week.

The challenge is, however, we have a limited amount of supplies, both the actual specimen testing supplies as well as PPE. So, these testing sites will be limited in the numbers that they can deal with every day but let me just say this: compared to Friday morning at 8:00, we are now well over 1000 folks more who were tested at literally just one site. And that number will begin to grow with the second site, second drive-in site being added tomorrow.

Let me remind everybody, to be tested you need two things – one is you need to be a Jersey resident and have proof of that. And secondly, you've got to have symptoms of a respiratory illness. Do not go to either the Bergen Community College site or the PNC Bank Arts Center if you're not a Jersey resident and you're not symptomatic. We cannot right now, with limited supplies and limited manpower, accept what is being referred to as the worried well. We appreciate the worry, we understand it, but if you don't have symptoms we don't have enough manpower or raw material to test you.

One more health warning on PNC. Please don't go to the PNC Bank Arts Center prior to tomorrow morning. And again, do not go if you're not exhibiting symptoms. And we're all well aware of the national shortage of supplies and we're doing everything we can about that. We've been ahead of the curve in our testing posture at every step of the way, probably compared to any other American state which is good news. But we still need to ensure that we're using these supplies in the most prudent way because no matter how far ahead of this we might get, we are limited by the supplies that we are getting to use for these testings.

We know there's pent-up demand for testing – that's an obvious point. The State Police, local authorities, National Guard – again, I can't say enough good things about them – as well as our extraordinary heroes, healthcare workers, will be onsite; in the first instance to direct traffic and ensure public safety. Once the facility's at capacity new arrivals will be asked to return the next day. And we ask everyone please have patience and follow directions of public safety and public health officials.

Not related to FEMA Region 2 but importantly, Union County is also opening a testing facility at Kean University for its residents, first responders and county workers tomorrow. That facility is open by appointment only, and Union County residents must work through their primary care provider. So, we tip our hat again to our brothers and sisters in Union County who are working to get that up and running.

I have directed multiple state departments to ensure that our residents have access to the telehealth services they need whenever possible. Today, we will be announcing critical telehealth and tele mental health options for more than 3 million residents. These services will be accessible without copays. These services will ensure residents can have flexible access across a variety of platforms to vital care from the comfort and safety of their homes.

One final note before I turn things over to Judy, which I'm not happy to even have to talk about, but we are hearing from in particular our Asian-American communities their concerns regarding incidents of racism. To be clear, this repugnant and repulsive behavior is wrong even in good times but it is even more repugnant and more repulsive now. Our diversity is one of if not the core strength of our state, and that strength will get us through this. We are one New Jersey family. Everyone is fighting the same fight. Everyone is making the same sacrifices.

We are going to get through this together. Stay in, everybody. Please stay home unless you absolutely need to go out. Stay safe, stay smart and let's stay compassionate to one another. It's our New Jersey values that will get us through this emergency and make us even stronger when – and I say 'when' – we emerge from it.

I mentioned this on national television earlier today. We didn't win WWII because we panicked. We didn't win WWII because we started to divide on each other and turn on ourselves. We win wars, and this is a war – we win wars when we stay calm, when we're fact-based, when we realize we're one family; when we're proactive, when we're aggressive, when we're transparent, when we're straight with each other and when we recognize that we go up and down, we rise and fall as one extraordinary diverse New Jersey family.

With that, I turn it over to again, the woman who needs no introduction, the Commissioner of the Department of Health Judy Persichilli.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Thank you, Governor, and good afternoon, everyone.

As the Governor said, we sadly report four additional deaths. This makes the total number of deaths in New Jersey at 20. The age range for the 20 deaths is between 30 years and 98 years, with a median age of 73.

The four new deaths that we're reporting today include a male in his 90s from Bergen County, a male in his 80s from Passaic, a female in her 90s from Middlesex, and a male in his 70s from Somerset County. We do know that the deaths in Bergen and Passaic involve individuals with underlying medical conditions. We are still investigating the other two individuals. The families of every one of these individuals is in our thoughts at this very difficult time.

We're also announcing 590 new cases, for a total of 1914 cases in the state. The county breakdown is as follows: Atlantic 1, Bergen 94, Burlington 5, Camden 7, Essex 65, Gloucester 2, Hudson 29, Hunterdon 2, Mercer 10, Middlesex 31, Monmouth 66, Morris 55, Ocean 39, Passaic 29, Salem 1, Somerset 17, Sussex 6, Union 42, Warren 4. And there are 85 cases that we are still gathering information on.

As I've said, we expect these numbers to increase. That's why we're doing everything in our power to prepare, to flatten the curve by closing nonessential businesses, and practicing aggressive social distancing.

We are aggressively planning to open closed hospitals, standup field hospitals and open up unused wings of existing hospitals. We are doing this with the assistance of the US Army Corps of Engineers. As more counties prepare to open community-based drive-through coronavirus testing sites, I want to emphasize that if you have symptoms including fever, shortness of breath or cough, you should call your primary care provider and be assessed. Those with underlying medical conditions and those who are 65 or older who have symptoms are particularly at risk and should be more vigilant.

As we've been saying, we absolutely appreciate and understand that the rising number of cases along with the curtailment of our daily activities and normal routines is causing people to be anxious and concerned. If you are concerned about your well-being or your mental health, or the mental health of someone you love, the free mental healthcare hotline can help. It offers free telephone counseling, emotional support, information and assistance. It is available seven days a week between 8:00 AM and 8:00 PM and the number is 866-202-HELP. 866-202-HELP.

I'd also like to say a few words about the critical blood shortage we are experiencing in our state and the need for health people to donate to help ensure our hospitals have an adequate blood supply. The need for blood is constant in our healthcare facilities and the need right now is becoming increasingly urgent.

Novel coronavirus is a new virus but there is no evidence that the virus can be transmitted by donating blood. Our blood centers are taking every precaution to protect donors at this critical time, including the use of proper protective equipment, increased sanitizing and disinfecting, and adherence to social distancing. Our healthcare workers are doing an amazing job taking care of us in this unprecedented public health emergency. The last thing we want to do is add to the crisis because of a depleted blood supply.

I know so many of us feel helpless in the face of this particular crisis, so there is something you can do to help those in need. I urge you to contact Bergen Regional Community Blood Center, New Jersey Blood Services, or the American Red Cross and make an appointment to give. There are locations throughout the state with flexible hours to accommodate our communities. It's one concrete way we can all roll up our sleeves and help if you're in good health and you're feeling well. If you don't feel well on the day of your scheduled appointment, please cancel your donation. But if you're in good health and feeling well, please donate blood to help our communities.

I want to address the issue of personal protective equipment, the resources and demands both now and in the days ahead. Under the offices of the New Jersey State Police we are centralizing an effort to manage the inventory of supplies led by the Office of Emergency Management. OEM will coordinate with the New Jersey Hospital Association to maintain an ongoing count of statewide supplies in order to address the needs of individual hospitals, long-term care facilities, first responders and others throughout New Jersey.

I want to thank the individual healthcare systems for sharing their inventories as needed as well as your maximum cooperation going forward. I also want to thank the New Jersey Hospital Association for coordinating and centralizing communications within the hospital community, which allows our team here at the Department of Health to be more efficient in getting services where they are needed as fast as possible.

Please rest assured as the Governor has said, we are doing everything in our power working around the clock to respond to the cases of COVID-19, to increase testing sites, expand hospital bed capacity and get protective equipment for our valued and lifesaving healthcare providers.

In closing, to clarify my comments, all of us are at risk of getting COVID-19 if we do not practice aggressive social distancing, respiratory etiquette, handwashing frequently throughout the day and covering our coughs and sneezes. Thank you.

Governor Phil Murphy: Judy, thank you for that. Two quick comments before I ask Jared Maples to say a few words and then we'll open it to questions. Number one, just to repeat something Judy said and I referred to, where would we be without our healthcare workers? Where would we be without our first responders? I had a call on Friday with law enforcement and first responders, including both police and fire, state, county and local, with the chiefs up and down the state and made this point: healthcare workers, just extraordinary heroism day in and day out. And so, that's the first. I'm actually going to make three quick points, number one.

Number two, Judy's last point. Let there be no doubt about this. We're all going to die trying to keep the number as low as we physically and humanly can. It's why, both low in terms of folks who get it and certainly folks who get really sick from it, and/or God forbid pass as a result from this virus. We're going to die trying. I will tell you we will not leave anything on the practice field. We'll turn over any stone to keep this number as low as we humanly can. But we also owe it to you to be straight with you in terms of what the reality is as we go through that process, and we promise that as well.

But no matter how many cases we have, remember, flattening the curve not only impacts how many cases but it impacts the pace of cases; and therefore, the stress on our healthcare system. So, you could have the same amount of cases in a 'we don't care' world, let the virus run wild with a huge spike in the curve which would bring our healthcare system to its knees; or with the same amount of cases you could smooth, flatten that curve – break the back of it, smooth it over a longer period of time perhaps, not that we want this around any longer than we have to. But allow the healthcare system and its capacity, in particular the capacity that Judy is adding, it will allow us to withstand a comparable amount of cases.

So, both statements are true. Number one, we're doing everything we can to keep the number of cases, in particular serious illness and fatalities as low as humanly possible, but we will be straight with you as we do that. That's why we're telling you stay inside. But by the same token, if we have the same amount of cases the flattening of that curve is a huge deal in and of itself. It allows our healthcare system to digest a similar amount of cases but in a more smoothed, more coherent fashion.

My last point, which I don't think I hit hard enough in my remarks – and Judy, this is not related necessarily to yours specifically – but when we say stay inside... Pat Callahan is on and I'd be very happy when we take questions for Pat to weigh in here. We mean it and we're not happy when we see folks flaunting that. And we will take action. The only way we're going to flatten this curve is everybody stay inside, work from home, only go out if you have to; only go out if you are helping us fight this virus period. No exceptions.

With that, we'd love to turn it over, particularly as I mentioned yesterday in our live gathering in Newark, there's a lot of false information out there. And we can't implore you enough to rely only on official sources. And to make that point stronger and put more flesh on that, please help me welcome the Director of the Department of Homeland Security Jared Maples.

Director of Homeland Security and Preparedness Jared Maples: Thank you, Governor. We know that there's an ongoing disinformation campaign, both regarding the origins of COVID-19 and an impending national lockdown among several other areas. That information is false.

The federal government through the US Department of Homeland Security National Operations Center and the National Security Council along with my office here in New Jersey have publicly reiterated that this information is false.

To really emphasize the Governor's and Commissioner Persichilli's points, it is so vital in this situation with this virus to make sure the information is correct and that you're getting that information only from trusted, established sources such as the www.covid19.nj.gov (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov>) portal that was just launched yesterday along with our various other official channels and reputable news sources. It becomes important and quite frankly vital to getting through this as a stronger New Jersey together, just like the Governor mentioned.

With that, I'll turn it back over to the Governor.

Governor Phil Murphy: Jared, thank you and thanks for all your help here. So, we're going to go to our operator Chelsea; Chelsea's going to queue up the questions. Again, please, media only and if you could state both your name and your outlet when you ask the question because Chelsea won't have visibility into that; that would be very much appreciated.

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Q&A Session:

Tom Davis, Patch.com: I think you actually basically answered my question, and that is the situation in Lakewood. The people are actually still going to school and also there were reports today about GameStop. Apparently, business is brisk and elsewhere. I'm assuming you've heard these reports.

Governor Phil Murphy: I'm glad you asked it. I'm gonna ask Pat to weigh in here. I didn't hear them but I read them. The Attorney General is actually going to join us in tomorrow's briefing to talk very specifically about what we're doing with the 21 County Prosecutors' officers about folks who are just ignoring these edicts. But Pat, anything you want to add in the meantime?

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: Thank you, Governor. Yeah, I'll just reiterate what I stated yesterday with regard to the Attorney General's guidance that came out in the past week, which was really to inform all of law enforcement's chief executives across the state with regards to the rules of the executive order; as well as directing the County Prosecutors' offices and the Division of Criminal Justice to have Assistant Prosecutors and Deputies Attorney General on call 24/7.

As we keep saying, it's somewhat of a new process for us and we want to make sure that his office and all of us have a standardized approach to assist all of law enforcement in making those charging decisions for any violations that we find in the executive order. Thanks, Gov.

Governor Phil Murphy: Pat, thank you. And I would just say, if anyone's wondering where my sort of emotion is on this, when I hear stories, Tom, like the one you raised, we are really damned unhappy and we're going to take action. And I just don't know. We already are in the extent to which we've aggressively, up and down – and I want to thank the police forces up and down the state for being as visible as they are. But you don't win a war by putting your feet up. You don't win a war by, "You know what? It's somebody else's problem." You win it because everybody rows the boat together. And we are exceedingly displeased to the extent to which there are people who are not rowing the boat with us. Thank you for that, Tom.

Lindy Washburn, Bergen Record: Hi Governor, thanks for taking the call. I wanted to ask a little bit more about the PPE solution or new strategy that you have. Is this something that's voluntary or mandatory in terms of pooling of the existing resources? And is there any indication that you'll be able to add new supplies to this either from the Stockpile or from other sources?

Governor Phil Murphy: Yeah, so I'm going to give you a general answer and then I'd like Judy and Pat to talk about this, because we basically have gone to a unified command, using a military phrase, in terms of the procurement and inventorying of the PPE both around the state in terms of what we have and what we think we can get on order or from the federal government or from other sources.

And that includes, again, I want to reiterate a huge shoutout today to Prudential as another great example of great corporate citizenship, delivering a big amount, a big slug. But Pat and Judy, would you give a little more color on how, by doing this as I'll use the phrase again, unified command headquartered at the ROIC, how we think this may be able to smooth our lines to get more PPE in faster?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: I'll start and then I'll let Chris fill in.

Governor Phil Murphy: Chris Neuwirth is on. I apologize, Chris, I should have recognized you earlier.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: One of the things that we've recognized hour by hour is the number of individuals, hospitals, facilities that require PPE and the short supply. But we also recognize that there are some institutions that have some inventory that they may be able to share. For example, as elective surgeries are decreasing across the state, and there'll be some prohibition on them, and ambulatory surgery centers, their supply is coming in.

We have doctors' offices calling us, saying they have a supply that they want to put into a centralized area. So, we've decided today to work with the Office of Emergency Management and centralize the procurement, inventorying and distribution of PPE throughout the state. And I'll let Chris talk about how that's going to work. And I was on a call with Kevin Slavin and Cathy Bennet from the Hospital Association, going through the mechanics of this today and how we expect to disseminate and prioritize the PPE. So Chris, maybe you can talk about how we're going to do this at the ROIC.

Assistant Commissioner of Health Chris Neuwirth: Sure. So, we fully understand that the need in New Jersey and nationwide is greater than any one source can provide. And in recognizing that, we are putting together a team housed in the state Emergency Operations Center that is multi-departmental. So, it'll include reps from the Department of Health, Emergency Management and others to consolidate, organize and coordinate all of the procurement opportunities that are being presented to the state through various means – which includes everything from our requests and allocations from the Strategic National Stockpile, procurement opportunities, donations management and so forth.

And we think that consolidating our efforts across state government under a unifying framework of prioritization, that we'll be able to greatly facilitate both the incoming and the outgoing of resources of all types and better position ourselves to provide support and relief to the entire healthcare and public health infrastructure.

Governor Phil Murphy: Chris, I should have introduced you earlier, it's good to have you on. Assistant Commissioner Chris Neuwirth. Thank you, Lindy, for that.

Brian Thompson, NBC: Two questions, please, one for the Commissioner. We're getting a lot of mentions now or seeing a lot of stuff online about hospital staff, nurses, etc. being told not to wear their PPE masks because it would scare the patients. Does the state have a policy on that? And the second one, Governor, for you is apparently there's a strike of prisoners at the Hudson County Correctional Institute. You have the ACLU that is trying to get people released from county jails. I'd like to know your position on that please, Governor.

Governor Phil Murphy: Okay, I don't have a lot of insight into the latter. Matt Platkin may be on with me, and/or Pat Callahan can address that. But on the former, Judy, on masks – that's a new one to me. I don't know that that's what we're hearing on the ground, is it?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: No, I haven't heard that. What I have heard is that there appears to be a lack of standardization about how PPE, specifically masks are being used. And that's why we're working with the Hospital Association and relying on the CDC guidance in that regard.

Governor Phil Murphy: Yeah, I mentioned this earlier. Judy and I did a broad call now a number of days ago. I had a follow-up call on Friday night with one of the representatives of the healthcare workers. There's a working group call. There was a lot of discussion about lack of harmony, lack of standards across the many health systems in our state in terms of PPE, training with equipment, etc. On the Hudson County, I've got no insight on that, Brian, other than we want as many folks, outside as well as in the system... We stand on behalf of everybody in the state and we want to keep everybody healthy. Matt or Pat or anyone else on the line, do you have any insight into that? Brian, we'll get back to you. Alex Altman is on helping us. We'll make sure we get back to you with anything on that. Thank you for the question.

Alex Zdan, News 12: I wanted to ask you about the executive orders that were issued in Newark by Mayor Baraka in which three areas of the city, residents are being told they can't leave their homes except for emergencies, food shopping, and work. And I wonder if that conflicts with your executive orders which say that you can't impose, a local municipality can't impose more restrictions on freedom of movement. We're

hearing also that businesses are being told, even restaurants, even ones that are offering takeout only are told to shut down at 8:00 even though your order says that they can maintain normal business hours. What's your reaction to this? And is your administration going to speak to the administration in Newark?

Governor Phil Murphy: Yeah, listen, we speak to Mayor Baraka literally all the time. There's no better mayor in the state, maybe I'd even go out on a limb and say in the country. And as it relates to what he's asking his residents to do is frankly completely consistent. I hadn't heard the takeout on the restaurant side but otherwise, stay inside. Only go out if you have to. Only go out if you're part of the struggle to break the back of this virus. That's what we're saying statewide. He put more of an underlined emphasis as far as I read it or heard it as it relates to particular neighborhoods but it was completely consistent with our executive order. And again, to everybody, whether you're in a particular neighborhood in Newark or you're where I am right now in Monmouth County or anywhere else in the state, say inside, period. Thank you.

Alex Zdan, News 12: Governor, if I may just say, Mayor Baraka said in his own statement that he's going further than you're going. And your message yesterday to local leaders was let the state set the table here.

Governor Phil Murphy: Alex, I've given you what I got on it. Let's go, keep going.

Anthony Vecchione, NJBIZ: Hi, good morning, Governor. Thank you for taking the call. Governor, this morning I called ten pharmacies and ten supermarkets in northern New Jersey to see if they had thermometers. Every one of them were out of stock and didn't know when they were getting a delivery. The call was prompted by a friend of mine who called me and said they wanted to take the temperature of a family member but the thermometer was broken. So, I guess my question is are you addressing this? Are you doing anything about this? You know, one of the criteria for getting tested is to know if you have a fever. Well, if you can't take your temperature you can't know if you have a fever, and certainly you don't want people going to an emergency room or an ER to get their temperature taken. Can you give any advice on this or can the Commissioner?

Governor Phil Murphy: Yeah, listen. Clearly, if you think you've got a temperature you need a thermometer. I get that part 100%. And one of the things we've been preaching is for folks to not panic and I want to repeat that. This is no time to panic, this is a time to be smart, aggressive, get out in front, stay home, the things we're talking about. And in terms of supply lines, one of the things that we emphasized in the executive order from yesterday that Alex just asked about is making sure that we're not disrupting supply lines; and that in fact, the places like pharmacies are deemed beyond any shadow of a doubt essential. Not only can they stay open, unlike a whole lot of other retail, but that we need to make sure we're not doing anything to disrupt their replenishing of their inventory. And we are committed to all of the above. Judy, I'm not sure if you or Pat want to add anything to that.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Yeah, I know along with PPE, thermometers is the most valuable asset we have. I don't know how to answer that. Keep looking. Somebody's, there's got to be a thermometer out there somewhere.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you for that.

Matt Skoufalos, NJPen.com: Hi, this is for Mr. Maples. You had said in yesterday's briefing that there is a disinformation campaign originating from foreign sources around COVID-19 or around the potential of military lockdown, that sort of thing. I would like to know if you could tell us whatever you can about that, where it's coming from and what is known about that at this time.

Director of Homeland Security and Preparedness Jared Maples: So, regarding the campaign, that's exactly right. What we were referring to yesterday was a text message that went out to many citizens, not just in New Jersey but around the country. We do know that was targeted by a foreign adversary. I don't want to get into the specifics of that and get out ahead of the federal government, but I can tell you that China, Iran and Russia have all contributed publicly to misinformation through official statements. And as far as covert actions like the text messaging strains, those are clearly designed to cause disruption and cause confusion and have quite frankly have led to things like hoarding and things like some of the panic that you're seeing across the country. So, we really want to get that message out there that it's not just for fun here. Those types

of text messages mean an awful lot, and it came out from a specific and coordinated source; and we want to counter that message to make sure that our citizens aren't panicking, to know that we've got this in hand, to know that we're being transparent and direct with all of our information through our official sources.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you, Jared. Let's keep going.

Carly Sitrin, POLITICO: Hi, Governor. I have two education-related questions. The first one, has the decision been made about standardized assessments for students as it was coming up in a couple weeks?

Governor Phil Murphy: The decision has not been made although I was on with the team earlier today. Obviously, we're looking at the federal guidance. This is obviously a high priority, not just for us but for teachers, educators, parents and kids. My guess is we'll have an answer for you within the next day or two.

Carly Sitrin, POLITICO: Thank you. And my second question is regarding getting food out to students. I've spoken to a couple of districts that have switched from delivering meals every day to two days a week to allow parents to stock up. Is there any guidance on whether schools should be delivering meals every day or every couple of days?

Governor Phil Murphy: So, each of the districts were responsible for developing their own emergency action plan as it relates to the step we took in terms of closing the schools, public and private in the state. I am not up on what literally each and every district is doing, but Pat, maybe you've gotten... I know you've been keeping close tabs on this from Lamont and his team. Anything you want to add?

State Police Superintendent Col. Pat Callahan: Yeah, I do get a daily update on that and it is within that district's purview to function as they see fit in accordance with their food service providers. And again, I'm seeing very few hiccups with regards, or have been reported very few hiccups with regards to how the food is being distributed. But we defer to the districts to operate in order to be most effective and efficient in that process.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you. When we have more on that, on the assessments front, we will let you know. I wanted to go back. Alex asked the question about restaurants. This is a general comment and I want to make sure I'm clear about this. Restaurants and bars are closed for eat-in but they are able to stay open including beyond 8:00 for take-out, and that must be the case because we've got to make sure that that source of food and provision is provided for our folks and that's up and down the state. I want to be unequivocal and clear on that front.

Dan, News 12: Hey everybody, thanks for making yourselves available and taking my call. I have a few questions here, please bear with me. We've also, like Brian Thompson, gotten a lot of calls from panicked nurses who are saying that as a matter of policy, their supervisors are walking around, telling them to remove masks that they've brought in, that they've purchased and brought in themselves to try to protect themselves and they're being ordered to remove them. I just wanted to see, regardless of whether or not that had gotten up to your awareness, do you think that's ethical and is it consistent with the state's drive to try to... Also, we've gotten calls from construction workers who are concerned that they're on nonessential jobs and they just can't possibly keep a proper distance from one another because they work, they lift things with one another and they can't possibly follow any kind of hygiene standard. And we've also gotten a lot of calls about crowding in supermarkets and whether or not there should be some kind of regulation to keep people apart in the situation where you've got a ton of people hitting the supermarket trying to stock up on things.

Governor Phil Murphy: Okay, so let me go in reverse order. Supermarkets are essential. They must remain open and folks must practice social distancing at the supermarket period. So, use your common sense. If somebody's getting in your space, let them know and/or move out of the space. You can do it peacefully, you can do it politely but practice social distancing. Just because the supermarket's open or a pharmacy or whatever, medical supply store, make sure that within that context you're social distancing. Frankly, make sure you're social distancing at home. Even Tammy and I are doing this call right now on different phones so be smart. Secondly, unequivocally construction is deemed to be essential. We recognize there's a uniqueness around it. We have to ask folks, employers and workers to do everything you can to achieve some amount of distancing; and recognizing some of this is challenging as it is in some of the other lines of business, like healthcare right now. And that includes aggressive, both hand hygiene and respiratory good practices. On the former, healthcare workers wearing masks in places where there are folks that we're caring for is completely

consistent with what we believe in. So, I've not heard... I know you caveated your question whether or not this has come up the chain for us to hear. I've not heard that, but Judy, you and your team are the pros here, not myself. But we want folks to be protecting themselves and I think we'll need to follow up with the Hospital Association to get some more color on this. But Judy, anything you want to add?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Yeah, I do. You know, I keep urging people to follow the CDC guidance on the use of masks. We do know that the N95 masks, which are in short supply, are really the most effective in protecting healthcare workers. The other paper masks, etc., probably are true for the reverse but really are not as protective as people would love to believe. The conservation of PPE is something that we all have to be aware of. I can't speak to individual circumstances and what people are saying to each other within the hospital walls. I do know that just hearing that story we need a pretty big dose of education about the transmission of COVID-19, what we know about it and the best ways to protect everyone, including first and foremost healthcare workers and first responders.

Governor Phil Murphy: Well said.

Tracey Tully, New York Times: Hi there, I have two questions please. Can you speak to whether there are or how many cases there are among staff as well as inmates at the county jails and prisons? Question number one. Question number two is, this is anecdotal again, but I'm hearing that hospitals, for example Morristown, they're doing fundraising drives but also requesting of the community items such as Crocs, pump soap – you know, [supplies] if they have them in the community. Can you speak to that statewide in terms of are hospitals becoming so desperate that they're doing these community drives to request items like Crocs?

Governor Phil Murphy: Okay, so I think, Judy, I'm going to come to you. I've not heard the Crocs story I have to say, but Judy, to you for each of these. Do we know how many are with folks, you said either employees or persons who are incarcerated?

Tracey Tully, New York Times: Correct.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Well, I don't have any information on the county jails for sure, but the state correctional, we're in constant communication with Commissioner Hicks. And so far, we feel pretty comfortable that things are going well in correctional but we put them on what we would call our high-risk watch list, just merely because of the congregation of them together. But he is distancing the forensic individuals as much as possible and following all of our guidance. As far as fundraising for Crocs and things like that, what's happening in some of our hospitals – and you asked an anecdotal question so I'll give you an anecdotal answer – people are calling in saying, "How can I help?" You know, in situations like this – and I think many, many of us particularly sitting around the Department of Health have been through things like this before, whether it was HIV/AIDS, Ebola, H1N1, many of us Superstorm Sandy. People want to help. And some of the ways they feel like they're helping is to be able to, if they can't donate their time, donate their goods. And I know that many volunteers who cannot come into the hospital are making masks that they feel will be protective, but they feel like they have to do something. So, if that's going on I would assume it's because of a community call to action, "How can we help?" And I think we're going to see more and more of that and I think it will be very effective in bringing our communities together during a time when we can't see people face-to-face.

Governor Phil Murphy: I think there's also going to be, if I had to predict sooner than later, there's going to be – and I say this happily – a groundswell of support from the private sector, not just the examples I've referred to this week. And again, I want to repeat Comcast, Verizon, Home Depot, Prudential among others who have been huge, so many big and small companies but also individuals. I think there's going to be increasingly more organized nongovernmental but completely sympathetic with what the challenges we're seeing in government. I think we're going to see a lot more of that taking hold sooner rather than later – as Judy referenced, as we have done, as we've seen in the past, Superstorm Sandy begin a great example. So, thank you for that, Tracie.

Matt Katz, WNYC: Hi Governor, thanks for taking the calls. Just following up a bit on what Tracie just had asked, we had heard about hunger strikes among ICE detainees at the county jails in Essex and Hudson and also at the Elizabeth Detention Center. And there's a movement among their attorneys and activists to have

these detainees released. They're civil violations and they could be released on ankle monitors. First of all, with that do you think they should be released? And second of all, do you have any control even with your emergency powers over making that happen at all?

Governor Phil Murphy: So again, you're hearing, and I'm not denying whether or not this may be happening or not, but you've got some information that at least, I'll speak for myself, that I'm not hearing as clearly as it sounds like you are. And we care about everybody in this state – let there be no doubt about it. And we haven't beaten the drum lately on the ICE activities and breaking up of families, and the notion that we are the ultimate immigrant nation. And New Jersey's the most diverse state in America, and we wear that as a badge of honor. And we care not just about some of us; we care about each and every single one of us. So, we haven't hit that a whole lot lately because of emergency challenges before us. But beyond that, Matt Platkin, are you on? Anything you want to add to this, our Chief Counsel, in terms of the specifics of the question?

Chief Counsel Matt Platkin: We are monitoring it and working closely with the Attorney General's Office as well as the county offices to see what we can do. But we'll have to come back to you with an answer.

Governor Phil Murphy: Matt, if we get anything on that I promise you, Alex Altman will make sure to keep us honest and be sure to get something back to you. Thank you for that.

Matt Arco, Star-Ledger: Hi Governor, thanks for taking the call and questions. A couple things for you. Just kind of going back to your point about being very unhappy with folks not adhering to social gathering rules. I'm just curious, have there been any arrests? Is that something that we can expect? What examples can you give us? You said that you're going to plan to take action. And sort of related to that, are you considering dropping the number of people who can gather in one spot from its current amount of 50 to maybe 10 or something, or just dropping it in general?

Governor Phil Murphy: Yeah, so Matt, on the second one, this may have gotten lost in the shuffle yesterday. We actually dropped it to zero. We basically have banned any social gatherings in the state, period. And so, that is something that, you can imagine in every instance, in every household in every structure around the state that's going to be hard to enforce per se but we have essentially dropped it to zero. We want no gatherings of any kind. We want people to stay home period. And that includes, you know, if you're nonessential retail you're not open and if you're essential we need you to be open but practice social distancing within that. And by the way, if you're everybody else work from home and we need you to do that. Pat Callahan might want to come in here. I'm not sure, in terms of if I've got a crisp answer for any number of arrests, but the reason we had, in addition to thanking law enforcement on Friday, the reason we had that call... The reason I wanted to be on that call I should say and join Jared and Pat and the Attorney General and others is to make the point that we want all of these steps to be enforced aggressively. And hold that thought. Again, the Attorney General will be with us tomorrow. Pat, in the meantime anything you want to add to Matt's question?

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: Certainly, Governor, thank you. In anticipation of that question, when these executive orders started to get more restrictive, our Regional Operations Intelligence Center, which is the fusion center for all crime data, I did ask them to, rather than me reaching out to Chief Leusner every day with kind of anecdotal stuff, we wanted to set in place a more formal reporting structure. They do have a daily conference call with local, county, state and federal partners, and we also built into that call, as well as the formal reporting structure, this data. So, we're able to ask how many arrests, what was the situation. At this juncture I've not heard of any but I would imagine that in short order, the fact that we've requested it be reported that we will have that information if and when law enforcement needs to take action and arrest people.

Governor Phil Murphy: You know, we have Jared Maples on for a reason, for many reasons – one of which is to make sure everybody relies on official channels. And we've used the word 'anecdotal' a lot on this call and that's not a bad thing. I mean, we're all hearing stuff. I'm hearing stuff myself. So, with that caution that using the word 'anecdotal,' is not... You know, Tony Fauci would not be happy with me using the word, with my using the word 'anecdotal' because we need to make sure that we have official facts. For my taste, there's too much anecdotal evidence that there's too many people still not paying attention to this. And again, it's anecdotal admittedly but we've about had it and we've just got to figure... You know, we are constantly trying to figure out exactly what does that mean and know that we're on it. We're focused and we're not happy.

Assuming the anecdotal evidence is correct, and again, that's a big assumption, we are not happy with people out there ignoring what is a clear, unmistakable order to stay at home and only go out if you have to; only go out if you're helping us fight the virus. Thanks, Matt.

Haley Gregson, Bloomberg: Hi Governor. I'm wondering how many state employees may be laid off.

Governor Phil Murphy: How many state employees may be laid off? At the moment there are none being laid off, and the answer is we've got an aggressive work from home policy. And we're having to adjust capacities on things, like it's not a state government per se but NJ Transit has had to right-size its service given the enormous falloff in ridership. We're going to have to right-size I'm sure, this isn't laying people off but right-size things like toll collections just because of the far fewer cars on the road. And so, listen, this is putting an enormous strain on state government. So, just to reiterate a couple of things, we cannot go on without meaningful federal support. In fact, even during this call I've been back and forth on that very topic. We need meaningful federal cash direct assistance. And we just can't serve at the level we're serving people who are sick, people who want to get tested; people who have lost their jobs, small businesses that have gone belly-up. We cannot do all of that and not have a back and fill from the federal government number one. The second point I'll make is this, is the time to debate whether or not government matters has herewith passed us by. We need government more than ever before. If you look at what Judy and her team, Pat and his team, Jared and his team, the Department of Human Services, DCA under Sheila Oliver's leadership, Children and Family under Christine Norbert Byers' leadership – these folks are flat out working like they've never worked before to be there, to fill the void. So, with all due respect to that age-old government's not the answer, it's not the problem, with all due respect I'll take the other side of it. Right now, we need government at all levels more than we've ever needed it before.

Carolyn Volpe Curley, West Essex Now: Good afternoon, I have one question. I do want to rely only on official sources but not all of the Board of Health Departments are responding to press inquiries and it's become very difficult. So, my question is can the state create a COVID-19 reporting standard instructing municipal and county officials to daily release a COVID-19 online statement including when possible age, sex, town and hospital?

Governor Phil Murphy: My guess is, Caroline, that the answer is no and not 'cause we don't believe in transparency and not because we don't believe in making sure the information is out there. We ourselves at the state level don't have access to all the information we want. We've mentioned this before, as the private testing takes off aggressively and it's overwhelmingly taking off, we just don't have the same insights into that data that we have into the data and the testing that's done, for instance, under the aegis of the Department of Health. I think we can state good practices, what we hope to achieve. We believe in transparency. Nothing is being, to the best of my knowledge... I can tell you at the state level we're not holding anything back for any reason for sure. But we're in a mode right now where it's easier said than done. I can't speak for a particular local health official or a local experience that you've had so I can't speak for everybody, but that would be my general sense. Judy, could you come in on that? Also, the www.covid19.nj.gov (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov>), we are trying to ramp up to be a very robust and complete source of knowledge for folks to go onto.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Yeah, I have nothing to add. Agree totally.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you, Carolyn.

Matt Friedman, POLITICO: Hi Governor, I'll give you two. One is that you told the president in the letter on Tuesday that the state would need another 2000 critical care beds within two weeks on top of the current nearly 1200 ICU beds. Since the Health Commissioner said on Saturday that she expects 5% of all the cases to require critical care, does that mean you expect 64,000 cases by next week if the math is correct there? And what are your longer-term projections? And the second question is, you've taken executive action, signing legislation to require insurance providers to cover testing for the coronavirus. Is there any sort of plan or need to compel health plans to cover treatment as well?

Governor Phil Murphy: Good questions. Judy, why don't you kick us off on the first and then I'm going to ask Matt Platkin to come in and help me out on the second. Critical care beds, Judy?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Yeah, we're doing some predictive modeling right now to look at when we believe the greatest need is, the greatest demand and how many beds we will need. And then we'll be working with the Hospital Association to bring those beds online. We have additionally identified additional beds that can be brought online right now are about 445; we know in two weeks we can bring on another 449. We also have plans to segment the state into three regions, north, central and south; and look at the possibility of opening up two closed hospitals. I think I've already talked about one in the south, I guess it would be central-south; and then, the additional one is a hospital, the external structure itself – it's gutted inside. And the Army Corps is going out there today or they've already been out there to look at how we could outfit that hospital. So, we're planning for the worst and hoping for the best. We're still standing by the national statistics, that of the people that do contract this disease, mild and moderate disease will be hitting 80% to 85% of people and they can effectively be taken care of at home; 15% perhaps in the hospital and then a percent of 5% into critical care. We're still looking at the predictive modeling which hopefully we'll be able to bring out more specifics next week on the total number of population that will be affected.

Governor Phil Murphy: I just would say that we had a conversation earlier today on modeling and that is something I would echo with Judy. We're intensely focused on and hope to have something to say on that this week. As a general principal matter, before I ask another Matt – this is the Matt day – to weigh in here, as a general principal matter not only do we want cost not to be a factor to prevent someone from getting tested, but we believe as we've said from moment one way back when, healthcare is a right, not a privilege. So, that extends to everything including fighting this disease or this virus if you get it and you need treatment. But beyond that, the specifics... I want to thank the legislature as well again. I was on with the Senate President last night. We have a leadership meeting tomorrow. The legislature has really done yeoman's work here in terms of signing stuff into law a whole bunch of stuff that allows us to make sure everybody's got access and everyone can be protected here. Matt, anything specific on actually not just cost of testing but of treatment?

Chief Counsel Matt Platkin: So, Governor, right after the state of emergency was announced two weeks ago, one of the first actions was to waive cost sharing for testing and testing-related services. That's been now backed up. That was done through administrative action and has now been backed up through the signing of legislation. Part of the purpose behind the telehealth announcements today is for both our Medicaid plans and for our individual and small and large group plans, is to expand access to healthcare services with minimal or no cost sharing. With respect to treatment, we're looking into all options but we have to be honest that treatment is very expensive and we need the federal government to step up here in a big way. I'm getting live updates from that as we're on the call and it sounds like there may be some disagreement about how much support is going to the states from Republicans in the Senate. We desperately need the federal government to make those sorts of options available, Matt. The treatment is very expensive and obviously we're going to do everything we can, but the state needs help.

Governor Phil Murphy: And I would just add – Judy and I are the only two people not named Matt at the moment in this discussion. But I would just say the federal government was the point I was going to make. We can't do this alone so God willing we get some support down there. Right now it looks mixed at best.

Daniel Munoz, NJBIZ: Hey, Governor. I guess I have three questions. First, with the \$100 billion for New Jersey and the four states, how much of that would go to New Jersey and would that last till the end of FY2021? With how businesses can comply with the work at home orders, if for some reason they don't have the resources to give that to their employees how are they going to comply? You mentioned do everything you can but I just wonder how businesses could interpret that. And third, what tighter restrictions are left on the table at the moment to increase social distancing?

Governor Phil Murphy: So, real quick, and forgive me because we are really real-time trying to battle our way through the debate in Washington. So, I'm going to have to, on behalf of Judy and Jared and Pat and others and myself, we're going to probably be quicker in our answers. The amount of money for New Jersey, Daniel, would be many, many billions and we've done the math some number of days ago. My guess is it's somewhere, could be as much as \$20 billion. Secondly, on work from home, folks should go on, businesses and/or employees should go on www.covid19.nj.gov (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov>) and see what advice and help we can give you online. Again, these are unusual times so you've got a lot of firms that say, "Listen, we don't... We've never done this before." And I completely respect that and understand it. And my reply is "I've

never done this before either,” so we’re all going through this for the first time. And what more tighter restrictions there are? There’s not a whole lot other than enforcement which we’re going to be much more aggressive on. There are some more steps but we will have taken the bulk of the steps. We now need people to adhere overwhelmingly to the steps that we’ve taken. We need people, I can’t say this enough, to stay at home. Many thanks.

Erin Vogt, NJ 101.5 News: Good afternoon, Governor. I have a quick question: the gray area of essential versus nonessential divide. I know there’s going to be a few that kind of maybe feel like they’re falling through the cracks with concerned staff members wondering what their best protection is. So specifically, we’ve gotten a question about mental health partial care programs. Some of them have temporarily closed; others are still open. What’s the best guidance for people who are wondering what side of the essential versus nonessential they fall under?

Governor Phil Murphy: So, unless somebody on the line – Matt Platkin, you’ve helped me write the executive order. Mental health is something we care deeply about and we are one of the few states in America that view it *pari passu* with physical health. I’m not sure of the particular types of facilities you’re talking about but Matt, anything you want to add?

Chief Counsel Matt Platkin: There’s nothing in the order that would require them to close. If they’ve voluntarily closed they should know that there’s nothing in our order that would have made them close. So, I don’t have specifics about the site but we did not order them to close.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you, Erin.

Colleen O’Dea, NJ Spotlight: Hi, thank you for taking my call. Hey, Governor. Two questions quick. There are some businesses I think that consider themselves to be essential that have been ordered to close, for instance cellphone stores. Everybody kind of relies on their mobile phones today; a lot of people don’t have home phones. If your phone breaks, what do you do? And then, the second question is do you have any sense for when some of the stuff that has just been actually sold out or hard to get, things like hand sanitizer, toilet paper, whatever, might be coming back into grocery stores and pharmacies?

Governor Phil Murphy: By the way, when the historians write the history books about this challenge and this war that we’re in, there’s going to have to be a chapter on toilet paper. I just don’t get that but we will leave that to the historians. Yeah, we are in touch with and we’ve had pretty fulsome discussions throughout the day on the cellphone front. I’m going to say as we sit here at this moment in time, we are sticking with the order and the parameters of the executive order from yesterday. We know that’s a concern that’s been raised. We’re thinking it through but unless folks are otherwise, we’re staying with where we were. Putting toilet paper aside, all kidding aside, things like hand sanitizers, Clorox or other manufacturers of the wipes that sanitize surfaces, and I mentioned earlier we are doing everything we can to remind folks this is no time to panic. This is a time to sort of be smart, to be sensible about what they do. We’ve got a Food Town locally here. We’ve just got the word that they’ve got stuff back on the shelves including toilet paper I might add but they’re limiting purchases to X number per person. We would endorse that; we think that’s a smart thing to do. I’ve mentioned this before. We are the warehouse state. We probably have as many warehouse square feet as any per capita of real estate of any state in America. The good news is that it’s already, a lot of this stuff is in New Jersey. I know Pat and his team at the ROIC, at the Office of Emergency Management are focused on supply chains. Anything you want to add to that, Pat?

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: Yeah, just the important part about that PPE group, too, is also about the end process when we go back to the federal government and seek reimbursement. If we’re all over the place and don’t know what we expended and don’t know who got what, that process becomes a nightmare. So, I think it’s also... Although right now it’s public safety and it’s healthcare and it’s getting on top of the PPE issue and making sure we can treat people months or a year from now, the structure that we’re putting in place will make sure that when we submit our requests for reimbursement to FEMA that we cover every dollar that we’ve put forth in this effort. And I think that although people’s lives and health are paramount, there will come a time when we then look back and say, “Hey, what did this cost us?” and make sure that for the citizens of this state that we do our best to recover every dime that we can. Thanks, Gov.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you, Pat. And again, I think the best thing we can do right now is when things are restocked is to... And I thank the retailers who are doing great work here, for them to sort of limit what any one individual, any one family can purchase of items that are in scarce supply. So, thank you, Colleen.

Shlomo Schorr, Lakewood Shopper: Thank you, Governor. Thank you, everyone, for your patience. I really appreciate it. Just 'cause I'm looking for some good news here, I know we see the numbers spiking every day. Can you perhaps tell us if any number, if anyone recovered and what those numbers are? And also, maybe for Patrick Callahan, perhaps are we seeing a decrease in other numbers, maybe traffic-related accidents and deaths? Are those numbers down?

Governor Phil Murphy: I will defer to Judy on the first and Pat on the second. But on the good news front as a non-health expert, you'll forgive me for practicing without a license. I think Judy mentioned this earlier, 80%, 85% of the folks who get this virus, the good news is get mild to moderate symptoms. Which means, overwhelmingly they recover. And I don't know that we've got a number right now for you because, as I mentioned earlier, the data is hard to get for all of us right now. That's the case in any state, no less ours. But the answer is overwhelmingly yes. However, not everybody does; and more importantly, even if you do and if you're asymptomatic, you may be carrying the virus and unwittingly infect someone else – which is why we need folks to stay home and stay away from each other. On the latter, it has to be the case but I'll let Pat answer the question. Judy, anything you want to add on the former?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Dr. Tan's here, she can talk about the recovery.

Governor Phil Murphy: Hello, Dr. Tan.

State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan: Hi, Governor. And as far as the information on the outcomes, we have minimal information as you had mentioned to date. But what we do know, of the patients that we do have outcome data, it looks like many of those are outpatient individuals. So, as what has been said on many different calls, many individuals don't have severe illness fortunately. But again, just a reminder that people, adults of any age can get severe illness, could potentially be hospitalized, have complications. So, that's why again it's really important to get that message out there about taking those everyday preventive steps to prevent illness as well as to socially distance.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thanks, Dr. Tan. Pat, what are you seeing in terms of traffic-related or other incidences?

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: I'm not going to use the word 'anecdotal' but we all know. Probably everybody on this call has been doing a substantial amount of travelling and traffic is extremely light. And I have no doubt that the traffic report that I receive from our Traffic Bureau tomorrow is going to indicate that accidents are down, that motorist aides are down. And I think we're going to see that across the board just given my own personal traveling up and down the entire state in the last two weeks.

Governor Phil Murphy: Amen, amen. Thank you, Shlomo.

Charlie Kratovil, New Brunswick Today: So, I'll try to keep this 30 seconds or less. I asked you about extending Board of Ed member terms yesterday. I'm concerned about that because it can be a slippery slope. And [it seems] that the County Committee elections for Cape May Democrats are being essentially cancelled, postponed for a whole year now. Do you agree that this is a bad sign for our democracy and do you want to weigh in on the DSC's recommendation to County Chairs that they can and maybe should postpone the elections a whole year? And is there anything that you can do to ensure that our democracy doesn't become a casualty of this war, like maybe eliminating the 21-day voter registration requirement or moving up the launch of online voter registrations? Is there anything you can do to help make elections still possible in this environment?

Governor Phil Murphy: Well, I think we've done some of that, and Matt Platkin who's with me on the call can maybe address some of the specifics that you raised. The general comment is, just because we're in a war against a virus, no time to panic, no time for business as usual; no time to shut democracy down. So, democracy, we must continue to pursue the tenets of democracy. Obviously, the most sacred right associated with that is the right to vote. That's the general premise that we won't waiver from. The specific steps we took the other day give some indication of an acknowledgement of a very difficult fight that we're in

– on the one hand, respecting democracy; on the other hand, so moving local and/or Board of Ed elections from March and April into a single, nonpartisan – what was already a nonpartisan – day for election on May 12th. I hope that gives you some sense of trying to get that balance right. Still, democracy is essential. We must preserve the right to vote. But we acknowledge that given the circumstances, we both moved elections from March and April into May and we said at the same time that those elections would be entirely vote by mail. I personally am not patting myself on the back. Sheila Oliver was very much a part of this. I think she and I would believe that that is a good example of getting the balance right. The elections are a little bit delayed, will still happen, will be all vote by mail, and we'll probably frankly learn a fair amount as a result of it. We also adjusted the petition process to make that an online reality from that moment forward. Matt, anything else you want to add to that?

Chief Counsel Matt Platkin: The only thing I would add, just on the Schoolboard members' terms, we are reviewing that. And the reason for the delay here to May, for the March and April elections is we couldn't, on that short of a notice, have implemented an all vote by mail election. So, as the Governor said, he has not moved the June date. We had to move March and April in order to establish the process for all VBM elections in May.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you, Matt, thank you, Charlie.

Cristian Benavides, Telemundo: Governor, thank you for your time and thank you to the whole team. Okay, so my question is, I have two questions. The first one is are there any venues being considered for temporary hospitals for when the hospitals reach capacity and can't meet demand? And one other question is, I know how hard it's been getting these billions of dollars approved by the federal government. Now, you mentioned the portion that might get into New Jersey specifically. How long would that provision last for us?

Governor Phil Murphy: Which provisions, I'm sorry?

Cristian Benavides, Telemundo: The billions of dollars that we'll get if approved by the federal government.

Governor Phil Murphy: How long will that last us?

Cristian Benavides, Telemundo: Correct, because it's been said that this crisis might take months to overcome.

Governor Phil Murphy: Yeah, I'll answer both questions, and Judy, if you don't like the answer on the first one in particular please come in and correct me; and Matt Platkin on the latter. On the first, I think you may have heard the Health Commissioner earlier talk about reopening closed hospitals, reopening wings of hospitals that have been closed, setting up field hospitals. We feel like we've got a particular exposure in the south, all of which all of the above is under consideration; as well as converting for asymptomatic, I should say not a- but low-symptomatic individuals, converting things like dormitories or other hotels that may not be occupied into other uses for the duration of this. On the second, when we came up with our numbers, that is intended to at least get us through this year. And that is, you know, an acknowledgement that this is not a multi-week challenge that we're dealing with. This is a minimum multi-month challenge as it relates to the economy if not a multi-year challenge. It may well be a down payment. The numbers we're talking about we may have to revisit, and by the way, I hope Congress acts responsibly and gets to the levels we need because we need it and we're not alone. And this is not just a blue state phenomenon; this is across the country. It's quite striking: on the VTC we had with the President and the Vice President at the end of the week, how much you heard that need from both red and blue states. Judy, on the former anything else you want to add?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: No.

Governor Phil Murphy: I can put in a little bit more work on these answers and I'm going to ask for a job at the Department of Health.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: You got it, you got it.

Governor Phil Murphy: Matt, you good on the latter?

Chief Counsel Matt Platkin: Yes, Governor.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thanks, Cristian.

David Wildstein, NJ Globe: Hi Governor, I just have two questions and I'll make them fast. The first is, there's reports of an extraordinary number of regularly scheduled outreach and briefing calls from all across your administration with government officials, private sector stakeholders, nonprofits. Could you give me an idea of how many of these daily briefings are occurring or possibly provide a list of what these regular briefings are? And then my second question is specifically with the New Jersey National Guard, are you taking any steps to call up or to activate Guard members who are physicians or nurses or licensed healthcare workers? And with the schools closed, are there any plans to ask the probably more than 2500 school nurses to take on other responsibilities?

Governor Phil Murphy: Yeah, so both good questions. I'm not sure that I've got a crisp answer that there's a daily roster of calls. I mentioned at the outset of my remarks that since the beginning of this, but I'm just trying to think over the course of the weekend, I've had more – other than the press calls that we were live for yesterday and now on the phone today – I've had largely bilaterals. You know, Kevin Slavin on behalf of all the hospitals and the Association, I know Judy has been on with him; and Cathy Bennet is an example. So, I'll ask Alex Altman if she can do a little bit of an inventory, in particular probably the most relevant to the Lieutenant Governor and myself, Judy, Pat, maybe Jared just to give you a quick sense of that. Yeah, the answer is – Judy mentioned this; if she didn't, I believe she did – this notion of a medical reserve corps which we are aggressively pursuing. And she can talk to this. Again, it came up with Kevin Slavin and his folks but this is to do just what you're talking about – to think through folks who are licensed in other states who can automatically be licensed in New Jersey for healthcare: retired workers, school nurses; particular expertise in the not only National Guard as you raised but we raised this, George Helmy and I, our Chief of Staff with the Secretary of Defense Dr. Esper on Friday for specific medical talent within the Department of Defense. So, the answer is yes, and I think I don't want to speak entirely for Judy but she is in sort of the process of doing a big sweep of inventory of exactly those sorts of people. Judy, anything you want to add to that?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Actually, we're looking at just about everything. The Medical Reserve Corps which is county call-up is a small group. We're working with the Nursing Association and they've put out a call to action. We're looking at the Division of Consumer Affairs giving us lists of licensed individuals. We're looking at certified registered nurse assistants, anesthetists that can help in critical care units. We're looking at, school nurses are on the list; we're looking at just about everything including students who are in their last semester who cannot go back to school can actually work their last credits in helping us with COVID-19. So, in addition to that we'll be contracting with a staffing agency and we'll probably be running an on-demand staffing centralized approach.

Governor Phil Murphy: All hands on deck, Judy, right?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Absolutely.

Governor Phil Murphy: Amen. Thank you, David.

Chuck O'Donnell, TAPinto New Brunswick: Hi, Governor. My question maybe is best directed to the Health Commissioner. I'm wondering about, to circle back to the call for people to donate blood. How exactly would that be used to help COVID-19 patients?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: It's not specifically for COVID-19 patients, it's the blood supply overall. Particularly now, when the types of procedures that are being done in hospitals, i.e. surgeries are mostly trauma-related and emergency, and that's usually where the call for blood is the most vital.

Governor Phil Murphy: And as Judy said earlier there's no evidence whatsoever heretofore that there's any blood-to-blood transmission of anything related to coronavirus or COVID. Thank you, Chuck.

Fred Snowflack, Insider New Jersey: Hi Governor, good afternoon. You mentioned in your earlier remarks about some signs of bigotry or discrimination against Asian-Americans. Have there been [reports] on that at all, anything nefarious going on? Can you give us examples of what might be going on in regard to it?

Governor Phil Murphy: No, I won't get into the details. This is not new. Unfortunately, we've had more incidents of it lately. And I'll leave out any details but it's extremely unfortunate. We're better than this. We rise and fall as one family. Our diversity is our core strength if not our very best strength as a state. And we ain't gonna get out of this if we start squaring off against each other. We're going to get out of this, and we will get

out of this by the way, unequivocally, when we row the boat together. And I would just reiterate what I said earlier. This is no time – by the way, even in peacetime, even in any time this behavior's unacceptable and it is even more unacceptable now. So, thanks for asking, Fred.

David Levinsky, Burlington County Times: Hi Governor, real quick. I just wanted to give you a chance to comment. The Head of FEMA today said that the Trump Administration sees no reason to use the Defense Production Act yet, that the private sector is stepping up and volunteering and making donations. Do you want to respond? And do you see a need to nationalize the supply chain for medical supplies?

Governor Phil Murphy: Listen, David, I don't have the insight into the national picture. I did hear him say... I was interviewed on the same program, I think I followed right behind him. I heard the President speak to this. In an otherwise uniformed world I would have thought, given the dramatic shortfall right now we have in personal protective equipment, that it would be an all hands on deck moment in terms of manufacturing, conversation of manufacturers to produce that equipment. So again, if you think through the agenda items that we're dealing with, flattening the curve which is the job of all of us – stay home please. And then you get into PPE, critical care beds, money that we're going to need from the federal government to help us sustain these efforts. I know Congress has the right to act on the latter and the President would then sign a bill. I just hope it's sufficient to deal with the enormous economic challenges we're all going to face. I know collectively New Jerseyans will come together to flatten the curve. I know that the Army Corps is working well with our teams to as aggressively as possible build out our critical care bed units. And I'm not checking that box by any means. Depending on the scenarios, we're going to have a strain on the healthcare system, intensive care beds and negative pressure rooms, etc. But it seems to me the big gap in those four initiatives is the personal protective equipment. So, I don't have an insight; I don't have the same look that the Director of FEMA or the President of the United States has. But I would have thought that, given what we're going through and based on our conversations with other Governors, we're not alone – that this would be an all-hands manufacturing, let's get this... Even on a temporary basis let's get this stuff produced. Thanks for asking.

Tim Jimenez, KYW News Radio: Thank you very much. Governor, obviously the numbers here in South Jersey, confirmed cases aren't as high as North Jersey. Could there still be some drive-through testing down here?

Governor Phil Murphy: Yes, I hope there will be. I said this the other day, I had a good conversation with Lou Greenwald, the majority leader. There's one healthcare organization in particular that wants to be the participating entity. As Judy Persichilli will tell you and any of us, the constraint is probably going to be on equipment and to some extent manpower, but in particular the actual stuff that you need to give your specimen as well as the personal protective equipment to protect the folks who are taking it. The incidences in the south are not as many in the north, thank God for the folks who live in the south but they're not zero. So, just to review total cases, right now Atlantic County's got 5, Burlington's got 26, Camden County's got 22, Cape May's got a couple, Cumberland has got 1, Gloucester has 8, Salem as I mentioned earlier has its first. I don't know if I said Cape May County has 2 and Cumberland had 1. So, it is there. It's our hope but again, we have to realize that we are restricted in many cases by equipment, both the stuff you need to give the specimen and the PPE for the folks who are taking it. Judy, is that fair?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Exactly.

Governor Phil Murphy: Okay, thank you, sir.

Matt Skoufalos, NJPen.com: Thanks, Governor. I think I was just going to ask the same thing, which is, is there any more information available about what current bias incidents you're seeing or anything like that?

Governor Phil Murphy: No, I'll leave it where I said earlier. I don't have a data point for you but, and I don't want to use the word that I was accusing myself of using too much, which is 'anecdotal.' But enough already, and we just have to snuff it out. I want to be unequivocal. As I said, even in peacetimes, even in normal times this behavior is unacceptable. It's completely and utterly unacceptable at a time that we're in such as the one we're in now. Many thanks for asking.

Michael Aaron, NJTV: This is Michael Aaron from NJTV.

Governor Phil Murphy: Hi, Michael! How you doing, buddy? You have the right to have the last question. I'd normally have you as the first but I'm honored you'd be on this long and to ask the last.

Michael Aaron, NJTV: I've been watching you every day.

Governor Phil Murphy: Bless you.

Michael Aaron, NJTV: CNN reported last night that officials in Madrid, Spain, expect an infection rate among their population of 80%. CNN reported today that Governor Cuomo is saying that New York state is expecting a 40% to 80% infection rate. I know you and Judy said that you're doing some modeling in the week ahead. I wonder if you think New Jersey's in the same ballpark?

Governor Phil Murphy: So, very good question. I'll give you a very general reaction other than it's good to hear your voice and make sure you stay well. I'm going to make the obvious preamble and that is I'm not a health expert, but I do know this, that the best practices as we've seen them around the world – never mind around the country – are aggressive flattening of the curve, aggressive testing, being straight with citizens about what we're dealing with. The social distancing piece is real. The extent to which everybody complies with that, we much more readily not only flatten the curve but reduce the potential amount of exposures and sicknesses, and ultimately the amount of, sadly, fatalities. So, I know that when you look at where the playbook has been the most successful – South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, I think still to some extent Hong Kong – and in certain communities, there are examples of certain communities... Even inside of Italy there are examples of certain communities and Italy has been crushed. We know what the playbook looks like for the most part and our job is to execute that playbook. But Judy and Dr. Tan will give you the expert's reaction to that.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Thank you, Governor. I'm going to have Dr. Tan weigh in and then I'll talk a little bit about the modeling.

State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan: Hi, this is Tina. So, that is an excellent question and I think we're still in the process of seeing what's happening. We have to keep in mind that we have multiple layers of community mitigation efforts that have been put forward in these last several days or weeks, so it's hard to tell what is going to have an impact. That's why we have to continue to monitor what's going on, on top of the fact that we've had more testing. So, I think we have to see how all this balances out and unfortunately we don't have a good answer for that question at this time. But again, we're hoping that as we get more data, we become more informed; we see what's happening nationwide as well – we'll be able to provide a better informed response in the near future.

Governor Phil Murphy: Again, Michael, we will hopefully... I know Judy and Dr. Tan and their teams are working on a whole lot of modeling and we don't want to wing an answer on something as important as this. We want to make sure it's as fact-based as humanly possible.

So, with that, Chelsea, thank you for hosting us so graciously. To each and every one of you who have listened, thank you for your patience. I want to thank in particular Judy Persichilli again for being here and her team: Dr. Tan, Chris Neuwirth, the entire squad at the Department of Health. Pat Callahan, to you and your extraordinary team; Jared Maples likewise at Homeland Security. On behalf of the Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver and myself, thank you all.

Tomorrow again, unless you hear otherwise we're going to be on together at noon at the War Memorial in Trenton. Forgive us if we don't have the full overnight data. We're going earlier because of a video conference call with the President and Vice President right after that.

Again, if you've got questions we think the best place to go is www.covid19.nj.gov (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov>).

I want to thank every New Jerseyan who's listening either directly or through the media outlets for everything you're doing. We will get through this as long as all 9 million of us, each and every one of us does our part including stay at home. We will get through this stronger than ever before, not unscathed, not without mistake, not without bumps in the road. But we will get through this as one New Jersey family stronger than ever before. God bless you all and thank you.

Governor Phil Murphy

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