






Governor Phil Murphy



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TRANSCRIPT: April 2nd, 2020 Coronavirus Briefing Media

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Holding a COVID-19 briefing. WATCH:



Governor Phil Murphy: Good afternoon. I am joined at the head table by the woman to my right who needs no introduction, the Commissioner of the Department of Health Judy Persichilli; to her right, State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan – honored to have you both with us. Far left, State Police Superintendent Col. Pat Callahan as usual; Director of the Department of Homeland Security and Preparedness Jared Maples is with us. Jared, thank you.

Also joining us today to my immediate left is Department of Children and Families Commissioner Christine Norbut Beyer. Great to have you, Christine, thanks for being here. I've asked her to provide an update on our order for our childcare facilities to provide services only to the kids of our frontline responders and essential workers. And I should note, and I know Christine will note this, April is also National Child Abuse Awareness Month.



In times like these when there is tremendous uncertainty and stress and anxiety, children can be at risk of abuse. It's a horrible reality but it exists. The Department of Children and Families has a host of resources available to survivors of abuse frankly of any age, and I hope Christine can provide some of those for anyone watching who does need help and who doesn't right now know where to turn. So Christine, thank you for being here.

Let me, as I've done the past week or so, turn early to the numbers. Today, we are reporting another 3489 positive coronavirus test results, bringing our statewide total to 25,590. Again, that is 3489 positive test results, bringing our statewide total to 25,590. As usual, Judy in her remarks will get into some of the details of those positives as well as negatives.

Additionally, we must report with the heaviest of hearts that we have lost another 182 members of our New Jersey family to COVID-19-related complications. We have now lost a total of 537 precious souls. Their memories are in our prayers. God rest each and every one of them. Our prayers and thoughts and sympathies go out to their families and friends.

Judy will give you some more dimension on this and some more color, but I'll just as a headline, as a teaser to when you speak, Judy, you should not assume that people passed since yesterday's press conference. There is a lag here in terms of confirming cause of death in particular, and Judy will get into that in detail. So, it's tragic – every one of these lives is a life, but let me be unequivocal about that.

But in terms of how these have actually transpired and these pressed folks have left us, I think I would just say as a nonmedical professional, you need to think of this over a span of days – and particularly given the stress right now that we have on the system that is more than ever. I think Judy will tell us that even in a normal, regular time of peace that there is a lag associated with this, and there's an overwhelming challenge as you can imagine right now given the stress that we're going through.

One of those precious lives lost was Kim King-Smith, an EKG technician at University Hospital in Newark. Look at her blessed picture. She worked the night shift and was part of the University Hospital family for 13 years. And I might add on an interim basis, Judy Persichilli ran University Hospital and was the head of that organization, and I want to thank you for that, Judy. We haven't spoken about that enough.

As the current University Hospital President Dr. Sharif Elnahal, a true friend to those of us up here, as he noted, "Her family is saying her smile was, and I quote her family, 'more infectious than the virus that took her life.'" She was a frontline hero. God bless her and God rest her soul.

By the way, if we had our druthers we'd speak about each and every single one of these lives. We can't but I want folks to know that that would be our preference if we could, but each and every one of them are in our hearts and prayers.

We also lost veteran Hudson County Sheriff's officer Bernard Waddell. I had the opportunity, there he is – God bless that guy. I had the opportunity to speak with his wife Sheila and his son Bernard – by the way, also a member of law enforcement – yesterday afternoon to extend our family's and our state's condolences and appreciation for his 28 years of service. He too was a frontline hero. I also spoke with Hudson County Sheriff Frank Schillari, exchanged notes with the County Executive Tom DeGise. This is not abstract for them as it is now not for so many.

And we learned as well that we lost Montclair's own Adam Schlesinger, an award-winning musician and songwriter – there's a good shot of Adam, bless his heart – and a founding member of Fountains of Wayne which not only made its mark but whose very name memorialized the iconic store on Route 3 that Adam remembered from his youth. He was Jersey through and through and the lights of the arts scene and our arts scene are a little dimmer today.

We keep each of them and every single one of these lives in our hearts, in our prayers – again, every single member of our great New Jersey family who we have lost. And may each of their memories provide strength to the families and friends left behind. And as they say in the Jewish tradition, may each of their memories be a blessing.

Again, I know these numbers are stark. They are certainly sobering. They are shocking and they are indeed sad. And as I said, Judy will get into giving you some sense as to how this is really building over a period of days. But I want to say this. We can lower these numbers and we will. We can see fewer of our New Jersey family pass because of COVID-19. And the way we do that is by aggressively and continuously practicing our social distancing, even under the most extreme of circumstances.

In fact, I and my team have spoken with and have exchanged notes – I just literally exchanged one with him within the past hour – with Passaic Mayor, a dear friend Hector Lora, their great Fire Chief Peter Trentacost and State FMBA President another dear friend Eddie Donnelly and Passaic FMBA President Dave Montalvo. Passaic, as I mentioned, suffered a tremendous loss on Monday with the death from COVID-19 complications of young fireman Israel Tolentino. I'd mentioned that I'd spoken to his widow and spoke to her about his life and their children and how they were doing.

They obviously wanted to be part of a proper sendoff for their fallen brother, but as we discussed this is not an ordinary time and it just simply can't be done. So, the Passaic Fire Department will pay their respects by driving past the funeral home to let firefighter Tolentino's family know they are there with them in spirit. And once this emergency ends and it will, and we will come through this together, they will gather as one to memorialize him. This is leading by example, again, even for the rest of the state.

If you do not need to be out then we need you to stay at home. Please God, stay at home. And even when you're at home keep your distance between yourself and other family members. We need to make sure that we're doing all that we can to support the folks who we need working on the frontlines in which have essential jobs they have, and I want to give a particular big shoutout today to all our transit workers on both the bus, the rail, the support side who are helping many of our essential workers especially get to their jobs. And by doing so, they are also heroes. They are also at the frontlines.

Now, I know it is a beautiful day. I know you want to get outside and go for a walk or a run or talk with your neighbors. You can do that but only at a distance. Keep that critical minimal six-foot distance between you and anybody else. If you're out for a run, give others you pass a wider berth. And as we keep ourselves healthy we keep others healthy, and we do our best to flatten that curve that we've looked at so often.

We are all in this together. Do it for yourself. Do it for your family. Do it for your community, and frankly, do it in memory of the likes of Kim and Bernard and Adam and Israel and everyone else we've lost. It's what we need to do, please.

Switching gears as we often do up here, this morning Col. Pat Callahan and I had the opportunity to tour the Field Medical Station, which I believe, Pat, is the formal name for what is really a temporary field hospital being set up at The Meadowlands Exposition Center in Secaucus. In fact, it is set up. We were joined on our tour by Senator Bob Menendez, and I cannot say enough good things about Senator Menendez and Senator Booker and our entire Congressional Delegation in fighting for our state in Washington throughout this emergency. And by the way, the fight isn't remotely done.

And Pat and I were also joined by the Commanding General of the US Army Corps of Engineers North Atlantic Division, Major General Jeffrey Millhorn who's become a good friend, and Lt. Col. David Park who sat about where Elise and John are sitting today, of the US Army Corps of Engineers who heads the Philadelphia District in which we find ourselves. I also want to give Col. Callahan and the Troopers a big shoutout for their extraordinary efforts.





That site will at minimal, depending on how they configure it – at the moment it's configured for 250 beds is nearly ready to be put into service. I think they're going to have a soft opening as they say in the retail business on Monday. And I thank the women and men in the Corps, our partners at FEMA and the State Troopers and also the Administration for availing this necessary service to us.

This is the first of what will be at least three such field medical stations in our state, with Edison and Atlantic City to follow, which will expand our bed capacity by at least 1000 beds in total. And as Commissioner Persichilli's briefing today and frankly I think every day will show, they're coming online not a moment too soon. And of course, we've talked about four of these, four times 250 – just to remind you, for the current configuration at least Edison is actually two of them together and will be 500 beds there.

We will need not only the capacity but the great flexibility these sites will afford our bricks & mortar hospitals in the coming weeks. I want to give a shoutout at this time to UnitedHealthcare which is dedicating two of its senior folks to work with the Department of Health to assist us in our efforts. We are proud to welcome Dr. Jeffrey Brenner the Senior Vice President of United's Clinical Redesign Team, and Kathleen Stillo, the President and CEO of Clinical Redesign. Dr. Brenner is a family physician by training and Kathleen's career has focused on improving the overall delivery of healthcare. They will join us for the next 90 days and we welcome them.

We are proud to welcome them both to our team and we know they're going to hit the ground running. I exchanged a nice note yesterday with UnitedHealthcare CEO Dave Whitman and thanked him personally for the assist here, which is big.

Of course, we continue our work to get the equipment and supplies that all of our healthcare providers and hospitals and workers need from all possible sources including the federal government, our federal government partners, our state supply caches, individual and corporate donors as well as private sector procurement.

Today, I am signing to that end an executive order from  (https://www.facebook.com/governorphilmurphy) authorizing Col. Pat Callahan, two to my left, to commandeer medical supplies and equipment that are necessary for our COVID-19 response. This may run the gamut from N95 masks and other personal protective  (https://www.youtube.com/njgovernorsoffice) equipment to ventilators and everything in between. While we look forward to these facilities cooperating with us and providing this equipment as needed, this order gives Pat the express authority to requisition  (http://distributionstrategies.com/gvmurphy/) hospitals and other healthcare facilities. And needless to say they badly need the equipment. But we also all certainly hope that Pat doesn't have to use this authority  (https://www.twitter.com/stepforward) and do the right thing. But if need be, we will use this authority.

Speaking of people stepping forward, additionally on the topic of PPE, we learned yesterday that Horizon Blue Cross/Blue Shield has committed to donating a total of 500,000 N95 masks and 81,000 face shields to our response efforts. That's more than \$2.3 million worth of supplies. These supplies will be delivered throughout the month of April. Horizon is also making both a \$100,000 donation to the Community Food Bank of New Jersey and \$60,000 to the Jewish Family Service of Atlantic and Cape May.

This is a good reminder that it's not just our frontline healthcare workers – it certainly is that group – and first responders certainly and other essential workers who need our help at this time, but that there are also countless, everyday New Jerseyans and their families we can't forget. And I thank Horizon for remembering that our entire New Jersey family needs help. I mentioned that article in the New York Times quoting one source that 70% of the people who are pulling up to food banks in that certain area were doing so for the first time in their lives. Horizon has told us this all amounts to the largest single donation the company has made in its 88 years. So, to Kevin Conlin and their entire team, bless you and thank you.

As always, if you have any PPE to donate please get in touch with us through our one-stop online portal and head to www.covid19.nj.gov/ppedonations (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov/ppedonations>), and we will gladly accept your donation no matter how large or how small. Every little bit counts.

I also signed an Administrative Order today permitting blood drives to continue to ensure we can continue to meet the critical medical needs of our residents. Judy spoke eloquently to this a few days ago. In order to operate, blood drives must undertake appropriate mitigation efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19 including, needless to say, incorporating social distancing where practicable.


Switching gears again for a quick note on testing, of our two FEMA-partnered public drive-through sites, a reminder that tomorrow April 3rd only Bergen Community College will be open. The PNC Bank Arts Center site will be closed. Testing at Bergen Community College will begin at 8:00 AM and you must be both a New Jersey resident and exhibiting symptoms of respiratory illness. If you do not meet either of these requirements you will not be tested.






Again, let me repeat this, in a perfect world I'd love to be South Korea. I'd love to have unlimited supplies from the feds of that which we need to collect these specimens. I'd love to have unlimited personal protective equipment to protect our healthcare workers who would take these specimens. I'd love to have

an unlimited, Judy, supply of healthcare workers to be able to both test everybody and care for those who are sick.

We don't live in that world. We live in a world of limited resources particularly coming out of the federal side. We're grateful for what we've got but it's a fraction of what we need. And so, we made a decision right from the get-go that we needed to test those who were exhibiting symptoms for the obvious reasons that these folks are sick – whether or not they've got COVID-19 to be determined. It turns out six in ten do not have it approximately so far and that's an important point to make.

But for the folks who do have it, we can be much more aggressive in treating their symptoms and as Dr. Tan reminds me, even if they don't have COVID-19 they're sick. So, they're not Superman or Superwoman here. They've got to go back and take care of themselves. But that also gives our healthcare professionals a high-quality trove of data that we need.

I know folks would like to say, "Gosh, wouldn't it be nice if you had a spread between symptomatic, asymptomatic?" In a perfect world, yes. We don't live in a perfect world,  that's the world in which we find ourselves at the moment. (<https://twitter.com/GovMurphy>)

Additionally, I think this is now over 33 different places  (<https://www.facebook.com/governorphilmurphy>) in Mercer County, NJ, operating an appointment-only drive-up testing site at the Quaker Bridge  all in Lawrence Township for county residents. This site is open weekdays from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM.  (<https://www.youtube.com/njgovernorsoffice>) To receive an appointment, your doctor must send notification to the site that you meet testing requirements and are symptomatic. Again, we repeat, you've got to be symptomatic. Those who show up and do not have an appointment will not be tested. If you live in Mercer County and you are symptomatic  (<https://www.instagram.com/govmurphy/>) please contact your primary care provider  (<https://www.snapchat.com/add/philmurphy>)

We have a comprehensive list of all publicly-available testing sites, not just what I hold up in my hand but it's online at our one-stop portal. Either scroll down on the homepage to the graphic for COVID-19 testing information or go direct to www.covid19.nj.gov/testing (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov/testing>). That's a little bit of an eye chart there but it's at the bottom, www.covid19.nj.gov/testing (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov/testing>). And again, for all testing you must be symptomatic.

Switching gears again, please if you can bear with me, to highlight a couple of announcements from elsewhere in our administration. This morning the Department of Labor reported that over the past week more than 206,000 new claims for unemployment were filed, meaning that in just the past two weeks alone more than 362,000 residents have filed for unemployment. You no doubt saw the national numbers – also record-setting. And we are also very cognizant that there are delays and backups in the system, and we urge everyone to please have patience and that your claim will be taken care of and you will not lose one penny of your benefits.

But on the other hand, we do have literally thousands of opportunities for employment at essential workplaces listed online. If you want to work and help us as part of our response team, please visit again www.covid19.nj.gov (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov>) and click on the link for Jobs Portal under the search bar, or you could go directly to www.jobs.covid19.nj.gov (<http://www.jobs.covid19.nj.gov>). And again, we thank the 500 employers who have worked with us to put their available jobs online. I don't know what the number looks like today, Mahen, but I know yesterday I believe it was 44,000 job offerings were on that website. So, it is multiple tens of thousands of job openings.

Next, the Department of Education, NJTV and the New Jersey Education Association have partnered to begin NJTV Learning Live, a new Public Television program featuring lessons taught by New Jersey's tremendous educators – best in the nation, best in the world. Starting on Monday, each hour-long weekday program will offer programs for grades three through six that will cover subjects including English language arts, math, science, social studies, and will also include art, music, or physical education. Third grade instruction will begin at 9:00 AM, fourth grade at 10:00 AM, fifth grade at 11:00 AM and sixth grade instruction at noon. Again, that's third grade at 9:00 AM, fourth grade at 10:00 AM, fifth grade at 11:00 AM, and sixth grade at noon. And all will be aired on NJTV.

I cannot thank enough NJTV and NJEA for working with Commissioner Dr. Lamont Repollet and his team at the Department of Education. And especially again, a huge shoutout to all of our extraordinary educators up and down this state.

Switching gears again, Attorney General Gurbir Grewal's Office has made public what I would like to refer to as the first members of Knucklehead Row, six individuals who have been criminally charged for assaulting law enforcement officers by spitting or coughing on them while claiming to have COVID-19. Let me be clear, we are taking a zero tolerance policy against anyone who acts as stupidly or puts others in danger, or makes them fear for their health. These are not slaps on the wrists either, by the way, folks. If you engage in such reckless behavior you're going to face, at the very least, fines of up to \$10,000 and up to 18 months in jail.

I am proud of the work our women and men in blue, our County Prosecutors and the Attorney General do on these cases each and every single day. Pat, before we go to questions in a few minutes, would you mind giving us an overnight compliance report? Thank you for that, sir.

And I think this is as good a point as any to wrap up, but before I do and turn things over to Judy, I know there's a lot of serious news out there but I'd like to highlight some of the good news that's happening across our state. To help us remember the extraordinary things that ordinary New Jerseyans are doing literally every day to help us get through this.

I want to start by giving a shoutout to one of the many, many, many true frontline heroes among us. Lorna Mickey Miquiabas. I believe Mickey is the third from the right in that picture in the whiteish color shirt. She is one of the terrific nurses at Hackensack Meridian Health Palisades Medical Center in North Bergen. There she's gathered with a group of colleagues along with my wife, First Lady Tammy Murphy.

Mickey is a recovery room nurse who has stepped up to the plate and is now working in critical care, treating COVID-positive patients all of whom are on ventilators. She is a 33-year nursing veteran and I know that she is putting that tremendous work experience to work. To her, and everybody at Palisades Medical and at every single one of our hospitals you are our superheroes. Mickey is just one example of thousands literally of others doing the right thing to help us get through this and emerge stronger.

Some are nurses; some are businesspeople. Some are just everyday New Jerseyans. Some as I mentioned are working at NJ Transit or in retail, essential retail like supermarkets and pharmacies. But each and every one of them deserve our thanks. And I encourage you, by the way, if you could, to tell us their stories. When you meet one of these heroes use the hashtag #njthanksyou so we can share them with our state and spread some hope and optimism, and perhaps some good humor at a time when we are all desperately in need of it. And I'll highlight some of them in the days ahead.

Remember, folks, we're not at the beginning of the end and I'm afraid to say we're not even at the end of the beginning. We've got a tough, tough road ahead of us and it's already proven to be a tough road. Look at the lives, the hundreds of lives lost. The numbers are going to keep going up, sadly fatalities and certainly positive test results. Again, the positive test results do give us a window into how best we can manage this. But it's more important than ever before that we all hang in this together.

We are one New Jersey family – again, extraordinarily, even in these moments of social distancing and staying at home and isolation, there's a bond we have begun to develop unlike anytime ever before. Let's let that continue to flourish and remind each other that we're all in this together. And just as extraordinarily, we are the most, on the one hand the most diverse state in America and yet no state rises and falls as one family more so than New Jersey. We are all in this together.

And as I've said to you, this is war and you don't win a war by panicking. And you also don't win a war by going business as usual. You win a war like WWII, like other wars that we've won over the centuries by being smart, aggressive, proactive, straight with each other, not kidding around about what the facts are and the enormity of the task before us – by acting as one and never turning on each other, by working harder than anybody else, by showing courage more so than anyone else. That's New Jersey. That's not just American values which it is, it's Jersey values.

And if we all do our share, each and every one of the 9 million of us in our family, we will not only get through this not unscathed, sadly, not without mistake I'm sure, but we will get through this whenever that is stronger and more united, as one family in New Jersey, than ever before.

With that, please help me welcome the woman who needs no introduction, the Commissioner of the Department of Health Judy Persichilli.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Thank you, Governor. Good afternoon.

As we see the number of cases increasing across the state and the pressure on our hospital systems building, we are preparing to release that valve by standing up alternative care sites. We are expecting the Field Medical Station in Secaucus to be available early next week for what the Governor has appropriately called a soft opening.

This site will take individuals with lower acuity from the surrounding hospitals so these hospitals will have more space to care for the critically ill. The field medical sites are being set up for non-COVID-19 patients. However, the staff working at these sites will be prepared to care for individuals who may develop COVID-19 while at the field station.

As I've outlined previously, the state is separated into three regions with the Level I Trauma Centers organizing resources and needs for the hospitals in their specific regions. The Level I Trauma Centers are well positioned for this role, as these are the hospitals that have the ability to transfer individuals by ground and also by air medical transport. The Level I Trauma Centers will take care of individuals who have the lower acuity of their hospitals of individuals who have the lower acuity of and can be placed safely in the medical field station.

We're working closely with University Hospital right now in the northern region who will coordinate the transfer of patients to the Secaucus facility. The Field Medical Station, which can accommodate up to 250 patients will be led by a Chief Medical Officer and a Chief Nursing Officer. The staff compliment at this site will include physicians, registered nurses, physician assistants, advanced practice nurses, respiratory therapists, behavioral health workers and social workers.

Staffing was obtained primarily through our volunteer portal as well as through temporary agencies and the National Guard. Some of the services that will be available include everything that you would see in an acute care hospital – radiology, pharmacy, and lab services. We have a full team there to meet not just the medical needs but also the mental health needs and the discharge planning needs of the individuals who will be there as patients. This site will be a valuable resource for our northern New Jersey hospitals who are already experiencing increased demands for care.

As I noted yesterday, the night before seven hospitals were on divert. Last evening, only four were on divert and they were different than the ones the night before. So, as hospitals are managing their volume they are moving patients along appropriately. As I've said, we expect this pressure on our healthcare resources to continue as we see the increasing number of cases in the state.

As the Governor mentioned, we are reporting 3489 new cases for a total of 25,590 cases in the state of New Jersey. Sadly, as reported 182 new deaths have occurred, however, in order to report the most accurate statistics, our Communicable Disease Service is now including data from our electronic death certificate service. Today's report includes 124 from our Communicable Disease Service and 58 deaths from the electronic death certificate service that have occurred over a number of days. 17 of these new deaths were associated with a long-term care facility.

Of the new deaths, 45 were from Bergen County; 30 from Essex; 21 from Middlesex; 15 each from Hudson, Morris and Ocean Counties; 14 from Monmouth County; 7 from Passaic County; 5 from Union County; 3 each from Burlington and Camden Counties; 2 from Somerset County and 1 each from Atlantic, Mercer and Sussex. And we are still gathering county of residence for four individuals who have passed. Our thoughts and prayers are with these families who have lost their loved ones.

Overall, we're reporting 537 deaths. 59% are male, 41% female. 47% are over the age of 80. 35% have documented underlying conditions such as cardiovascular disease, obesity, diabetes myelitis, chronic lung disease. 14% or 76 deaths are associated overall with long-term care facilities.

The county breakdown of the new cases is as follows: Atlantic 9, Bergen 300, Burlington 39, Camden 56, Cape May 12, Cumberland 4, Essex 205, Gloucester 19, Hudson 220, Hunterdon 14, Mercer 47, Middlesex 223, Monmouth 118, Morris 90, Ocean 97, Passaic 128, Salem 3, Somerset 47, Sussex 16, Union 152, and Warren 15. And we're still gathering more details on 1675 of these new cases.

At this point, 110 of our long-term care facilities in the state have reported at least one COVID-19 case. As stated previously, we are concerned for our most vulnerable populations in long-term care facilities, psychiatric hospitals, group homes and prisons. We continue to monitor all of these areas closely and on a regular basis.

Along with the Governor, I want to thank all the New Jersey residents who are following the guidance to stay at home. Social distancing is the best tool that we have to slow the spread of this illness. The importance of social distancing was underscored by a CDC study released yesterday that demonstrated that transmission can occur also in the absence of symptoms.

We know the pressure on the healthcare system will escalate as cases increase, and that's why we're urging the public to take personal responsibility to reduce the spread of COVID-19 by staying home. We are all in this together and we must take steps to protect one another. Thank you.

Governor Phil Murphy: Judy, thank you for everything you and your team are doing, extraordinary work in an extraordinary time.

A couple of things, again, just to make sure I've got this right- 110 long-term care facilities have at least one positive. The denominator again is 375 for folks watching, so that's I guess about a 30% ratio. And I know you're watching that, you're watching homes for developmentally disabled, psychiatric hospitals, prison communities, etc., where you've got an intense... And to repeat something, again, if I get this wrong you'll correct me, but the reality of asymptomatic folks coming into those areas or facilities of high concern is a particular concern that we've got, right, in terms of masking?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Yes.

Governor Phil Murphy: You've already put the word out for complete masking at long-term care facilities by example, right?

Top five counties in total cases, I won't go through the numbers but this is a list you've heard before. Bergen continues to be number one, Essex number two, Hudson number three, Union four, Middlesex five and Passaic is right behind at number six in terms of total cases.

And again, the reality on the blessed lost lives is you've got a mix of folks really, again Judy, I don't want to say this incorrectly, but you've got a mix of folks who we know passed at a certain moment of time from a certain cause; but you've then got some others that you're bringing in over time. Is that fair to say?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Yeah.

Governor Phil Murphy: And is that timeframe a number of days usually, Christina?

State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan: It really depends. The electronic death certificate data are relatively recent information. The issue is the challenge that sometimes there might be some errors in the death certificate data, and of course, the other information that we get through our Communicable Disease system takes a little bit longer to follow up on.



Governor Phil Murphy: And as we have, and again, I don't want to get this wrong, but as we have said I believe at almost every one of these gatherings, just one other thing on the positives. Did you mention the positive ratio?


Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: I did not.


Governor Phil Murphy: So, that's something that folks should hear. I gave an approximation but Judy's got the exact number.


Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: The total number of tests performed, 56,915. 23,395 tested positive for an overall percent positivity of 41.11%.

Governor Phil Murphy: So just again, a couple of things that Judy and I have been pounding away, Dr. Tan has been helping us make these points. Number one, that means approximately six out of ten people who got tested, tested negative. Secondly, Dr. Tan wants me to remind you that you're still sick so take care of yourself. Thirdly, it's overwhelmingly symptomatic people so this is not an average slice of the current state of the state. These are folks, as you heard me say at these testing sites, you've got to be symptomatic or you'll get thrown out of line. And we can't say that's the case in every single test but overwhelmingly that's the case.

And Judy, we are now 12 days removed from the last, most aggressive  <https://twitter.com/PhilMurphy> shutting the state down. These test results that we're  [announcing today are probably somewhere in the seven to twelve day ago specimen collection, is that fair?](https://www.facebook.com/governorphilmurphy)

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Yes.  <https://www.youtube.com/njgovernorsoffice>

Governor Phil Murphy: So, we're still a week or so away from  [daily knowing what that last set of actions that we took, what impact that has on the positives. Is that](https://www.instagram.com/govmurphy/)

 <https://www.snapchat.com/add/philmurphy>

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Absolutely correct. We're getting calls at the Department of health. People have been tested and they're waiting ten to 12, sometimes up to 14 days for their results because all of the labs are overwhelmed at this point.

Governor Phil Murphy: There was something... I got accused of being rosy on a couple of things earlier. I don't think this has been rosy in any way, shape or form. But one of the statements you heard us say probably a week or so ago was that the scarce resources was the collection materials from the feds to take the specimen, the PPE and the healthcare workers. A week or ten days ago it wasn't the testing labs. That reality has changed. Now, all of the above are scarce resources – the materials we need to collect the specimens, the PPE we need to protect the workers, the healthcare workers who, as I said, we're facing forks in the road all the time between testing and care. And then lastly, I think CNN reported last night, was it Qwest, Dan or Mahen, that had a backlog I think of 20,000 at one lab alone. So, there's limited resources and/or constraints on the entire system right now, not just in New Jersey but on America. So, I think I'm probably being charitable on the seven- to ten-day window right now based on the backlog.

Judy, again, thank you for everything. Dr. Tan, thank you. Before we go to Christine, Pat, any quick words either on compliance, field hospital? You guys did an incredible job, PPE?

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: Just real quick, overnight six of what we could call COVID-19-related incidents. A funeral in Lakewood that had 60 to 70 people in attendance was broken up. 15 people were charged with violations and one gentleman was charged with disorderly persons and hindering an investigation. A subject under arrest for a controlled dangerous substance in Edison claimed to have the coronavirus and coughed on the arresting officer. Newark issued 130 separate violations and closed four businesses.

A Jersey Trooper responding to an accident up in Morris County, the driver of that car was found to be wanted and while arresting her, she drooled and spit on him claiming to also have the coronavirus. There was a social gathering, a party up in Morristown where a subject was charged with violating the executive order. And lastly a dispute at a tow yard where the subject arguing with the tow truck operator claimed to have the coronavirus and was going to spit on the door handles of his vehicles.

So, I was pleased to see what the Attorney General did in his announcement yesterday. That is not disorderly conduct, that that will be treated as an aggravated assault if warranted. So, I appreciate that, Governor, and to the Attorney General.

As far as PPE goes, that's an ongoing conversation as we all know. The donations are greatly appreciated. A lot of things in the pipeline; a few things backordered. It's an hourly conversation, and as you said this morning, just a phenomenal effort to watch that medical station go up in six or seven days. Just truly a phenomenal effort by local, county, state and federal partners. So, it was something to see. Thanks, Gov.

Governor Phil Murphy: Again, the vast majority – and Pat, I think you'd back me up here. The vast majority, Jared, of folks in New Jersey are doing the right thing and we are eternally grateful for that. And you will be rewarded for that behavior if not before in heaven, so thank you for that. But the vast minority of complete knuckleheads, I mean the sort of behavior you're talking about. And it goes from sort of the more benign – hello, you can't have a gathering – all the way to the sort of aggressive and awful behavior, spitting on people and threatening them and whatnot.

We've got to eradicate all of that. We need 100% compliance. Again, I wouldn't bet on any other state to achieve that other than this state. So, I know we can do it. I've got that. I'm looking forward to one of these days when we ask about compliance, anything going on and Pat says, "I've got a goose egg."

Secondly, we're wargaming, we're working on plans, on all the alleys where we've got challenges as this builds to a crescendo whenever that may be. And we are grateful for all that we've gotten, whether it's from the federal government, from private donations. We're grateful for the folks who are volunteering to serve. But again, ventilators, personal protective equipment, beds in healthcare workers. We're not in any of those places where we need to be. Again, we're trying to wargame that and trying to stay ahead of it as best we can. And the work that's being done by everybody – Judy deserves the biggest shoutout but Pat and the whole teams on sort of trying to figure out how we solve for these huge challenges. You can't say enough good things about them.

The one thing we didn't hit today, I want to re-hit the call to arms. Go to www.covid19.nj.gov (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov>). If you want to volunteer to help us get in the fight and augment our extraordinary heroes among our healthcare workers, please go on that website and sign up. And there's a process, Judy. I'm using the phrase matchmaking but that's kind of what's going on, right? You've got folks who are looking at where the needs are over here, where the volunteers are over here in their particular specialties and licenses and where we've got to match.

And we'll continue to do that, and that's happening in real time. But again, I wanted to make sure everybody realizes we're not where we need to be on any of those fronts. We're working to wargame and do the best we can to stay out ahead of it but we have ways to travel. As we've said all along, it is a whole of government challenge and it is a whole of government, frankly whole of society response that will allow us to get there.

I mentioned both daycare, childcare for essential workers. We mentioned that this is now Child Abuse Month. There's no better leader in our state than the person I'm going to introduce next to speak to both of those. Please help me welcome the Commissioner of the Department of Children and Families Christine Norbut Beyer.

Commissioner of the Department of Children and Families Christine Norbut Beyer: Good afternoon, everyone. I'd like to begin by thanking Governor Murphy and my colleagues for all your leadership during these trying times in our state and working so hard to reduce the spread of COVID-19, flatten the curve and help save lives.

I'd also like to offer my sincere thanks and appreciation to the people on the frontlines of this pandemic – law enforcement, healthcare workers, emergency responders, firefighters and our own team at DCF; as well as everyday heroes who are keeping New Jersey functioning during this time – the grocery store clerks, gas station attendants, childcare providers and more. Your efforts to ensure essential services continue for New Jersey families during this pandemic has been nothing short of heroic.

We all have a role to play, each and every day, to keep New Jersey's families and children safe, happy and connected. And we're seeing that play out during this crisis in the work that's being done through government, private and nonprofit channels to support families in need. And I have to say, witnessing the talent, the drive, the thoughtfulness and the ingenuity of our team at DCF and our network of service providers across every community in the state, I could not be prouder to be working in public service and leading this extraordinary department.

We know that there are very difficult times ahead for New Jersey as a state and for each of its families individually. We're working around the clock and across state government to support families during this time, particularly families of workers performing essential services for New Jersey during this pandemic.

I'm here to share additional details around the partnership announced last week between DCF, the Department of Human Services and the Department of Education to rollout childcare options for the state's essential workforce: individuals working in the public and private sectors who were determined to be essential for the continued functioning of the state under Governor Murphy's Executive Orders 107 and 110. And know that if this were a perfect world, all employees across the state would be deemed essential.)

Earlier this week, our team within the DCF Office of Licensing certified nearly 600 agencies statewide to provide care to the children of essential employees. And today, we're announcing the launch of an emergency childcare assistance program which is being administered by the Department of Human Services Division of Family Development to help support childcare costs when a parent or guardian is an essential employee regardless of family income.

In order to have access to emergency childcare, essential employees will need to register with their county's Childcare Resource and Referral Agency. Registered essential employees will then have access to emergency childcare assistance support to offset the cost of childcare. More details and guidance around the emergency childcare program for essential employees, including eligibility requirements about who is essential under the Governor's executive orders have been posted to the DCF corona website and www.childcare.nj.gov (<http://www.childcare.nj.gov>).

Beyond the availability of childcare, we know that families are experiencing a number of other stressors during this crisis. We know that families and children who were struggling before may become even more vulnerable during this time of elevated stress and social distancing. The research shows that during natural disasters or national emergencies, like what we're experiencing now, families are subject to greater levels of stress and heightened anxiety.

Just at the same time that parents and children are isolated from their usual forms of support, like time with family, friends, gatherings and school, and community routines and events, increase in stress coupled with the decrease in support like this can lead to an increase in maltreatment and family violence, including child abuse, neglect and domestic violence.

As we look at the data across the country and really across the world in terms of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, states are already seeing an increase in incidents of child abuse and intimate partner violence. At the same time in New Jersey as in other jurisdictions, we're seeing fewer referrals to our hotlines and helplines. Social isolation is hard. Every one of us who is a parent knows that every parent needs the support of friends, family and community, but now we're all less able to connect to natural supports.

Families are now less able to connect to the kind of formal help that they need, and it's harder for us to know about struggling families during times like these because social distancing means that many who serve as sentinels for children and families – teachers, coaches, counselors, pediatricians and primary healthcare professionals - don't have the same level of contact with children and families in communities.

So, as New Jersey residents abide by and practice the safe social distancing practices that are absolutely necessary, the challenge becomes that the individuals and the professionals who might have otherwise supported families or connected them to help in their community are restricted in their face-to-face interactions.

In New Jersey, we're already seeing these affects. One year ago, in March 2019, there were 7501 referrals made to our state central registry, which is our 24/7 child abuse and neglect hotline through either Child Protective Services or Child Welfare Services. This year in March 2020, there were 5117 referrals. That's a 32% reduction. And March is traditionally one of our highest reporting months. The reduction doesn't necessarily mean that children are experiencing less abuse and neglect, but rather that it's not being seen or heard – and so, no response is being taken. It's not being reported.

This is the other reason why I'm here today. April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. But our commitment to prevent child abuse cannot only happen during April or during times of national emergency. I'm urging all New Jersey residents to do your part to help us prevent child maltreatment and domestic violence.

I'm asking each of you to be extra-vigilant for those children and families who might be having a hard time right now. If you have a family member or friend with small children, call them, check in daily. See how they're coping. Ask them if you can anything to help relieve their stress. Sometimes, just being able to talk it through is enough. Other times, dropping off a meal or offering to help with (https://www.youtube.com/mgovernorsoffice) benefits can be the best way to help.

If you know a family caring for a child with special needs, this is the time to be the best friend or neighbor or church community member that you can be. Reach out. (https://www.facebook.com/governorphilmurphy) (https://www.youtube.com/mgovernorsoffice) and that you care about them, and if there's anything you can do to help.

If you know parents who are challenged by substance use disorders or who struggle with maintaining good mental health, please get in touch. Ask them how they're handling the stress and if they need to be connected to a counselor. Help is still available. Offer whatever help you can because at the end of the day, we're all in this together. And it's only together that we'll get through these difficult and challenging times.

Through the Department of Children and Families we're rolling out a campaign to let people know that social distancing shouldn't mean social isolation. The connections you make with your friends, your neighbors, your family members and your community, they're absolutely vital and can help us bridge the social connection gap during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We're partnering with our sister state agencies, community-based prevention organizations, several trade organizations such as the New Jersey Association of Counties, the American Academy of Pediatrics in New Jersey, the NJEA, school districts and more, and pushing out messaging on social media channels, Facebook, Twitter, Next Door, to advance this call to action. If you or anyone you know is having a hard time coping text NJ to 741-741. Trained counselors are available around the clock.

If you suspect someone is getting hurt in a family you know please report it. You can call the New Jersey Child Abuse Hotline at 1-877-NJ-ABUSE. To report domestic violence call 1-800-572-SAFE. All of these resources are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Working together, we can all make a difference for families in need and help them get through this crisis. Thank you, and on behalf of the Department of Children and Families, stay safe, healthy and connected.

Governor Phil Murphy: Christine, thank you, and thank you for what you do every day in our administration but particularly at this time.

I was struck in particular by the reduction of reported instances in March, and the big takeaway I have, I suspect many of us have had is because a lot of those instances get uncovered by a teacher, a coach, a nurse, a member of law enforcement. And the kids are not seeing most if any of the above right now because of the lockdown that we're in. And so, this is not just timely but it's particularly poignant at this moment again, at this month in particular. So, thank you for everything and thanks for your leadership.

Before we go to questions, I had an enormous amount of feedback on how we were spending our time as a family personally. I got a lot of questions about was I favoring one James Bond actor over another, one set of Jason Borne's over another. My kids wanted me to remind you that you can also get, for you soccer fans, you can get on social media seven- to ten-minute summaries of about any great game every played. And so, I'm going to give you my three: the 1996 Euro Semifinal between England and Germany, the 1997

Champions League Final between Dortmund and Juventus; and one that you won't get every day, the 1997 Confederations Cup in France between Italy and Brazil. Those are three that we've watched lately and have enjoyed in the midst of this extraordinarily challenging time.

Brent, we're going to start with you. Fire away.

Q&A Session:

Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger: Three things. Game six of '86 World Series is my favorite game.

Governor Phil Murphy: Yeah, I was in Boston for that. I appreciate that.

Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger: Were you there? Nice! Number one, I have a question from Nancy Solomon at WNYC. I understand there's a shortage of tests but can you explain the thinking behind why you are having people who are symptomatic come get tested rather than conducting randomized tests of the whole population so that the modeling of hospital capacity reflects the true infection rate in each county? One, then I have two other questions. One, hospitalization rate overall, how many people have been hospitalized; how many people have been discharged? And three, we saw Los Angeles Mayor yesterday urge people to wear masks when they go in public. Is Jersey considering any other kind of thought on that?

Governor Phil Murphy: Judy, can I just say a couple of quickies and then turn it to you and Dr. Tan?

To Nancy's question, in a perfect world that's probably something we would have done the expert but we have to play the hand we've been dealt. And this is the hand that we've been dealt.

I'm going to skip over hospitalization rates which Judy can speak to. I think, Judy, it's fair to say there's a fair amount of movement around masks right now including from the CDC and their guidance. Is that fair to say? And again, remember, we don't have enough masks. So, we're already bemoaning the fact healthcare workers, first responders. What about our retail brothers and sisters at supermarkets and pharmacies and essential places? What about the bus drivers and the rail operators at NJ Transit? What about others who are in contact, long-term care facilities Judy's mandated but what about in a psychiatric hospital or a home for developmentally disabled? We're already sort of in those rings of need in terms of personal protective equipment.

But beyond that may I, both in terms of the testing protocol as well as hospitalization rates and masks?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: I'll talk a little bit about hospitalization rates. We really don't have that at this point but they're coming in, because we have to go to the discharge data. So, once someone is discharged the chart is analyzed, coded and then entered into a system that also allows for billing and for medical record statistics. So, we should be getting them; they should be coming out. Once we have them I can admit that we will share them. We just don't have them now. There's always a delay in getting the discharge data.

Governor Phil Murphy: How about masks, any comments on masks?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Well, we did mandate universal masking for employees going into long-term care facilities. Based on the experience of Washington State and as I've reported, I spoke with the Department of Health in Washington State and they identified the spread of COVID-19 coming into the facility by the employees. We believe that's the same situation here in New Jersey, so to protect that most vulnerable population that we have we are mandating that the employees mask when they come into the facility?

Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger: But nothing for the general public yet?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Not for the general public yet.

Governor Phil Murphy: By the way, Brent, I don't want to overstate this – again, we're short ventilators, we're short PPE, we're short beds, we're short workers. If we flipped the switch and said, "General public, you need to wear masks," we don't have the masks. And that's a federal reality, right? So, you've seen

articles today saying the federal stockpile is diminishing with that extraordinary outpouring of donations and manufacturing. But fair to say we're not remotely close to being able to mask everybody.

Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger: Is it a bad idea for people to do that if they can use a scarf or something else?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: I'll let Dr. Tan talk about scarves. We have to understand that if you're taking care of a COVID-19 patient you should be wearing an N95. They're in very, very short supply.

Masks are generally to protect people from you, not necessarily to protect you from what's around you. So, it doesn't take the place of social distancing; it doesn't take the place of staying at home. The mask protects other individuals. There's some level of protection, you can read about that in general newspapers but at the end of the day it's more to protect others. And it can be cloth or it can be flat-face, surgical.

Governor Phil Murphy: Dr. Tan, would you mind weighing in?

State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan: First, related to the masks, the Commissioner is completely spot-on. It's the issue of source control because we want to protect the most vulnerable from becoming ill. So, as the Commissioner kept on emphasizing, especially in these long-term care facilities, we want to protect those vulnerable populations, the residents of these facilities, from exposures that are coming into the facility itself.

And also, we have to remind everybody that the biggest message is social distancing. Let's not have a false sense of security about what the mask might offer to protect yourself versus the source control aspect that we're trying to emphasize for the most vulnerable populations.

And with regard to the testing there are two aspects to consider. One is, is the reason why we've had a lot of focus on symptomatic individuals and prioritizing individuals for the testing in the context of what the Governor had mentioned a little bit earlier about backlogs and testing and such is that we really do want to ensure that we get the tests done on those people where it will really make a difference – for example, in those long-term care facilities, for healthcare workers and the like. That's one aspect.

The second aspect is related specifically to the characteristics of the test itself. We know that when you test individuals who are symptomatic, the likelihood of your picking up an infection, SARS-COVI-2 is much higher when you're symptomatic, when there's much more virus that you can actually capture in your clinical sample. That's why we've got really high positivity rates. I mean, again, as to what the Governor mentioned earlier, we can't say that every single one of our tests reflect a test that was done on someone who was symptomatic but we know the vast majority are. That's why we have a really high positivity rate and we're able to pick up on those cases.

Governor Phil Murphy: Just two human nature, and Matt, I don't want you to pull a hamstring so we're going to go to Dave next here.

Two human nature points. One is, I guess on the good side of masks you hear a lot of anecdotal evidence. We don't want you to touch your face, so folks, when they get out there and they realize they've got a mask on it does give people a second thought, so that's a good thing. But I've just got to underscore social distancing trumps the mask in a big way, and the problem – and you probably have seen this, less in this room but you've seen folks with masks who just start behaving like everything's normal again. And that can't be the case, right? Social distancing trumps all, so thank you for that. Dave?

David Levinsky, Burlington County Times: He must have read my mind because I have many more mask questions. Governor, I understand that we're not in a situation at this point to officially suggest people wear masks, but you do see a variety of them, from bandanas to Assemblywoman Munoz has a video out about how to sew a mask and apparently some of them you can put a filter in. I believe, Commissioner, you had said that it can offer some level of protection. Can you talk a little bit about that, flesh that issue out – perhaps Dr. Tan can assist with that? If it can give some level of protection, because we've got a lot of people walking around who are asymptomatic, who may be giving this to somebody else. And if the function of the mask is to protect other people from getting what you may have, would there be a value in having people wear a cotton-made mask or something else like that? How do you clean it? Some

people have told me that they were attempting to spray Lysol on an N95 mask. I believe that does not work, I'm not sure – maybe you can comment on that. And just this issue of people walking around in New Jersey, if they have to go to the supermarket should they be trying to think about some kind of level of mask protection in some way? Second question, if I may, Governor, unrelated....

Governor Phil Murphy: Second question, Dave?

David Levinsky, Burlington County Times: Well, second broad category.

Governor Phil Murphy: Second doctoral thesis is what you meant to say.

David Levinsky, Burlington County Times: The Department of Labor release mentioned the \$600 additional supplement from the federal government. Could you just explain, because there's a little bit of confusion apparently with some with regards to is this in addition to the state unemployment? What should people do? How is this going to help people and so forth?

Governor Phil Murphy: Yep, so I would just say, I'm going to hand the mask question to the team of experts to my right. But I guess a different way to ask Dave's question, not the cleaning piece, is if we had unlimited resources and each of us could easily, free of charge theoretically have a mask is that something that the CDC would recommend? Is that something you all would recommend is perhaps a different angle on a similar question.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: I get more mask questions now than anything. So the first thing I want to start with is exactly what you said, Governor – if we had unlimited resources, you know, let's look at masks in a different way.

Part, some of what you said is absolutely on target. If you're not feeling well and you're going to be with people, my recommendation is don't be with people. But if you're finding that you're sneezing, it's allergy season – you know, sometimes you can't discriminate between what's actually going on. And you have a mask at home that is cloth, that someone made for you and it tightly fits around and you want to wear it? I would never tell somebody not to. But I don't think we would put out a recommendation that everybody mask.

Again, it's to protect other people more than you being protected. Droplet infections are droplet infections, and Dr. Tan can talk about droplet infections and the importance of staying your distance and why.

State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan: Just to comment about the issue of also cleaning the masks. It's a tricky thing as well. The CDC does have guidance for healthcare workers as far as how to try to manage some of their PPE such as masks in the times of crisis. It's tricky to just, you know, you just don't Lysol a mask like you had said but there's actually processes that need to be considered and followed to ensure that you're not cleaning and disinfecting some of this PPE in an inappropriate way that actually inadvertently then infects you a little bit later.

Just remembering that one question from earlier about people asking about how you, for example, just take off a glove properly. So, these are things which our healthcare workers commonly encounter all the time and are trained to deal with, and that's why, again, it gets back to some of the comments about overarching mask use and just recognizing that again, sometimes if you're not familiar with how to use a mask, that it can potentially create more of an issue than not. But again, to the Commissioner's point, if you want to use a scarf or homemade mask for your own sense of well-being we wouldn't discourage that.

Governor Phil Murphy: But I think we would all agree, don't use that as an excuse to get closer to people than you should be, is that fair to say? That you've got to. Social distancing trusts this. I believe on your employment question that this is incremental but Matt Platkin is in the back. He's going to address this, the federal \$600 stipend is incremental to the state numbers?

Chief Counsel Matt Platkin: Yeah, I believe it's once you exhaust your state benefits then it's incremental on top of that but we'll get a definitive answer from Labor.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you. You good, Dave? You got one, Sir?

NJTV News: Got a couple of questions, Salvo from NJTV News. Would you, Governor, please talk about your concerns upon hearing that medical supplies in the federal stockpile are running very low with only 10,000 respirators left and no guarantee that those respirators are in working order. Do the respirators that we've received from the federal stockpile actually work? And then, for Commissioner Persichilli, how will you triage patients into the new FEMA medical station at The Meadowlands? Where will they come from, what level of care will they need? And then, Governor, just following up on the unemployment numbers, we've been trying to access the website and are having trouble getting through even though we're not unemployed. Is there any help on the horizon for those who are trying to get to our website but cannot?

Governor Phil Murphy: Yep. Is that it?

NJTV News: If you'll take more I'll give you more.

Governor Phil Murphy: Give me one more, how's that?

NJTV News: Alright, one more. Question from a viewer, that they are positive with COVID-19 yet need groceries. Is there any way that we can ask the business public to make a list specifically for people who are positive, find a way to safely shop even though they're infected?

Governor Phil Murphy: Okay. I'm not going to have the answers to all of these but let me just give you... Reaction to the federal stockpile being low is of great concern. (As I mentioned, I can't say it more clearly...) while we're grateful for what we've got, we're still light ventilators, personal protective equipment, beds, workers. There's a plan in each of those cases to do the very best. (Let me stay in a great condition for that...)

Pat, ventilators that come in, for the most part they've been working for us, haven't they?

State Police Superintendent Col. Pat Callahan: I've not heard of one that has not worked.

Governor Phil Murphy: So, we read the same article and we exchanged thoughts on that. But we have not had that. I'll come back to... Judy, if you don't mind in a second doing the triaging at The Meadowlands.

The website, I mentioned this in my remarks, we've got an overwhelming amount of demand. I know the Department of Labor and the Commissioner Rob Angelo is doing everything they can. Again, my backup, I think I've said this a couple of times – go on this website over my left shoulder here, www.covid19.nj.gov (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov>). That's another way in.

And in terms of shopping hours it's a good question. I've not been asked that before. I don't know what guidance as a health matter you would give. I know that certain retailers are having senior hours, again, seniors being more impacted by this than not, not only seniors, which we have encouraged. This is something I'd like to come back to you on. I think it's another fair question. In a perfect world it seems to me you'd have that. We're not in a perfect world so I can't promise it but fair question.

Do you mind hitting the triage question?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Sure, but before we get there, about the grocer shopping: if someone is in quarantine or isolation they should not be going out. So, we have to make arrangements and most of the stores right now are delivering just particularly for that type of situation.

If someone cannot get nutrition in their home on quarantine or isolation, go on our website. We have the website where you can put in the question and we will get back to them. That's important. We don't want anyone home on quarantine or isolation that has to leave to get nutrition, and we don't want anyone home not getting nutrition. So, I just wanted to clarify that.

On the triage, we're going to be working with the local hospitals to identify the individuals that could be going home in one or two days. We can handle oxygen, we can handle IVs, there will be the appropriate level of nursing support and perhaps just needs a couple more days of maybe IV antibiotics, because we will have pharmacists on-call. They could move safely to a field hospital. But we will triage that. We will

have criteria for the community hospitals so that they can go through the criteria and then every day be able to identify, "I have two patients," "I have three patients." And the Level I Trauma will support the transport.

Governor Phil Murphy: And you'll build this up but you and I both used the phrase of the soft opening. This will be built up beginning on Monday, right?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Yeah, we want to make sure that it all works, that the transport works correctly and seamlessly.

Governor Phil Murphy: When you see it, as Pat and I did this morning and I know Judy and her team have been all over it, it's a barebones reality, right? So, this is something that started on a bare slab concrete floor that has been built up from nothing.

I constantly find myself trying to balance coldblooded "If you don't do this we're going to come after you" with compassion, particularly for those who are sick and who have lost their lives. I want to retract my answer for the last question. If you're positive you can't be doing that, right? (https://twitter.com/GovMurphy) I'll just give a shoutout for among other reasons our retail workers who are already screaming out, "Please God give us protection, consider us wherever you can" (https://www.facebook.com/governorphilmurphy) wipe down activities, etc." So, I'm going to just say, I'm going to echo what Judy said. We need you to stay home. (https://www.youtube.com/njgovernorsoffice)

But having said that, and this is the second part of what you said (https://www.instagram.com/govmurphy/) got to stay home, self-quarantine, God willing get better, but make sure you've got a way to get your nutrition. And if all else fails go on that website to make sure we know who you are and where you are. (https://www.snapchat.com/add/philmurphy) that fair?

Elise, good afternoon.

Elise Young, Bloomberg: Good afternoon. I have a bunch of questions about hospitalization rates. It seemed that earlier you were disclosing those rates. Occasionally when we asked how many coronavirus patients had been hospitalized you had those data including how many were on vents, and I just want to make sure that we do not have those data now. Also, about how many patients have been treated and discharged. Another question, have we started co-ventilating yet any patients in New Jersey, and if so where and how many? There used to be the county data on the Health Department website, the breakdowns of numbers and I'm wondering if those numbers are going to come back because I haven't been able to find them.

Governor Phil Murphy: Positive?

Elise Young, Bloomberg: Yes. And regarding the delays in the lab testing, is the state lab running at its maximum? I believe, and I could be wrong about this, that the state lab could process 500 a day, and I believe that some of the private labs said that they could do 20,000 tests a day although I'm not certain of that number. Where are the data on how many tests the private labs are handling? What is the biggest cause of the backups?

Governor Phil Murphy: Judy, I'm just going to make a couple broad comments and then turn it to you all, is that alright?

One of the things that I think you've probably implied on the data front is that we want to make sure that when we speak to data, that we have as much as close to perfect certainty on the data that we share with you. And I would guess, and you've seen this over time by the way, over the past number of weeks. My guess is, I don't want to put words in anyone's mouth here, but over the coming days we're going to be giving you a lot more of a deeper dive into the data as a general matter. And that includes everything from hospitalization rates to incoming, outgoing, testing and everything in between. And again, I'm not going to

promise you which day or moment that that's going to happen. But I would just say that that is... The more time we're with each other, the more time we go through this, the deeper the data, the more certain we're going to be about that data.

I think with that I'm going to turn it over to you all, Judy.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Sure, and what you said, Governor, is right on. We're working to refine data every single day and we now have a portal that the New Jersey Hospital Association has had in existence. But we find the data that we need to get from the hospitals and that portal feeds right into the ROIC so we can have a dashboard. And when we talk about hospitalization rates, when you say 'rates' you're talking about a percentage of something. What we can give you and what I have given you and what I will give you is the number of individuals in our hospitals that are COVID-19 positive and those that are PUIs. That's the information that I've been giving you. They're absolute numbers.

You know, for lots of reasons, to do a hospitalization rate you would look at the total number of the population with a certain diagnoses and what percent is in the hospital. So because we don't do mass testing we really don't know the total number of COVID-19 patients. We could probably tell you the percentage of people in the hospital that have cardiovascular disease because we pretty much know that in the general population. We can probably break it down to the percentage of the population totally that's in the hospital, I mean that's in the community and those that have that diagnosis in the hospital. Absolute numbers we can absolutely give you and we will do so.

The state lab, the question on the state lab was how many we could process and I guess turnaround.

State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan: All I can comment on is the number, the results that we got today from the State Laboratory and that is about 558 of our positives today. And the balance is from the commercial laboratories. I don't have the denominators.

Governor Phil Murphy: So, more to come, Elise. You good? Matt, right with Elise.

Elise Young, Bloomberg: And the county data that used to be on the website, on the Health Department website you would click on the total number of cases and then you would go to a map, is that coming back?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: It should, yeah. I don't know why it's not on there.

Elise Young, Bloomberg: Okay.

Governor Phil Murphy: I believe it's on this website.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Maybe we switched it over, yeah, I mean the interactive map should be active.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you. Hi.

Reporter: I have a question about access to testing and I apologize if this has been asked already. A number of these county testing sites require a doctor's referral. This can be a barrier for many people, especially those who find themselves newly-unemployed and therefore newly-uninsured. Can you speak to those who want to get tested, have symptoms but may not be able to get a doctor's referral? And can we also get an updated timetable on the field hospitals in Edison and Atlantic City?

Governor Phil Murphy: You bet. Again, I'll defer to Judy on the testing, whether you've got a doctor's referral or not. But just to remind folks, the official state-sponsored testing sites are the one at Bergen Community College and PNC Bank Arts Center, which in each case are partnered with FEMA. They do not require a doctor's referral but they do require you to be symptomatic.

As other counties and other organizations have put testing sites together, in some cases we have helped as best we could with specimen collection materials or PPE, etc., but those are overwhelmingly initiatives that have been sponsored by a county or a healthcare organization. And we're not running those so they have... Just to make sure everyone knows, there may be some unevenness and that's for a reason. There are different sponsors for these.

But to your question, and we'll come back to the field hospitals – what if a particular county requires a doctor – I think Mercer I mentioned today is an example, I assume that's part of your question – requires a healthcare professional to have given you the go-ahead? What about somebody who's got symptoms and doesn't have that, Judy?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Well, that's the key. They have symptoms and I get emails on this. I just had one this week. "My wife has symptoms. We just moved down here. My insurance company, I can't find someone in-network, what should I do?" And of course, if someone has symptoms you need to get them to some type of organized care, because if they have symptoms and they are positive they're going to need to be followed up by someone who is responsible – you know, a medical professional responsible for their care. So, I advised them to check with their insurance company. If there is no one in-network call the FQHC, go to Urgent Care. You have symptoms, you have to be seen.

If you have symptoms and you just go for a test, and then you get it back in your hand and it's positive, what do you do with it? You're going to have to find a doctor or an advanced practice nurse to help you, to follow up with you. So, symptomatic individuals need to have, they need to be in some type of organized care situation.

Governor Phil Murphy: And to address the field hospitals, again, 250 beds, depending on the configuration at least 250 beds in Secaucus at The Meadows Exposition Center. We've got three other three other but they're really spread right now in two locations – one in Edison at that Exposition Center and the other is in Atlantic City. Pat, what's the status of each?

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: Edison's anticipated date is April 8th and the Atlantic City Convention Center site is April 14th to be up and ready.

Governor Phil Murphy: And Edison will be 500?

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: That's correct. We doubled that from a strategic centralized standpoint.

Governor Phil Murphy: So, everyone should understand we didn't lose a field hospital; we still have the four that were promised. The Army Corps is working mightily with FEMA, the State Police, the Department of Health to get these up and running. But the decision was made to double the size of the one in Edison, and I want to acknowledge that to the enormous credit of a lot of folks who had helped us out. Organized labor, our brothers and sisters in labor are deeply involved in getting these up and running, so thank you.

You good with those? Thank you. John?

John Mooney, NJ Spotlight: I have a few. To clarify, follow up on Elise's question about numbers, the executive order from a week or so ago about requiring hospitals to give data on all beds, ICU beds, will we be getting that stuff?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: That started on Monday. We're refining that data but they are reporting.

Governor Phil Murphy: Again, John, that's part of the answer that I gave to Elise. I'm not trying to put it to the side. We want to make sure it's right before we share it.

John Mooney, NJ Spotlight: Certainly. And can you clarify your instructions given to long-term care administrators, especially the preps that long-term care must do for accepting COVID-positive patients? And can you talk about naming the places in the long-term care, especially that have multiple cases of positive people and deaths? Because people are calling us and saying, "Where are these? It's my family member," they're not getting responses to those questions. And is there a statewide policy or is there one being discussed for DNRs for COVID-positive patients who die in hospitals? And then, can we talk a little bit about are you getting any kind of details from the state's military bases and installations about... Department of Defense is not reporting that but are they reporting it up to the Department of Health in New Jersey? And Governor, you once again implored people to stay home. Are you considering any extending

social distancing measures? Do you have anything left to do legally to require people to stay home and mandate any more shutdowns? And also, one more, I apologize – what if people don't have health insurance in terms of getting tested and getting care?

Governor Phil Murphy: Okay, that's quite a list.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Did you take good notes?

Governor Phil Murphy: I did. I got, I guess there are a couple of different long-term care questions you've got, right? So, one is the protocol and secondly whether or not you want us to name places where you've had either fatalities or multiple positives. You want to weigh in on this?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Sure. First, on the requirement of long-term care facilities to receive back their residents who have gone out to a hospital. What we were encountering is that a resident would go to the hospital, be treated, recover and they would not accept the resident back. At least that was the complaint, that they would not accept the resident back because the resident had tested positive for COVID-19.



(<https://twitter.com/GovMurphy>)

And part of the directive is, this is that resident's home. We keep forgetting that. This is their home. They should be accepted back with the appropriate precautions. And we did have a conference call with all of the owners of long-term care, and shared with them that we understand that sometimes the appropriate precautions, that is cohorting patients that have tested positive for COVID-19 in an area, a wing, a floor of the facility and making sure that the individuals caring for those residents were not staying in the facility that have not acquire COVID-19.



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And as asked them if that was not possible to give us a call, because we may have to move residents around so that they can get the appropriate post-acute care that they deserve; but also be protective of them and others in the facilities. So, that's the receiving back of residents that you've sent.

On the, I think you suggested or asked whether we would be looking at a statewide DNR for COVID-19 patients. Unequivocally, no. We have always promoted advanced directives for everyone in New Jersey, no matter who you are, your age, or anything else – an advanced directive which says specifically your desires in certain periods of your health life is the right thing to do. We've worked closely with the Healthcare Quality Institute in their statewide initiative Conversation of a Lifetime and we promote that. But we would never do a statewide DNR.

As far as testing when you do not have health insurance, that is exactly the type of individual who should be going to the federally-qualified health center for their care. Did I miss something, John?

Governor Phil Murphy: We've got a couple, state and military bases. Are you getting information or reporting out of them?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: No, we are not. I don't know.

State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan: Our local health departments might have some information about the people who are peripheral to the folks who are associated with the base, but we don't necessarily have that information in front of us.

John Mooney, NJ Spotlight: How about outbreaks at the long-term care centers, naming them?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: You know, we've hesitated to do that, again because these are the residents. But we did invoke a statute that is in existence already that requires the long-term care facility to inform the residents, the employees and families of outbreaks in their facilities. So, we did send a letter out to them yesterday with those instructions. And that is a requirement in New Jersey.

Governor Phil Murphy: John, in terms of other steps we're constantly looking. There aren't a whole lot more but we're constantly looking. One of the things that you heard Col. Callahan refer to, we're upping the ante in terms of the consequences for noncompliant behavior. And I want to thank the Attorney General for that. That is without question a step in the social distancing piece.

We've been asked about nonessential construction. We constantly look at that, both enforcing social distancing but also considerations. And we're constantly looking at this. I can't say it any other way. We are hoping, again, because we think we've taken steps cumulatively but especially as of a week ago Saturday that are about as aggressive as any American state, we would like to be data-driven coming out of that decision, giving time – specimen collection, positive case results, clearly looking at each precious life. And I think that's largely where we are. But again, we had a meeting, Matt and I and George Helmy our Chief of Staff this morning on this question. We constantly think about it.

We're going to sweep across. You good, John? Christy, you good? Elise, you've got one?

Elise Young, Bloomberg: Yeah, if you answered on co-ventilating I missed it, but are any patients in the state being co-ventilated?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: No.

Elise Young, Bloomberg: And one more question, the backlog of test results, has that been worsening or easing? And when do you expect that the tests will be coming in a fast, better rate? (https://www.facebook.com/governorphilmurphy)

Governor Phil Murphy: It's unequivocally worsening, right? (https://www.facebook.com/governorphilmurphy)

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Yeah. (https://www.youtube.com/njgovernorsoffice)

Governor Phil Murphy: I mean, we had... I'm not referring to the Department of Health but again, you know how many days back, Judy, you and I had this statement that seven to ten days ago that the gating factors were the specimen collection process, not the backend testing process. Now we've got constraints in the entire food chain, and again, that includes the high-speed, high-scale private firms. Those are all, while some of them are based in New Jersey they're also all national players. So, that's part of the national reality, not just the New Jersey reality. (https://www.instagram.com/governorphilmurphy/)

I can't tell you when that gets better. You've got... A friend of mine's son had been over two weeks waiting for a test to come back. Unfortunately, it's frustrating. It's not where we want it to be or not where it should be ideally. The one thing we haven't spoken about today, and I want to remind folks that we have spoken about it in the past, and Abbott Labs was the one firm in particular. There does feel like there's a lot of really good innovation and inventions at the cusp right now.

And if any of them come home, and Abbott to their credit has prioritized New Jersey as one of their early states. It's modest, but they're doing these tests in a couple locations in Bergen County. That's a good thing, but again, it's not scaled. So, we need the notion of invention and innovation coming into our midst, not just to be able to do your test or my test but to be able to do these at scale. The extent to which that happens sooner than later, all bets are off on what I've just said. Then you really open it up and then you can go back to whoever asked Nancy Solomon's question about in an ideal world could you do X? The answer is then you'd have a much better shot of doing X.

You good or...

Elise Young, Bloomberg: Did some of these labs overpromise? And how much has the Administration been going back to the labs and saying, "You've got to kick this up?"

Governor Phil Murphy: We go back to them regularly. And I can't say, in fairness, that they overpromised. I don't want to tag this on them. This is an extraordinary time, right? So, I'm not sure anybody in that food chain necessarily on the spot a couple of weeks ago could have predicted this. I suppose you could have but I don't want to tag this with them. But it's a reality that we don't have enough specimen collection or PPE from the feds. We need to make tough decisions about where healthcare workers are going between testing and care; and thirdly, the backlog. There's an undeniable backlog on the testing front, fair to say?

Dave, you good?

David Levinsky, Burlington County Times: On testing, Governor, most of I believe the test sites are drive area, drive-through areas?

Governor Phil Murphy: That's correct, yes.

David Levinsky, Burlington County Times: If people don't have cars, especially in urban areas or if somebody doesn't drive what should they do? And a second quick question for the Commissioner, any update on the work that's being done on the bioethics advisory, not committee, what is it? I'm sorry.

Governor Phil Murphy: Just on the testing, before you get there, Mahen or Danny, if this is not the case let's make sure it is. If you go to www.covid19.nj.gov (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov>) you'll see all the testing sites. I believe it says which ones are drive-through, which in fairness are more than not, and which ones are not. But let's make sure when we update the website, which we do regularly every day, we'll make sure we put that in there.

Is there any update? There really isn't, is there?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: You know, I'm trying to get numbers for you on hospitalizations. I'm not being rude here.



(<https://twitter.com/GovMurphy>)

Governor Phil Murphy: On the bioethics front?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: We do not have a bioethics committee. I want to make that clear. We have a Professional Advisory Committee that is looking at a whole range of things, starting first with helping us identify guidelines for how you deliver care in a crisis situation, criteria for movement of patients throughout the system – from critical care to stepdown to med/surg, to field, to alternative sites like hotels. It has physicians, intensivists, pulmonologists; it has the representation from nursing. I'm trying to go through the participation.



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David Levinsky, Burlington County Times: The question that I had referred to the question about if push comes to shove and the horrible situation where there's not enough ventilators, who's going to get one?

Governor Phil Murphy: As of this moment we're going to do what it takes to save every single life we can save period. I mean, we would be abrogating our responsibility particularly in the healthcare community without considering all eventualities. We have to do that, but the fact of the matter is we're going to lay it all out in the battlefield to save every life we can.

Brent, anything from you?

Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger: Just I asked about hospitalization before. So, we also don't have numbers, I think we discussed the other day, about how many people are getting better. We get a lot of readers like, "You're only scaring us. Is anybody getting better from this? How dare you! Fake news!" you know, so...

Governor Phil Murphy: Listen, I just as a non-healthcare professional, and Judy will correct me here, we've said consistently up to 85%, based on hard facts in this, with this virus are folks who get mild to moderate symptoms and they overwhelmingly get better. There's then 15% who need a much more intensive healthcare experience. A good chunk of them will need to be hospitalized, some of them in more critical care environments than not. And sadly we'll lose some. And we'll fight to save every single one of them. But there's no question people are getting better, right?

And I think one of the things we owe you, and I know Judy is incredibly and rightfully careful about this, because we don't want to give you data that we can't hang our hat on. But that's an example of something that I think over time we'll be able to give you a lot more texture on. Is that fair to say?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Absolutely.

Governor Phil Murphy: With that, I want to thank as I always do, the woman to my right, the extraordinary Commissioner of the Department of Health Judy Persichilli; State's Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan – thank you both so much.

Christine Norbut Beyer, great to have you, Commissioner of the Department of Children and Families. Great to have you hear with us. Daycare for essential workers. It's Child Abuse month. Let's make sure we're looking out for and having the backs of everybody in this state. Thank you so much for being here. Pat Callahan, I can't thank you enough for everything you do.

We will be back here tomorrow, unless you hear otherwise, at 1:00 PM; and unless you hear otherwise we'll be here on Saturday at 1:00 PM.

And I want to conclude by thanking the media. We have deemed you essential for good reason. We need to make sure that we're getting the facts out there and I want to thank you all for showing up as religiously and regularly as you do.

And to everybody watching at home, just remember, we are in a war and it is a war that we can and that we will win, as long as each of the 9 million of us do our parts – from the little things like social distancing and washing your hands with soap and water – all the way up to the big decisions that we have to make collectively. It won't be unscathed. We will sadly, we've already lost lives and we'll lose more, sadly.

The numbers are going to go up. This is going to be a really tough few weeks ahead of us if not more than a few weeks. But if we stay together, we don't turn on each other but we come closer together, as we are doing, we will get through this stronger than ever before and we will win this war. God bless you all.


Governor Phil Murphy

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