

Governor Phil Murphy

TRANSCRIPT: March 28th, 2020 Coronavirus Briefing Media

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Holding a COVID-19 briefing. WATCH:



Governor Phil Murphy: Good afternoon, everyone. Sorry to be a couple behind here. Thank you for joining us, especially to the thousands of New Jerseyans who are watching, today like every day, live.

Just a reminder, tomorrow we're going to communicate electronically with you unless we deem there is a reason to do otherwise. And if there is, you have my word that I personally along with I'm sure members of our team will be available and we'll call an audible.

On Monday, even though we said we were going to go to 1:00 for our briefings, we're actually going to be here at 2:00 on Monday, I believe right here, Mahen, at the War Memorial because we've got a VTC with the White House which is typically on Mondays. In this case, I think it's at 11:30 so 2:00 gives us enough time to attend that and communicate with the White House, and then we will be with you after that.

Honored to be joined by an all-star team today, including the woman to my right who needs no introduction, Commissioner of the Department of Health Judy Persichilli; to her right, Department of Health Communicable Disease Service Medical Director, another guy you're getting familiar with Dr. Edward Lifshitz. Good to have you with us, Doc. To my immediate left, Chief



Innovation Officer Beth Noveck – more from her soon. Beth, thank you for joining us. And to her left, Superintendent of the State Police Col. Pat Callahan, also and always honored to be joined by the Director of the Department of Homeland Security and Preparedness Jared Maples.

I mentioned yesterday, back to Beth for a second – I mentioned yesterday all the great work Beth's team is doing to keep our www.covid19.nj.gov (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov>) portal going and growing. And I asked her to join us today to give us some more color on all that goes into making that portal work.

Let's get to the overnight numbers if we can since we met yesterday. We have received another 2289 positive test results, bringing the statewide total to 11,124. Again, as usual, Judy will give you some more color on those positives' broad demographics, including county of residence. We are now into five digits as we predicted we would be soon, and we are about at the pace that we expected. And if that in and of itself isn't a reason to continue your social distancing and all the other efforts we are collectively doing to flatten the curve then please take this one to heart.

Over the past day, another 32 of our fellow blessed New Jerseyans have died because of COVID-19-related complications. This brings to a cumulative total of 140 invaluable, precious, nonexpendable souls who are no longer with us in the Garden State because of this virus. Let me put it this way. No one is getting graded on a curve for their social distancing. There's no opportunity for an A- or a B+ here. This is a pass/fail test. This is life and death.

Let me give you an example of something not to do, and we are not going to be shy about naming and shaming those who can't get this message into their heads. Last night, right here in Mercer County, Ewing Township Police broke up a party with 47 people including a DJ crammed into a 550 sq. ft. apartment. The organizer was charged as they should have been and deserve to be. I thank the Mercer County Prosecutor's Office for their work in addition to the Ewing Township Police Department as well.

This is not a game. It is critical that you stay at home unless you absolutely need to go out, or because we need you on the frontlines helping us respond to this crisis in whichever way we have asked you to help. For everybody else, stay home period. And if you do go out, whether it's to a supermarket or to a pharmacy, keep a safe six-foot distance from anybody else including family members or friends you may be with.

When you're at the grocery store for example, be mindful not just of your fellow shoppers but of the women and men working hard to put that toilet paper on the shelf for you, or ringing you up at the registers. I had a really powerful exchange this morning with another retail giant Stuart Appelbaum who is the head of the retail, wholesale and department store union nationwide. He's based in New York City; he's known to us. They've got thousands of their colleagues up and down this state. He wrote a really powerful op-ed in The Daily News that made the points that I'm making in terms of the retail workers on the frontlines of this response.

The federal bill that was signed by the President yesterday actually includes retail workers in the provision for daycare support which I think is a great point. And Stuart makes another point – still too many places in this country these workers are working for a pittance per hour. I'm proud, and we did it with the help of the likes of Stuart and his colleagues – I'm proud that we're on a path toward \$15 an hour minimum wage in New Jersey, which is the least we can do for these folks.

Likewise, when you go to go out to pick up dinner, which I think we're going to do again tonight, be mindful of the restaurant workers who need you to keep a safe distance so they can keep cooking and keep the food supply going. We are all in this together and I will end later with more on this.

On testing as a reminder, tomorrow Sunday March 29, only the testing site at Bergen Community College will be open of the two FEMA-run testing sites. Testing will begin at 8:00 AM and it will continue until 500 samples have been taken. On Monday March 30, only the PNC Bank Arts Center site of those two, by the way, will be open again at 8:00 AM and again will be capped at 500 samples. These are the two drive-through sites that we stood up with the help of FEMA.

So, today as you know, both sites are open, healthcare workers, first responders only today. Today, tomorrow, the day after, and every day until we tell you otherwise only people who are symptomatic, and then tomorrow we're going to go likely one on, one off. But at least Sunday I'm telling you that Bergen Community College will be open; on Monday it will be PNC Banks Arts Center, and we'll keep letting you know before each day. Again, you must be exhibiting symptoms of respiratory illness to get a test, and they check you by the way when you pull up. If you're not exhibiting the symptoms you are politely but firmly asked to leave the line.

With the new staggered schedule for these sites, I will not again, as I've promised, in my briefings which site will be open the following day. And the scheduled sites will also be available on our online portal again at www.covid19.nj.gov (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov>).

Additionally, as we have been over the past couple of weeks telling you when other testing sites are opening even if we are not, one of the sponsors in almost all of these cases – we are contributing in one form or another. Tomorrow, Bergen Newbridge Medical Center in Paramus will provide drive-through testing for symptomatic healthcare workers and first responders who live or work in Bergen County only. This will be by appointment only and you must first be prescreened via a telehealth interview by a doctor. That process by the way is now open and available at their website which is www.newbridgehealth.org (<http://www.newbridgehealth.org>), www.newbridgehealth.org (<http://www.newbridgehealth.org>). Again, this testing again is for symptomatic healthcare workers and first responders who live in Bergen County only. So, I want to tip my hat again to Newbridge for doing that.

Switching gears but an important one, today we are announcing a significant measure of mortgage relief for the many New Jersey families who are being directly impacted by this emergency and for whom that April 1st payment date loomed especially large and foreboding. Working alongside major national mortgage lenders including Citigroup, JP Morgan Chase, US Bank, Wells Fargo and I am proud to also note for the first time Bank of America, as well as many of our state-chartered lending institutions and mortgage servicers, we can announce today a 90-day grace period for mortgage payments for borrowers economically impacted by the COVID outbreak.

Importantly, for consumers who use this option this 90-day grace period cannot and will not be used to downgrade anyone's credit rating, and lenders will also waive any late fees or other costs which would otherwise arise because of this 90-day grace period. This program closely mirrors what the state of California under the strong leadership of my friend Governor Gavin Newsome was able to provide for their homeowners, and I thank the national lenders who are part of that agreement for working with us, as well as with all the state-level associations who worked with us on this for New Jersey.

And I'm especially proud, as I mentioned a minute ago, that we were able to bring Bank of America onboard with our plan. And again, I think we are the first state in America to do that with Bank of America. So, I tip my hat to them and to the extraordinary work of our colleagues, including the Commissioner of the Department of Banking and Insurance Marlene Caride.

Additionally, this announcement builds on the moratorium on removals of individuals pursuant to foreclosures or evictions that I previously instituted via executive order. Today, we are going further in announcing that these financial institutions are committing to not initiate foreclosure sales or eviction proceedings for at least 60 days. So, put together, a 90-day grace period and a moratorium on foreclosures and evictions means many New Jersey families can breathe easier, keep their heads above water and have a place they can continue to call home.

This is a very important note, because otherwise, you may come to us first, and while I hope we can be a source of information for you the first port of call if you're a homeowner should be contacting your lender directly to take advantage of this relief. As you can imagine, these lenders are experiencing a high volume of inquiries and they may recommend using online services when available.

So, as appreciative as I am of all the banks that signed onto this initiative, and I am, now is the time to do even more. I urge and expect our financial institutions and credit card companies to do the right thing in all areas of their businesses. That also means, for example, lowering credit card interest rates to reflect the reality that many families are living, to waive late fees and exercise compassion when people call with financial hardship. We all need to get through this together, and not just get through it but come out of it together.

As for renters, we have begun hearing stories of landlords who are attempting to evict tenants during this emergency. To any renter facing eviction let me be clear – under my executive order your landlord cannot kick you out of your home during this emergency period. And for any landlord who is getting mortgage relief today, we expect you will in turn provide similar relief to your tenants.

If you need rental assistance, I urge you to visit our online portal at www.covid19.nj.gov (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov>) to do a quick search for rental assistance, and you will find information and a link to the resources available through the Department of Community Affairs, which gives me a chance to give a big shoutout to Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver who continues to do an extraordinary job, not just as Lieutenant Governor and my partner but also as the leader of the Department of Community Affairs.

To every landlord, I cannot stress this enough – now is the time to show some compassion and to work with your renters, to ensure that they stay safe and in their homes. This is not the time to be raising rents, and as I mentioned you cannot evict anyone at this time. And if you try to, we are not going to take it lightly and we will make an example out of you for violating the law.

And to every utility provider that has voluntarily stopped all service shutoffs throughout this emergency, I also thank you for doing the right thing. The other day I noted that we gave our municipal water utilities a deadline to follow suit and halt shutoffs, and I'm proud that with very few exceptions we have received their cooperation. To the holdouts who have not yet responded you can expect a phone call from us, perhaps from me in short order, and I can assure you it will not be a pleasant conversation.

Switching gears yet again, we have talked many, many times about our desperate need for personal protective equipment or PPE for our frontline healthcare workers. This includes everything from N95 masks to gloves, face shields, gowns and the like. We continue to accept all PPE donations, and if you have PPE to donate I urge you to visit www.covid19.nj.gov/ppedonations (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov/ppedonations>) as you can see on the screens behind me to reach out. And our team will be in quick contact to accept your donations.

I've mentioned a lot of the corporate citizens who have stood tall over the past couple of weeks and they continue to. Even since we were together yesterday, I mentioned Apple already. Apple has informed me through the offices of Tim Cook and Lisa Jackson, even after yesterday's press gathering, that they're going to up their donation of N95 masks by 50%. They're one example of many right now who are standing tall.

So, in addition to the donations, though, we also recognize the need for us to work within our healthcare networks, to ensure that we are properly dispersing the PPE we receive, whether it's from the National Stockpile – more on that in a few minutes from Pat – or through donations. And we want to be able to do so proactively.

So, today I will sign – I didn't quite get it signed by the time I got here, but I will sign today an executive order requiring designated healthcare facilities including licensed acute care hospitals, long-term care facilities, and temporary medical facilities – Judy, I think at a minimum, right? – to report to the Department of Health and the Office of Emergency Management within the New Jersey State Police on a daily basis data concerning their capacity and supplies. And that will include things like bed capacity, ventilators and PPE.

This will allow us to more efficiently and effectively manage the flow of PPE and to have the most up-to-date data possible regarding our bed capacity. And we will establish a process that allows this information to be uploaded quickly and easily.

Having a clear understanding of where each hospital's inventory stands is critical, as I said, for us to make sure we're being proactive in distributing PPE. But it's even more important as hospitals begin expanding their capacities as we have directed them to and as our Level I hospitals prepare to help us administer the field medical stations that are being created in partnership with the US Army Corps of Engineers.

Make no mistake, I am continuing to fight, we all are every single day alongside our Federal Delegation for the essential PPE we need from the National Stockpile. We've gotten some of our request but not nearly all of what we need, and I won't stop burning up the phone lines to the White House until we get all that we need.

Our centralized Procurement and Donations Management Teams continue to pursue all available PPE in the private market as well. We are truly leaving no stone unturned when it comes to ensuring that our frontline responders have the protective equipment that they need. But until we know that we all have that which we need, we need to pull together to make sure that what we have is being properly distributed. So, let's not just take stock of what we have; let's make sure that we distribute it as effectively and efficiently as possible.

I had a good, private, one-on-one conversation with President Trump yesterday afternoon. I thanked him for the support that has already come our way – FEMA for the testing sites, the Army Corps for the field hospitals. He and the Vice President have heard at almost every step, almost every day the urgent need we have of PPE – thankful for what we've gotten but acknowledging we need a lot more.

And so, a couple things since that conversation. Following that and conversations again throughout the week with the Vice President we got another slug of PPE out of the federal stockpile shipped overnight. Pat Callahan will go through exactly what we got in a minute so we are thankful for that. Again, we have a long way to go but I thanked the President and Vice President for the support there.

I also asked President Trump formally yesterday, we had submitted a written request but formally asked him to federalize the National Guard. Indeed last night, so only a couple of hours after he and I spoke, we received approval from the Department of Defense to deploy the New Jersey National Guard as necessary to help us through this crisis. And again, I want to thank President Trump and Vice President Pence and Secretary Dr. Mark Esper for their timely response to our request.

I'm going to call an audible as they say in football. Pat, two things. Number one, can you run through what we got overnight, and secondly can you give us a 20-second summary of the conversation you and the team had this morning with Dr. Eastman who I believe is the Senior Medical Officer of the Department of Homeland Security?

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: That's correct, Governor. With regard to the shipment that came last night, almost 121,000 N95 masks, 287,000 surgical masks, over 62,000 face shields, over 51,000 surgical gloves, more than 3500 coveralls, more than 368,000 pairs of gloves and 1000 medical beds.

And as a direct I think result of your conversation with the President yesterday, Governor, this morning the folks on our team met with Dr. Eastman who is the Senior Medical Officer with regards to him making sure that he fast tracks any of the requests we have through FEMA Region 2; and basically just, for more than an hour assured us that in any way, shape or form, that he could fulfill – whether it's through regulation or actual equipment or ventilator needs. A high-level discussion but it was indicative of our phenomenal relationship with FEMA which continues. Thanks, Gov.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you, Pat, and thank you for all your leadership, all of the above.

To another important point, the federal bill the President signed yesterday is, as I have said, a welcome first step in helping us as a state make it through this emergency. But it is a welcome step but we're going to need more. We will undoubtedly need more. And I am committed to working alongside our Federal Delegation and my fellow Governors and their respective delegations in fact to get more. That's my job as Governor.

But you all have a job to play in all of this, too. So much of what we get from Washington is determined by the Census and I can't put it anymore plainly. We know that we were undercounted in 2010 and because of that we are right now leaving critical federal aid on the table. So, take a moment. Please go online as you can see behind me, www.2020census.gov (<http://www.2020census.gov>) and make sure you are counted in the Census.

The Census is not just a number. It's how we as a state qualify for literally tens of billions of dollars in federal funds. And right now we need every penny more than ever before. Being counted in the Census is something you can do while at the same time practicing that critical social distancing.

Finally, before I turn things over to Judy, thanks to the guy two to my left Col. Pat Callahan I'd like to lift up the words of Father Jim Greenfield, President of DeSales University across the Delaware River from us in Pennsylvania. In a recent homily during an online service, Father Jim, as I understand he likes to be referred to, urged his congregation not to think of what we're all doing as social distancing but rather as social solidarity. And I think that's an incredibly important point, and I referred to this phenomenon yesterday. And look at these blessed healthcare workers in the images behind me.

We are by nature a social species. Staying apart from our friends and neighbors and even from our families is not human nature. But doing so right now is critically important for us to break the back of that curve and to flatten it, and to emerge from this emergency stronger than ever before. We are all in this together as one New Jersey family. We may be literally apart right now but in many respects we are as close to each other as we have ever been before, with one big challenging common enemy.

We are united in our fight. We are pulling our family and ourselves through this together. And that, in every respect, is social solidarity. So, New Jersey, keep practicing not just your social distancing but your social solidarity. Do it for yourself, for your immediate family, your friends, and for every single one of the 9 million members of our New Jersey family.

As I've said before, we will unequivocally get through this together but only if each one of us, each of the 9 million of us including yours truly does their part, does their share big and small. And in those moments of isolation, in those moments of loneliness when you may think that you're all by yourself, remember that we are all in this together. And in that respect, we're developing a bond which will become unbreakable, and because of that we will win. Just as we won WWII we will win this war together, as one New Jersey family stronger than ever before.

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

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

Before I provide today's update on new cases I also would like to acknowledge and salute the hard work and dedication of our healthcare workers, our first responders and the staff in long-term care settings who are caring for patients on the frontlines of this public health crisis.

I also want to thank employees in grocery stores, pharmacies, gas stations and on maintenance crews who are working hard every day to ensure that food and other essentials are available. They are all heroes and we thank them for keeping things going. However, I want them to take care of themselves. We need them. They're essential for a reason.

For grocery store clerks and others who interact closely with the public, please try to maintain as much social distancing as you can carry out your essential duties. After each interaction, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. If you are sick, stay home. Please consider that repeated use of the same gloves between customers can actually be worse than not wearing gloves at all, because the gloves could be contaminated with the virus. And you could be spreading coronavirus around. Wash your hands with hand sanitizer as much as you can.

I know many of our frontline healthcare workers, especially those who work in long-term care settings with outbreaks, particularly in the hot zones, are fearful of the weeks ahead – fearful that they will not have the necessary protections that they need to stay healthy so that they can continue taking care of their patients. I want to assure you that our leaders – Governor Murphy, State Police Superintendent Callahan, myself, all of our teams – are doing everything possible to get as much PPE, personal protective equipment, as we can.

We're monitoring the number of critical care beds particularly in northern New Jersey, and we know that the CEOs of our hospitals are doing everything to increase that capacity. They are also working together and collaborating to make sure that the necessary equipment, particularly ventilators, are available for the patients who need them.

This morning I had a meeting and spoke with New Jersey Hospital Association President Cathy Bennet. The Hospital Association is working with us and we are doing as much as we possibly can to increase, again, the number of critical care beds and also the number of ventilators. As of the data from this morning from our major laboratories – and as of this time, 95% of the commercial labs are sending us information – there were 29,822 tests performed. 29,822 tests of which 10,436 tested positive, for an overall positivity rate of 34.99%.

Now, as I've said, confirmed cases are rising quickly and today we are reporting 2289 new cases, for a total of 11,124 cases in the state. As the Governor shared, sadly we're reporting 32 new deaths. Those deaths were in the following counties: Bergen and Union each have seven; Middlesex has five; Morris three; two each in Hudson, Passaic and Essex Counties; and there was one death each in Ocean, Somerset, Warren and Sussex Counties.

Of the deaths we are reporting today, 20 are male, 12 are female. The age range is 30 years to 100 years. Cases with underlying conditions of the ones we know, 12 of the 32 have underlying conditions. The rest are under investigation. There were no deaths reported today associated with a long-term care facility. We offer our condolences to all of the families who have lost loved ones.

As of the data available today, 71 facilities in our long-term care facilities are reporting at least one case of coronavirus. Yesterday it was 55; today it's 71 of the 375 long-term care facilities in New Jersey.

The breakdown of new cases by county is as follows: Atlantic 4, Bergen 250, Burlington 27, Camden 28, Cumberland 2, Essex 197, Gloucester 8, Hudson 155, Hunterdon 7, Mercer 36, Middlesex 126, Monmouth 122, Morris 42, Ocean 86, Passaic 88, Somerset 28, Sussex 13, Union 132, Warren 9. There are approximately 928 cases that we're still gathering information on.

The new cases today include 160 new positives received from the mass testing sites. There have been a total of 662 positive cases since testing started at the mass testing sites. Thank you.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you, Judy. As is my wont, just to remind folks as of total cases so far by county, Bergen is number one and it has been number one – 1838; Essex number two and it has been number two now for a number of days, 1086; Middlesex 808; Monmouth 781; Hudson 771; and then right behind Hudson is Union County with 742. Thank you, Judy, for that and for everything you and your team are doing.

Beth Noveck and I met a couple of years ago and hers was a name that I had heard from her time working with the Obama Administration, and if that weren't enough her time advising David Cameron as his time as Prime Minister as well as my friend, the Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel. And so, I thought to myself man, that is a... You know by the company you keep. That's keeping really serious company.

And Beth has been our Chief Innovation Officer and has had a huge impact with her extraordinary, small – she'll remind me – but extraordinary team across a whole number of fronts, none more so than helping us set up the all-encompassing www.covid19.nj.gov (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov>) website.

I thought it made sense to invite Beth to join us today and to share with you a little bit more detail and a little bit more texture in and around this site, what you can expect and some color behind each of the facets. So, with that please help me welcome Beth Noveck.

Chief Innovation Officer Beth Noveck: Governor, thank you very much.

I wanted to give a little color, as you say, about the ways in which technology, data and innovation are helping us to play a really key role, to provide the public with up-to-date information and also drive data-driven decision making for all of our leaders here.

In addition to the many people who have been thanked already and who deserve our thanks for being on the frontlines of this every day, I also want to thank my, as you said small but mighty team at the Office of Innovation and the many volunteers who are working with us, who are really truly working around the clock for their dedication and their long hours here.

But all of the work that we're doing and the reason we're able to be effective as a small team is because we are collaborating with all of our colleagues and their agencies at this table and many other departments, as well as between the public and private sector across the state to deliver a number of projects that I want to bring to your attention and hope that they are of use.

So, the Governor has already mentioned many times, and you can see the URL up on the screen, the COVID-19 information up that we have made available. We have already have 1.6 million people who have visited this site. There are updates made a dozen times a day in terms of new information, and collectively our team has pushed out more than 12,000 content updates including key points you've just heard the Governor talk about. So, you can go there to find up-to-the-minute information.

Articles range in topics from benefits and housing protections to guidance for businesses and healthcare professionals, resources for the disabled and answers to your science and healthcare questions about the virus. The site is now available in Spanish as well as in English, so you can go in there, search for information. It's fully bilingual, the site. This could not have been possible in the time that it was done without the generous volunteer support from our corporate partners at Yext who helped us to stand this up.

There is also, you will find from this same site, right front and center is the symptom checker. You can also get there from www.self.covid19.nj.gov (<http://www.self.covid19.nj.gov>). That is the place in which you can get answers to your questions about what to do if you have a fever or a cough. The anonymous data that the site collects also lets us know where the virus is spreading and where to anticipate spikes, and we were very glad to develop this in partnership with the Department of Health. And we've already had 129,000 people use this site since we've stood it up.

For businesses, there's a business information hub – www.cv.business.nj.gov (<http://www.cv.business.nj.gov>). We've had on this site already 270,000 individual users who have viewed over 800,000 pages on this site; and I might add over 8000 live chat sessions. That is, as a business you can go in 13 hours a day, seven days a week. Our colleagues at the Department of State's Business Action Center, also the EDA and the Office of Innovation are all chipping in to provide assistance at peak traffic times and answer your questions in real time.

So, in less than two weeks we've had over 250,000 businesses use this hub, and again, lots of action there and we hope answers to your business questions. Yesterday, for example, working with EDA and the BAC we were the primary place to go for answers about EDA's forthcoming business assistance programs.

In addition, for businesses and for job seekers there is a job portal. That was the first portal stood up in the nation, the first one to launch to provide, in less than 72 hours, information for job seekers about new jobs that are available to people. There are 43,000 jobs that are listed on that site from 435 different employers. Those are jobs that range in salaries of \$11 to \$75 an hour, but also salaried positions in excess of \$100,000. The jobs range from warehouse workers and delivery drivers to civil engineers and registered nurses.

And we stood it up really fast, again, in 72 hours. So, bear with us. We're improving it as we go to make it more searchable for you, to make it easier to find different industries and find different jobs. But we hope that this is of some use.

In addition, we are seeing as we already heard an outpouring of support in terms of donations of personal protective equipment. If you have personal protective equipment to donate, please go to www.covid19.nj.gov/ppedonatoin (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov/ppedonatoin>), that's all lower-case, www.covid19.nj.gov/ppedonations

(<http://www.covid19.nj.gov/ppedonations>). We stood this up just a day ago and already 203 people have committed to donations.

And yes, we've had the big companies you've talked about but there's also a dentist in Edison, New Jersey who's donating 20 surgical masks; there's a yacht company in Bats River Township which has offered to donate more than 180 N95s. So, we're just thrilled. Every little bit counts, whether it's big or small and we want to really thank you for your donation.

Related to that, businesses were required as of 5:00 last night to comply with Executive Order 109 and to inventory any PPE that they have. If you've missed the deadline the site is still up – please comply with the requirement and go up there as already 3700 businesses have done to let us know what PPE you have in the event that we need it.

Medical volunteers, www.covid19.nj.gov/volunteers (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov/volunteers>). We have already had in the last 24 hours 2000 people who have volunteered. If you're a doctor, you're a nurse, you're a healthcare worker of any kind we desperately need your assistance. And we've had offers of volunteers from nearly 600 zip codes, both from New Jersey but also from around the country who have offered their assistance to our residents.

Finally, last project I want to mention is a site that we've stood up to report violations. This is www.covid19.nj.gov/violations (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov/violations>). That's meant to streamline the reporting of violations of Executive Order 107 and to alleviate the call center volume. So, if you see something say something. Let us know there. We've worked hard with the Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness to stand up a very simple form which the public can use to report potential violations.

So, these are some of the projects that we've been able to make available in the last week and we look forward to doing our part. And I want to thank everybody for their collaboration in making it possible to get out this information to people; and to get in, above all, your offers of help and assistance for which we're very grateful. Thank you.

Governor Phil Murphy: Beth, cannot thank you and your team enough. That's the website. It's, as you've just heard, multifaceted, all-encompassing. It gets more robust by the day almost, that's literally the case. We think we were the first state in America to establish this and we wouldn't have been able to do so without Beth, without your work and without your team's help. This is a great first place to go if you've got questions as you've heard from all different varieties that reflect the impact of this challenge that we're in the midst of, so thank you.

There are, as we've already discussed, an extraordinary group of folks who have lost their lives, 140 at this point, of all shapes and sizes. We can probably say something about, in fact we could say something about each and every one of them and in a perfect world we would. And we're trying to find ways that each one of these precious lives are remembered and memorialized and celebrated for all they did during their lives.

So, when you start to mention some and not others it can be implied almost as a disrespect for those that you don't mention, so I don't mean any disrespect but for those who remember watching Desperately Seeking Susan, Mark Blum is a victim of the coronavirus. Born in Newark, grew up in Maplewood, an outstanding action of both stage and screen; a real Jersey guy. You know, we mention a lot of the talent we have in this state and he was high on that list. So, our thoughts and prayers go out to Mark's wife and his family, and to everybody who's lost their lives.

And just to remind ourselves that the beat goes on in life even away from the coronavirus, the dad of one of our colleagues Darryl Isherwood's dad Dave Isherwood passed away, not of corona to the best of my knowledge. Former Deputy Mayor in Livingston, a giant. I think he lived to the age of 89, known to many in Livingston and beyond. And again, his son Darryl works with us and is an outstanding colleague and professional. So, we take our hat off to him.

And on a lighter note, but importantly you mentioned Yext and I had given them a shoutout a week ago, Beth. But it's fair to say this site wouldn't have taken place without their partnership, so I want to repeat in their own way they've contributed mightily to our efforts.

With that, I think we're going to start questions. Matt, we'll go right to left and then sweep back across if that's okay. And we'll start, John, with you.

Q&A Session:

John Mooney, NJ Spotlight: Earlier this afternoon the President mentioned the possibility of putting New York, New Jersey and parts of Connecticut in a quarantine. Did he mention any of that to you in your phone call? Are you aware of that? And you and other Governors have talked about the difficulty in purchasing PPE, particularly ventilators. In all your cooperation have you talked about forming a regional or state-based consortium to purchase PPE to prevent the types of blockages in buying them as individual states? You've talked about financial aid for hospital systems. There are systems in South Carolina and Ohio that are laying off and furloughing workers. Are you looking at any financial stress test for hospitals right now? And there's some confusion about wearing face masks. Has the CDC said anything to the state about the possibility that Americans should be wearing face masks in the coming weeks?

Governor Phil Murphy: I did not have any part of the conversation with the President yesterday, which was very productive I might add, nothing on quarantine came up. I literally saw the story as I was walking into this room. I've got no more color on it. There's no question, the greater New York Metropolitan Area is the number one hotspot in America right now. It's not the only hotspot but it's the number one in terms of number of cases. And until further notified, we're going to keep doing exactly what we're doing because we believe the data and the facts are on our side in terms of this aggressive – as aggressive as any American state right now in terms of social distancing and flattening the curve.

Do we consider regularly taking further steps? You bet, whether prompted by the President or more often than not on our own. And so, we'll continue to be as aggressive as we've been and not let up. I don't know of any consortium conversations about ventilator purchases – not a crazy idea by any means. There's a lot of coordination. Ned Lamont just reached out to be on something as I was sitting here. There's a lot of coordination with our regional partners and there's a lot of best practices that we can learn from other Governors who may not be contiguous to our reason. And the last thing we need to do is to be bumping into each other in the acquisition market, which has happened.

Layoffs or furloughs, to the best of my knowledge I've heard nothing. Judy, have you heard anything as it relates to hospitals or healthcare systems?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Not in New Jersey, no.

Governor Phil Murphy: Not in New Jersey. In fact, to the contrary we're going the other way. We need all hands on deck. And CDC on face masks, you or Ed should weigh in. Literally in the New York Times today there's an article, you may have seen this – it may be the genesis, John, of your question – that there's a revisiting... Because we heard a few weeks ago that face masks weren't really as efficacious as we might think they are when we put them on, and there was sort of a reconsideration of that at least in the press as I saw today. Judy or Ed, anything from the CDC side?

DOH Medical Director, Communicable Disease Service, Dr. Ed Lifshitz: Yeah, let me talk a little bit about face masks and what they can do and what they can't do, and why there's this question in general. Face masks, which people put over their faces, are effective at preventing bigger droplets from either getting out if you're coughing or getting in if somebody's coughing on you. It's very important that people who are ill, for example, if they're around people wear these masks 'cause that can prevent them from spewing droplets and infecting other people.

If you're close to somebody who is also infectious they can have some effect, not as good as the N95s at being able to keep out the small particles but they can keep out those larger particles and have an effect as well. The issue about using them routinely is how often are you coming into contact with somebody who's sick and spewing you with larger particles where that face mask will give you protection?

And there are several reasons why you might think that you might not want to wear a face mask. First, you've heard us talk about PPE shortages and so forth, so if all of a sudden we're saying that everyone in America should be wearing them you'd have that issue and concern. The second is that it can actually make things worse, 'cause people who wear face masks, particularly those who aren't used to wearing them very commonly do things like this – they readjust, they touch, they move around their face and other things. And if I'm touching my eyes with my contaminated hands that can be worse than wearing nothing at all. And the face mask itself may get contaminated, and when you go to take it off, now I've contaminated my hands. Again, if I'm not used to doing this and I don't use hand hygiene or wash my hands, then I may again infect myself.

So, we have heard the rumors that CDC may change their recommendation. We certainly know that other countries do it differently, and I certainly see arguments on both sides as to whether you should wear a face mask or not.

Governor Phil Murphy: Ed, thank you, and obviously if we get more direction from the CDC we'll make sure you all hear that. Elise, good afternoon.

Elise Young, Bloomberg: Good afternoon. A couple of questions: during your conversation with the President yesterday did you bring up ventilators specifically and did you get any reassurance that any will be on their way? And in New Jersey, have any hospitals reached their census maximum? Are any hospitals on diversion? And have any hospitals exhausted their supplies of ventilators?

Governor Phil Murphy: Elise, ventilators did not come up specific in that conversation but they've come up in virtually every conversation that we've had. Pat was on with the FEMA folks and is on with them constantly. We were on with them on ventilators this morning. As a general matter, PPE comes up all the time but again, my specific... We did get a slug of PPE post this conversation. My specific ask was in and around getting the National Guard to get federalized which was an urgent request of ours. Judy, any comment on maxing out in terms of hospital capacities?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Sure, a couple things. First, on the ventilators, at this point it's getting more than a little tight with the ventilators, so there are hospitals working with one another and moving equipment around. We were able to send out... We had asked for 400 ventilators; we got 200. We were able in the past week to send out I think about 65 to hospitals that had urgent needs. We're convening our professional advisory group to talk about the concept of co-venting which has been approved at this point. That's where you can use one ventilator to support two individuals, to be prepared for the possibility of that down the road.

It was reported this morning in my conversation with Cathy Bennett, the President of the Hospital Association that a couple of hospitals in the north went on divert. It was not a PPE issue as much as a person-power issue. Some individuals went home, not feeling well and not enough healthcare workers in their emergency rooms. So, that's being handled on a regional basis at this point.

So, as I reported yesterday the north is really feeling the stress right now, so our goal is to work with the hospitals, increase their critical care capacity, give them the equipment that they need to the degree we have it and give them the guidance that they need if they have to start sharing equipment. And we would only do that along with the guidance of the CDC and FDA and safely.

Governor Phil Murphy: I think you know this just from yesterday, I believe yesterday, that we have sort of gone... Judy just referred to this, but to be more efficient in our beds, in our equipment, in our manpower we've gone to our north/central/south regional strategy, which in the past couple of days has proven to have been a very smart move for us. But again, there's more coming at us, let there be no doubt about it. Elise?

Elise Young, Bloomberg: A follow-up: how many hospitals are on diversion or can you name which hospitals are?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: I don't have that in front of me. I'll be able to get that to you for sure. We actually have a map with the counties and the hospitals that are in those counties, you might be able to bring it forth. It's a great slide.

Governor Phil Murphy: Do we have, which map, sorry?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: We have a map at the Department of Health that identifies the regions and the hospitals within those regions.

Governor Phil Murphy: Mahen, do you have that slide in the can here? We do not, okay.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: I'll try to get it.

Governor Phil Murphy: Can we have that maybe on Monday? That'd be great. Sir?

Reporter: Talking about the changing face of policing, and this may be for the Colonel. What are some of the things... Can you talk about what police are doing from a dispatcher's asking information to a police officer walking into a scene, if it's in a house or somewhere – what are some of the things they're doing to keep themselves protected as well?

Governor Phil Murphy: Sure, I mean as we've noted, not only are healthcare workers our heroes at the point of attack but they are joined in that reality by our first responders and not very far behind them essential retail workers. And getting them tested and protected are our highest priorities, which is why we've got two sites today dedicated exclusively to that. Pat, could you give a little bit more color in terms of protocols and protections for our first responders up and down the state?

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: Sure, Governor. To the one critical point that the Attorney General worked tirelessly with Commissioner Persichilli's legal staff was with regards to basically getting a waiver for the addresses of COVID-positive patients to be released to our Operational Dispatch Units throughout the state, so that when an officer or a trooper was arriving on scene it was basically a flag in the system. We didn't go as far as name at this point; that's certainly under consideration. But at least to give that responding officer a head's up in order to make sure that they properly don their mask as well as their gloves.

And as far as the guidance, the Attorney General put out guidance. We also have guidance from the International Association of Chiefs of Police that has been distributed, and we are on almost-daily phone calls with executives... We do a daily phone call every day, a COVID-19 call. As I indicated yesterday, I was on with 800 officers on a call every day, and this is where we stress the guidance and what the protocols are for when you arrive at these locations. And if you have any doubt, we ask them to just act as if that person is symptomatic with COVID-19.

Governor Phil Murphy: Pat, I know you mentioned, you and I mentioned over the past number of days at least two officers who were in tough shape but who were, God willing it sounded like they were improving. Is that still the case and anything else there?

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: That is the case and also daily, Governor, we track every single police officer who's positive and who is quarantined at home. At this juncture there's more than 700 police officers quarantined at home and there's about the same amount of number that have tested positive from all 21 counties.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you for that. Charlie?

Charlie Kratovil, New Brunswick Today: Yes, thank you, Governor. Regarding your upcoming executive order, the daily data, will that be public – shared with the press and the public?

Governor Phil Murphy: Will that be public? I actually don't know. I think we said it would be uploaded, right?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: It'll be uploaded to a dashboard. Portions of it will definitely be public. It's going to have a lot of items on it that are for probably internal decision making, but I see no reason why not.

Governor Phil Murphy: Let's come back to that. Matt Platkin's with us. Matt?

Chief Counsel Matt Platkin: Some of the data might be confidential and proprietary data to the hospitals as well as confidential health data about people there. So, we'll certainly as we have been make public whatever we can and be as transparent as possible.

Governor Phil Murphy: Yeah, that would be our default position is to give you as much as we can but for privacy considerations. Priority though would be for our professionals to maximize their ability to handle this crisis obviously.

Charlie Kratovil, New Brunswick Today: And starting when would that be?

Governor Phil Murphy: I think we said Monday, right?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: We're starting the reporting on Monday. It'll take us a number of days to refine the data and to confirm the data, so maybe by the end of next week?

Governor Phil Murphy: We're going to get it beginning on Monday but bear with us.

Charlie Kratovil, New Brunswick Today: One more on voter registration. I know the League of Women Voters, ACLU and Institute for Social Justice sent you and the Secretary of State a letter. Board of Elections offices are closed, MVC is closed – a lot of ways people normally register are not available to them. Speaking of innovation, will you be able to get the online voter registration up earlier and would you consider waiving the 21-day requirement to register before an election?

Governor Phil Murphy: Matt, you tell me if I'm wrong about this – we'd need a law to go to online voter registration, which is something frankly that I would actually welcome. But the answer is, as a general matter, we're reconsidering. And as I've said to you in some of our answers the past couple of days, balancing that life has to go on particularly democracy and the exercise of our sacred right to vote, with an acknowledgement that we're in a crisis which is unlike what we've ever dealt with before. So, that's sort of been guiding our decisions, to strike that balance and we'll continue to strike it. Thank you. Brent?

Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger: Three quick things – mortgages, will they be due in one lump sum after the 90 days? And it's only for people who have been affected by this and what is the qualification for that? Two, can we have an update on hospitalized patients? And three, I missed the PPE equipment that came from the federal government, so maybe even afterwards if I can get a rundown?

Governor Phil Murphy: Sure. On mortgages, and Matt, correct me if I'm wrong here – this is going to depend on your relationship with your particular bank and that's the place folks should go. Most I believe are just adding, if you have a grace period of two or three months now it's being added on the backend of your mortgage. I believe that's the practice that is most common, but in terms of your qualification and exactly how that plays out it's between mortgage payer and the bank that is providing it or servicing it. Is that about right?

Chief Counsel Matt Platkin: Generally, yeah. We've spoken to all the major banks that we don't regulate as well as the state-chartered banks and their associations that we do. Our clear expectation is that they will tack three months onto the end of the mortgage and not have one lump sum payment. They've all said that they intend to do that and have expressed that commitment. The one caveat is that some of the federal loans we don't have jurisdiction over and they have to follow federal guidance, which is why that language is in the release. But yeah, we've been pretty direct.

Gov, if I can just one quick follow-up on the online voter registration. We did sign a law that would allow that to be in effect. However, as we haven't implemented it and we are exploring whether that's a possibility.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you, Matt. Hospitalizations, Judy?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: That'll be part of the dashboard.

Governor Phil Murphy: Nothing to add today?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Nothing to add today.

Governor Phil Murphy: And PPE, real quick, Pat, just give us a quick summary again of what we got overnight.

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: Real quick, almost 121,000 N95s, over 287,000 surgical masks, over 62,000 face shields, over 51,000 surgical gowns, over 3500 coveralls, over 368,000 gloves and 1000 medical beds.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you for that. John?

John Mooney, NJ Spotlight: Just to follow up on the ventilators and some of the PPE. You said you got 200 more ventilators? Can you detail where they came from? The 3700 businesses that filled out their survey by the end of Friday, any word on how much and what kinds? Any more specifics on the equipment that we're getting from that?

Governor Phil Murphy: So, the 200 ventilators, do you happen to know where they came from?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: We got that from the National Stockpile.

Governor Phil Murphy: It was the National Stockpile? And then, any results from the survey that we required folks to fill out by Friday, last night? I think the answer is no.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Yeah, I don't have that together yet.

Governor Phil Murphy: Too early to tell. Everybody okay?

So, thank you all. I want to begin by thanking the folks to my right at the Department of Health, the Commissioner and the extraordinary Judy Persichilli; to her right, Dr. Ed Lifshitz. Thank you, both, and to all of your colleagues. To my immediate left, Beth Noveck – thank you for everything you've done to make that website a reality, to make it even more powerful and valuable with each passing day. Col. Pat Callahan for everything; Director Maples, likewise.

Again, the way we'll leave this is for tomorrow we will put out anything that you need in terms of overnight data electronically. If we collectively make the decision, and ultimately that'll be in my hands that we think we either need to be with you physically in person if there's news to report or if we need to get on the phone, Mahen and team will get the word out. And then, otherwise we'll be back together Monday at 2:00 PM in this very room unless you hear otherwise.

I want to repeat and end where we have ended most of these gatherings, to say unequivocally that we will get through this together – not without a price to pay as we've already seen 140 precious lives have been lost. Bless each and every one of them. We will not come through this unscathed. I'm sure we won't come through this without mistake but we will come

through this assuming each and every one of us, all 9 million of us does our part, from the little washing our hands with soap and water up to the big heroic work on behalf of our healthcare workers, first responders and others at the point of attack.

I'd love to tell you that we'll be out of this in the next couple of days – that's not the case. I've said pretty clearly over the past number of days, the number of positive tests is going to continue to go up dramatically. That's partly due to community spread; that's overwhelmingly due to opening up testing, again, still of symptomatic people. And that's been our focus from day one.

That's not all bad news, those positive tests. It allows these folks the data they need to much more aggressively and thoroughly deal with this. We will pay any price to save any one life. That number we would love to see never go up, and there's no amount of any acceptance of that number to continue to go up. Sadly, it most likely will. Again, there's no price too high for us to pay to be on the battlefield saving each and every one of those lives.

I remind you again, this is war. It's no time to panic. We win wars because we're smart, aggressive, we shoot straight with each other. We come together as one extraordinary New Jersey family. We don't cut and run; we don't turn on each other. But together, we fight the war, we win the war, and we come out of it as one family in New Jersey stronger than ever before. Thank you, all.

Governor Phil Murphy

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