

Governor Phil Murphy

TRANSCRIPT: July 8th, 2020 Coronavirus Briefing Media

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Holding a COVID-19 briefing. WATCH:



Governor Phil Murphy: Good afternoon, everyone. I'm honored to be joined by the woman who needs no introduction, to my right, the Commissioner of the Department of Health, Judy Persichilli. To her right, the Department of Health's Communicable Disease Service Medical Director, another familiar face, Dr. Ed Lifshitz. State Police Superintendent, Colonel Pat Callahan, is not with us today as he is with his wife, Linda, who by the way, let's remind everyone is a nurse, Judy, who is recovering from cancer surgery. I am happy to report that she is doing well and we all wish her a speedy recovery. She is a real gem, as is Pat, and I look forward to having Pat by our side again when we see you again on Friday.

And I will take this opportunity, if I may, to once again call on the State Senate to confirm Pat as the Superintendent of the New Jersey State Police. Pat has spent his entire career serving the people of New Jersey, and whose work throughout this pandemic has literally saved the lives of countless New Jerseyans. He is more than deserving of a hearing and a confirmation vote.

Now we have a lot of ground to cover, and I would just ask you with your questions, please be as economical as possible. Yesterday, I just want to say, and I'm not talking about who won or who lost, but I'm talking about our early sense of the elections yesterday, a hybrid model, as you all know, a big dose of vote by mail, and some dose of in-person voting. I'm not suggesting that in every single case it was perfect, but overwhelmingly, we believe early returns, anecdotally, are that it worked very, very well. I can save a question, which is when do we make the decision on what November's going to look like? Just, we're not there yet. But whatever decision we make on November, we'll make it sufficiently early enough so that not only can we learn from any kinks we may have had in the system, but we can give folks as long a runway as possible.

I want to give a particular shout out to our Secretary of State, Tahesha Way, to her and her team, I think they did an extraordinary job. I also want to give a shout out to General Jemal Beale, and I was honored to pin his second star on him this morning. That is because quite quietly, in civilian clothes, just to be there as surge manpower capacity, I'm not sure we actually ever spoke about it at one of our press conferences, Judy, but the National Guard was around the state to be there, just again in civilian clothes, to be there in case we needed help at the polling places, so I also want to give General Beale a shout out, and again, Tahesha Way her team did an extraordinary job. I want to say before I go on that I'm honored as well to have Jared Maples, the Director of the Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness with us today.

So with that, today I am signing an Executive Order requiring the wearing of face coverings by everyone when they are in outdoor public spaces and social distancing is not practicable. This is absolutely vital when individuals find themselves in a crowded situation, such as when walking down a packed boardwalk or an a line that is not properly spaced apart. The only exceptions for this requirement will be, and Judy will correct the record of I don't get this right, individuals who are clearly eating and drinking at an outdoor dining establishment. Secondly, those for whom wearing a face covering endangers their health for safety. And thirdly, children under the age of two years old. I am proud that we were the first state to require face coverings in indoor businesses as we gradually reopen them. given what we know about the behavior of this virus indoors, that was the right call from the get go and it has saved lives. And today's order reiterate our existing policy by requiring masks in indoor spaces accessible by the public, again with exceptions for those with medical conditions, and those kids under two years old. Requiring masks outdoors is a step frankly that I had hoped we would not have to take, and by and large New Jerseyans by the millions have been outstanding in their compliance when masking up to go outside, as it was our strong recommendation. But unfortunately, we have been seeing a backslide in compliance as the weather has gotten warmer and not surprisingly, as a result, our rate of transmission has similarly crept up.

Wearing a face covering, I remind you, is not about politics. It's about quite simply being sick or being healthy. It's about life and death. It's about showing others that you care about their health, especially if you've not been tested and you don't know if you're an asymptomatic carrier of the coronavirus. It's about showing your community what side you're on in the fight against COVID-19. Trust me, this virus doesn't care what political party you belong to. It doesn't care what you may or may not think about masking up. It doesn't care about you or your family. It frankly just wants to kill you and move on to the next victim. It does care, however, if you wear a mask, period, full stop. Remember, folks, there's no vaccine. There is no proven therapeutic. There's no cure. There's social distancing, covering your face, washing your hands with soap and water. If you don't feel well, staying away from everybody. That's it. That's all that we've got to rely on. As I said, I am gratified. We've said this, I think, every single day. I'm gratified, Judy, Ed, the rest of us are hugely gratified by the tremendous numbers of New Jerseyans who had been doing the right thing, who had been masking up, and who had been tremendous role models not just for your neighbors but for the out-of-staters coming to visit us.

But with all that's going on around the nation. We have to continue to be an example of how a state rallies together to beat back COVID-19. So please, please, please mask up, cover up before you step out. Show your community that you care about them. Remember, it's common sense for the common good. It's an homage to your family, your friends, your neighbors, your community. It's a statement that you care not just selfishly about yourself, but you're making a step, and a signal that you're giving that you care about them.

So we're also making a change that will allow for more restaurants to offer outdoor dining. After close consultation with Judy and the health team, we will be explicitly allowing areas with fixed roofs that have two open sides comprising at least 50% of the total wall space to be considered outdoors in light of their airflow. Again, two open sides with at least 50% of the wall space. If you can open that up, that's going to be considered outdoor dining. I'm pleased that many of our peer states are now following our lead and pushing back the resumption of indoor dining. We have made many very difficult decisions based on the metrics and public health guidelines, and this certainly was one of the most difficult, obviously and in particular for our restaurant community. I have nothing but sympathy for the business and employees impacted but we're just not ready to open up indoor dining. But again, we must put public health over politics and as numerous states and frankly, counties and cities nationwide follow our lead, we know it's the right call.

Next, I know that yesterday was a challenging first day back for everyone at the Motor Vehicle Commission. By the way, it sounds like day number two is not much less challenging either, and I completely understand the frustration felt by every customer forced to wait on long lines as we reopen and deal with the months and months of backlog due to the closures caused by the pandemic. What many experienced yesterday and it feels like perhaps again today, and my guess is this is going to go on for a bit, was not up to their expectations or ours, and we will do better. If you're not happy, I would just want to tell you something. You're upset about this, so am I, and frankly, so is Chief Administrator Sue Fulton. She recognizes this as well and is committed to meeting the needs of our residents and motorists. We are going to work harder and work better to deliver a better experience.

So, to ensure that the MVC does not go understaffed, I am exempting MVC personnel from any work furloughs. We need to have literally every hand on deck, every day, serving the public. Additionally, MVC will remain open on Mondays throughout July, and this is a reversal from prior plans. Agencies will be closed this Saturday, but beginning on Monday, will be open six days a week. In the meantime, before -- and this is really important, folks -- in the meantime, before you make the trip to an agency, visit njmvc.gov. If your transaction can be completed through MVC's online services, use it. You can skip the line and skip the trip. The lines we saw yesterday were not to be unexpected; after a three-month layoff, we knew that countless New Jerseyans needed to get their new licenses, to register new vehicles or renew their paperwork.

In pre-pandemic days, there could often be long wait times, especially in peak times. Expiration dates for all driver's licenses, permits and non-driver IDs, commercial registrations, inspections and temporary tags were automatically extended at the beginning of this emergency. I want to remind you all of that. I encourage you to take advantage of these extensions to allow for more customers to get in and get out and to lessen the crowding. And obviously, we don't want anyone, bless you, we appreciate why you might be doing it, but please don't be camping out overnight at an MVC agency or facility, please stay home and stay safe. See if you can conduct business online. Wait a few more days, perhaps, but please don't camp out.

The women and men of the MVC are hardworking, and they are doing their best to help serve New Jersey's motorists. They are our neighbors and friends, and I know these times can be frustrating but please, please, please be polite as they work to serve you. Again, I want to repeat what I said a minute ago. You're frustrated, and so am I, and so is Sue Fulton, and we are committed to getting this into a better place. It is not entirely unlike the experience at the beginning of the pandemic with the tsunami of folks unemployed seeking unemployment benefits and insurance. We have a backlog that has now been months in the making and we'll do everything we can to make this a better situation, but it won't be overnight. But the combination of more days, reminding folks that expirations have been extended, really strongly encouraging folks to go online [njmvc](http://njmvc.gov) -- can you put that up again, Danny? Njmvc.gov, it is up. Just go there first, because you're going to find you may well be able to do your business online, and there's a whole range of services, I won't go through them, that you can do online.

Please do that. Please have patience and respect for the folks who are serving you and doing their utmost to make this process as painless as possible. And again, I want to prepare everybody for the fact this is not going to get better overnight. So we will unfurlough any workers at MVC, we'll extend the number of days, we'll ask you to go online and do everything you can online, but we've got a big backlog and we're going to have to chop through it and get through this together.

Switching gears but staying in sort of a transit mode, I want to reiterate the announcement made last night by NJ Transit that another class of rail engineers has graduated, having completed their 78 weeks of classroom and practical training and passed their final, ready for this July? 800 question exam. Since our administration took office, we have now expanded the ranks of NJ Transit's rail engineers by 56. That's a nearly 20% increase from the staffing level we inherited. With each class we graduate, we move NJ Transit forward and we ensure NJ Transit's ability to run a full schedule of trains. So to each of our newest locomotive engineers, congratulations and welcome aboard.

Now before I go on, I reiterate the need to secure the funding we will need to protect against an imminent fiscal meltdown by allowing us to go to the bond markets for an emergency infusion of cash to keep our state afloat. The Senate has had this bill for three months. The Assembly, under the leadership of Speaker Craig Coughlin, has passed it and I thank them once again. It is well past time to secure the funding that is threatening our ability to have in place the programs and safeguards our residents and our communities

desperately need to recover from this emergency and get back to work. It's time to post this bill for a vote. September is coming quickly and if there's no action soon, and I mean in a matter of days, we will miss our opportunity. And by the way, even if it were past say today or tomorrow, it will still take many weeks, I think as much as 12 weeks, for us to get to the point where we'll have the money we need to keep the state running. We're already cutting it way, way too close.

Let me be perfectly clear about what will happen if this bonding authority is not passed. Funding for our children's education, funding for critical support programs that lift up countless New Jersey families, funding for essential programs that our underserved communities need and more will be left unfunded or underfunded in the next budget. And we cannot simply cut our way out of the budgetary hole we will fall into. I've already offered painful cuts and negotiated hundreds of millions of dollars in savings with our labor partners, but this is a multi-billion dollar hole. The level of cuts we've had, we've had no other choice to make, but if we have to look forward to the next budget and take those steps again, it would set our state well back on its heels at a time when we need to be leaning forward into a recovery.

Law enforcement, public education, public health workers, property tax relief for middle-class families and seniors, tuition assistance for our next generation, all of it and a lot more will be on the chopping block and likely gone. So now is not the time for politics. I literally do not care about who gets crowned a so-called winner. I care about how we're going to make New Jersey the state where everyone, not just some, but everyone can thrive, and not just the special interests or the privileged few, but literally everybody.

I know how Trenton works -- or in many cases, doesn't work -- in normal times. These are not normal times. I cannot allow politics to deny our state the resources that we need to provide real relief for millions, literally millions of our families. Again, the Senate has had this bill for three months. Let's get this done.

With that, a lot of business underway, let's get to the overnight numbers. Yesterday, we received another 335 positive cases, The total now cumulatively is 174,039. The daily positivity rates for tests recorded on July 6th was 3.23%. Now in fairness, the number of tests, Judy, counted on Monday was very low so this may be one reason for the increase. We've been hovering plus or minus 2%. It's a little bit up. I don't think you're going to, as we've said many times, one day does not make a trend, but that's something that we're watching very closely. The rate of transmission remains above one today. Today it is 1.10. This means that these new cases we're reporting today are leading to at least one more future case. This is again why we are taking the steps to require everyone to wear masks and face coverings when outside. We have to have both a lower daily spot positivity rate and an RT or rate of transmission below one. This is not an either/or, by the way, it is and/both. It's the only way that we can meaningfully slow the rate of spread of COVID-19 to save lives and not see our progress backslide.

And by the way, some of this increase, Judy, in the rate of transmission, and Ed, we expected as we reopened the state, right? So we knew that we would be going from stay at home to actually the ability to be hopefully socially distanced but back participating in society and the economy together, but some of it, there's another increment of risk that we're getting from folks coming in from other states that have exploded and continue to explode, and so we need everybody to continue to do the right thing, and that includes anybody who's coming in from another state that is a hotspot. We now have 19 of them on our list. You've got to self-quarantine and you've got to get tested. We've had a couple of flare-ups. The system has, for the most part based on what we know, and Judy will get into this in more detail, I'm sure, and Ed, the system so far so good, has worked spotting some of these flare-ups related to out-of-state travel, as well as some knucklehead behavior in state.

But, you know, we've got to ask everybody, personal responsibility to me are the two words. That's wearing a face covering, its social distancing, it's doing the right thing if you're coming into Jersey, coming back to Jersey or coming into Jersey, from a hotspot state, self-quarantine 14 days, get tested. Please continue to do the right things.

Now looking at our hospitals, the overall picture remains one of a healthcare system that is strong and resilient. As of last night's reporting, we had 935 residents hospitalized for COVID-19. The number of patients in ICU was 175, number of ventilators in use 142. Here are how those daily numbers continue to feed overall trends. And again, this is not just since the peak but over the last couple of weeks, and those are a lot of good numbers there. But as we measure ourselves against our peers, which we also show you most days, we see

the need for continued vigilance. And they also speak to the need for us all to redouble our efforts on social distancing, especially in wearing face coverings that can further help slow the rate of transmission, and especially if you've not been tested, and it is possible that you might be an asymptomatic carrier of coronavirus.

The point of our work isn't that we want our hospitals to be ready for more patients. The point of our work is to keep people out of the hospital entirely. So folks, again, personal responsibility, please, do your part. Today we're reporting another, sadly with the heaviest of hearts, 53 confirmed COVID-19 deaths and that is now a total of 13,476 confirmed losses of life from our extraordinary New Jersey family. The number of probable deaths has been increased, Ed, to 1,947. I'll tease this for Judy and then Ed may want to weigh in as well. We haven't said this in a while, Judy, but we used to say it almost every day. This does not mean that 53 people died since noon yesterday from COVID-19. In fact, Judy's got the numbers from the hospitals which are quite low. This is the -- and we want to be as accurate and faithful in our data as humanly possible -- these are the folks that we can confirm have died in this pandemic, the newly confirmed folks we've lost since we last gathered. It does not mean that these are the folks who have necessarily passed since midday yesterday. Some of these go back quite a bit, and so Judy and Ed can get into some of that in their remarks. So as we do every day, let's recall three more of the New Jerseyans we have lost.

We'll begin by remembering Elia Nicolaidis, a 30-year resident of Warren Township. Born and raised on the island of Cyprus, Elia was working in an international shipping aids agency in 1959, I was the ripe age of two at that point, when she met a visiting American lawyer named Mark Nicolaidis at a cousin's party. The chance encounter was love at first sight and Mark asked her to join him on his return to the States, and they were married only one month later.

She started work at the Atlantic Bank in New York City but would leave to raise her and Mark's two sons. The family moved across the Hudson River in 1966, first to Plainfield, and two years later to Warren Township, to a home that was open always to friends and family, including the family whom she and Mark helped escape and saved from the war in Cyprus in the 1970s. With her children grown, she returned to work outside the home, working another 14 years at First Atlantic Bank in South Plainfield before retiring in 1996.

Now, Elia and Mark eventually came to call Palm Beach their home, but their Jersey roots remained strong. She leaves behind Mark, as well as her sons JP who is a dear friend of Tammy's and mine, and his husband, Red Bank Councilman and Democratic Chair in Red Bank, another dear friend at Ed Zipprich, and also her son Christopher. She also leaves three granddaughters, Mary Kate Zipprich, Willow Nicolaidis, and Nikita Nicolaidis, as well as her sister-in-law Androulla, and many nieces and nephews and great and great-great nieces and nephews. Elia was 82 years old. May God bless her soul and memory and watch over her and her family.

Next we head to the Pine Brook section of Montville Township in Morris County to remember Joyce Brauchle, there's Joyce standing, bless her. Born in Newark and raised in Caldwell, she called Pine Brook home for the majority of her life, even convincing her late husband Helmuth to move there from West Orange. Her family remembers her as a compassionate woman who did whatever she could to brighten someone's day, whether it be a note in a card or a home-cooked meal. She found her inspiration in her faith, and she was a longtime member of the Jacksonville Chapel in Lincoln Park. Joyce leaves behind her sons, Kurt, Christopher, and Eric, and I had the great honor of speaking with Eric who by the way, he and his wife both had COVID-19 hard, and Eric literally just retired, I think within the past week, from the Montville Police Department. And also their families, which include grandchildren Tyler, Justin, Jonathan, Lindsay, Amanda, Christian and Kate. She is also survived by her siblings, brother Richard and sisters Joan and Judy and their families. I want to give Montville Mayor Frank Cooney a shout out for making sure that we knew all about the extraordinary life that Joyce lived. Joyce was 77 years old, and we know her memory is a comfort to her family and to all who knew her. God bless and watch over her.

Finally, today we recall Vincent Buchinsky Jr. of Newton in Sussex County. He was just 70 years old. Vincent was an artist and an educator, a graduate of both Pratt University on Long Island and Montclair State right here in New Jersey. For 30 years he taught and inspired thousands of students in his classrooms in Harrison High School and Sussex County Community College, and even in retirement he didn't let up teaching art classes to Newton's seniors. An award-winning abstract artist, his vision was fueled by what he called the turbulence of life. Ain't that the case, huh? Vincent's work was displayed not just here at home, but also in

galleries across Pennsylvania, California, and Massachusetts. Vincent is survived by his daughter, Brett Lynn, with whom I had the great honor of speaking yesterday, and her husband John, and their children, Brahm and Rosalie, and by his son, Kyle. He also leaves behind his sister Patricia, and numerous close cousins and friends. They'll all miss his silly humor, easygoing nature and his love for family. And by the way, Judy, this happened, this is a tale that we've heard all too often. Vincent had open heart surgery in December, so that made him more vulnerable. And then after the hospital went into rehab and that's where they think that he caught the virus. We thank Vincent for sharing his artistic passions and talents with us. God bless and watch over him and his family.

Elia and Joyce and Vincent are three examples of why we need to take this pandemic seriously, and why we have to take every precaution to stop it. So when you put on your face covering, you are telling others that you do not want your family, or theirs by the way, to have to know what it is like to lose a loved one to this virus. Not wearing a mask isn't a sign of strength. It's not a symbol of politics. Not wearing a mask is an act of selfishness, plain and simple. It's a sign that you think you're invincible, and to hell with everyone else. The time for selfishness ended back in March.

Now before I close, I want to give a couple of well-deserved shout outs. First I want to recognize another one of the small businesses committed to their community and to our recovery. This is Hayday Coffee in Atlantic City, owned and operated by entrepreneurs Evan Sanchez with whom I spoke yesterday and Zenith Shah. Both Evan and Zenith grew up right outside of AC and both of them gave up careers in bigger cities to return to their roots to be part of Atlantic City's renewal through their company, Authentic City Partners. Through Authentic City Partners, they opened Hayday, Atlantic City's first independent coffee shop on the beach block at 155 South New York Avenue, in the heart of the orange loop, a space where residents and visitors alike could gather. Evan and Zenith are now eyeing a fall reopening. They reminded me that Attorney General Gurbir Grewal was a good customer in Hayday 1.0.

However, through a \$50,000 microbusiness loan from the Economic Development Authority, Hayday is still at work. The shop just hired a full-time manager and Evan and Zenith are now looking to hire between seven to 10 part-time and full-time employees, as well as purchasing new equipment to fuel Hayday's future. Hayday is just another example of how we're working with our entrepreneurs and small businesses to help them survive this emergency and to find their footing for a prosperous future, and I encourage other small business owners to visit www.njeda.com (<http://www.njeda.com>) to learn what assistance may be available for you. And to Evan and Zenith, I thank you for your commitment to Atlantic City and I look forward to stopping in for a cup of coffee when I'm in town.

Finally today, I want to give a special recognition to that guy, NJTV's Michael Aron, a fixture on press row in the Statehouse, and the longtime dean of the New Jersey Press Corps. A few days ago, as I'm sure you all saw, Michael announced his retirement from day-to-day reporting, important caveat. And while he'll still grace our screens every now and then, I for one will miss his smart and fair reporting, and his encyclopedic knowledge of New Jersey politics and government. He was a newsman's newsman, always tough but fair to those he covered, always ready to mentor the next generation of journalists, but always willing to get his story, and to get it right. So to you, Michael, and I know you're watching as I think you said to me in a text, you've only missed a couple of these, I hope you enjoy the slower pace of life and watching the goings on from your own TV for change, and that we'll see you around the Statehouse.

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 and good afternoon. Face coverings, along with social distancing, staying home when you're sick, good hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette are vital tools in the fight against COVID-19. It's really all we have. Wearing a face covering or mask has been shown to dramatically decrease the release of droplets from people's mouths, which can carry infectious particles. Studies have demonstrated that masks are an important barrier to the transmission of respiratory viruses. A recent study in Health Affairs showed a significant decline in the daily COVID-19 growth rate after states mandated facial covers in public, with the effect increasing over time. The study projected that as many as 230,000 to as high as 450,000 cases may have been averted due to the face covering mandate.

The International Journal of Nursing Studies suggests that community mask use by healthy people could be beneficial, particularly for COVID-19, where transmission may be by asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic individuals, and data included in the New England Journal of Medicine this spring examined the amount of droplets that were expelled when someone is speaking. It showed that hundreds of droplets, ranging from 20 to 500 micrometers were generated when saying a simple phrase, but that nearly all of these droplets were blocked when the mouth was covered by a cloth.

COVID-19 spreads mainly among people who are in close contact with one another, within about six feet for more than 10 minutes, so the use of cloth face coverings is particularly important in settings where people are close to each other or where social distancing is difficult to maintain. To help prevent transmitting disease, it is critical to wear the mask correctly, covering both the nose and mouth. When possible, clean your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer immediately before putting on the mask, adjusting it and after removing the cloth face covering, and wash the face covering after use.

Moving on to my daily report, our hospitals, as the Governor shared, reported 935 hospitalizations and 175 individuals in critical care, of which 81% of those individuals are on ventilators. The hospitalizations are remaining flat. We've been rolling up the field medical stations across the state as a result. At the end of last week, we shut down the Atlantic City site. However, we are keeping the supplies in storage in case we need to boost hospital capacity again in the near future.

There are no new reports of multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children, so the total remains at 51 cases in the state. As a reminder, the children affected have either tested positive for active COVID-19 infection or had antibody tests that were positive. In New Jersey, thankfully, there are no deaths reported at this time.

The Governor reviewed the new cases and deaths reported today. In terms of deaths, the breakdown by race and ethnicity is as follows: White 54.3%, Black 18.3%, Hispanic 20.2%, Asian 5.5% and other 1.7%. We reported 53 deaths today. As a reminder, the deaths we are reporting are lab confirmed and death certificate verified, and include deaths as far back as March. At our peak, deaths in hospitals rose to over 400 daily. Today, over the past 24 hours, we are reporting five deaths; five deaths from COVID-19. At the state veteran homes, the numbers remain the same as they do at our psychiatric hospitals. Overall, our positivity rate as of July 4th is 3.23%. The Northern part of the state is reporting 3.4%, the Central part of the state 2.88%, and the Southern part of the state 3.3%.

Today's daily positivity is from July 4th. The total number of tests performed on that date was very low because of the holiday, which causes variation in the percent positivity. That concludes my report. Stay connected, stay safe, stay healthy, get tested and wear a mask. Thank you.

Governor Phil Murphy: Judy, thank you, and thank you for everything, and most importantly, your leadership. But again, you and I haven't made that comment about the fatalities. Sadly, these lives are lost, so they're gone. That's the most, the weightiest thing to say. But we hadn't said it in a while that that doesn't mean they were all gone since yesterday. I wonder if I could ask Ed a question. Someone who passed, as Judy said, perhaps in late March and there is at least one of those on the list that we're announcing today, can you give folks a sense as to why that could have taken so long? Because we want to get this, as you can imagine, we want to get this exactly right.

DOH Communicable Disease Service Medical Director Dr. Ed Lifshitz: Thank you. I'll say a couple of things about that. As the Governor has mentioned, the deaths that are reported every day are not the people who died every day. And actually on our website, we have what we believe to be a better presentation of what's happening as far as deaths over time, where we show a curve which is very hard to see from there that looks like this, number of deaths by illness onset date, which is a better understanding of when people are actually dying as opposed to when they're getting reported.

As mentioned, yes, back to March, it can actually take up to a year-and-a-half before all death certificates are final, and that's why we won't give what we call these preliminary numbers. And we always say that they can change. Now the further back in time, the less they're going to change but it won't be until a year-and-a-half after this that we're really going to be able to say for sure that these are the numbers that we're sticking by.

The reason for that is it's actually a fairly complicated process which a death certificate goes through from the time that somebody dies, the initial physician signs off. That goes through a funeral home, it goes through a local registrar, it gets sent down to the Centers for Disease Control to standardize and look back at it. Sometimes those questions come back to the doctor or there's a question about a death certificate as well. While most death certificate information we get in a matter of weeks or months, some will lag because of that.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you for that. And I'm not – this is an awful topic because these are lost lives and I'm certainly not patting ourselves on the back. We take this as seriously, getting this right, as seriously as any state in America, maybe any place on Earth. We owe it to the families, most importantly, who have lost a loved one, but we owe it to everybody, including when we're trying to guide you through this pandemic, to give you as accurate a sense of the reality as possible.

So with that, we are going to stay on our every other day, Monday, Wednesday, Friday plan for the moment, although we reserve the right to reconsider that, which means, Dan, we'll be on Friday at 1:00 p.m. next. With that, Dustin, we're going to start with you if that's okay. And again, folks, if you could be a little bit more economical because there's a good crowd here today. Thank you.

Q&A Session

Dustin Racioppi, Bergen Record: Good afternoon. As you can imagine, there's a lot of questions on the face masks. Does the outdoor order, is it going to apply to people on the beach? Lifeguards, sports, while running or exercising, landscapers, construction workers, painters? Did you consult any health experts on this decision or was it yours? What's the penalty for violating the order? And what violations and which citations are issued, including the Colonel's regular enforcement reports?

On motor vehicles, how do you know that a lot of the people could do what they had to do online? Would you say that the agency was unprepared for the pent-up demand? And if so, how was it caught so off-guard after knowing for several months that this was going to happen?

And if the rate of transmission is such an important metric, is there a reason why it hasn't been and isn't included on the state dashboard? Thanks.

Governor Phil Murphy: I've got no quick answer on the state's dashboard, but Judy or Ed can deal with that. The reality on Motor Vehicles, in terms of our confidence that folks can do things online, stems from the fact there's a lot of things you can do online, and a lot of them are typical. One of our colleagues yesterday renewed his license online. We know anecdotally that there were a lot of people in line to get their license renewed. You don't need to do that, in most cases.

Listen, we knew we were going to have a tsunami, so I would caution to say, I would not use the word unprepared, although I'm really frustrated by this and I know Sue Fulton is, and if you're in that line, and you're watching or you were in it yesterday or today, I don't blame you for being frustrated. I'm also frustrated that we're living through a pandemic and some of this stuff is just a reality. As you heard me say, please go to the website, njmvc.gov to check to see whether or not you could do it online. We'll add another day. We will unfurlough any MVC workers, and we will do our level best to get our way through this. And again, I don't blame folks for being frustrated, but please bear with us. And this is probably realistically going to be with us for some number of weeks would be my guess, based on the incomings.

Part of the reason we hadn't gone to outdoor before is we had the rate of transmission down, even below 0.7 at one point and it's hard to enforce, admittedly. I've said this many times, Judy's said it in these sessions that we don't want to put something in place that we can't enforce. So indoor dining, we're enforcing. That gym that we've been telling you about, that's being enforced. This is admittedly going to be harder. And again, it's where social distancing is not practicable. That's the important caveat. So if you're in your bubble with your family, or you're sitting by yourself, or you're doing something on your own, that's not our focus. Our focus is gatherings with lack of social distancing, with folks who are in different bubbles and different families in different circumstances coming together, and you just cannot properly social distance.

I use one example, you're in a line somewhere and the line is not being properly distanced. You're not with your family. You gotta be masked up. Matt, anything you want to say else on enforcement or what the penalties, or any more color there?

Chief Counsel Matt Platkin: I think most of Dustin's questions will be answered when the order is put out, but generally speaking, you mentioned if you have a health condition or if you're under two, as part of the health condition if you're participating in strenuous activity, like an anaerobic or aerobic workout, that would be accepted, but I think once the order comes out today, it'll be much clearer.

Governor Phil Murphy: Yeah, and when do we think the order is out? Is that later today?

Chief Counsel Matt Platkin: Yeah.

Governor Phil Murphy: Okay, so we'll have that out later today and Dustin, if you have something that comes out of that, come back to us through Dan or one of us. And by the way, we consulted a lot of health experts. Judy and I were on with the White House yesterday with Deborah Birx and Alex Azar and face coverings was discussed. Obviously, we've got a great team in our own state. We've got our commission, our Restart and Recovery Commission. By the way, we had a really good meeting with them yesterday. There were some health experts on that, including Rich Besser, who ran the CDC, so that's a pretty good qualification right here in Jersey. We feel pretty strongly this is the right step to take one, as I said, that I hoped we wouldn't have to take but we're taking it. We were state number one in America mandated on the indoors, this is the right thing to do in the outdoors. Thank you for that. Daniel, good afternoon.

Daniel Munoz, NJBIZ: Hi, Governor. With masks, do you expect some organized resistance such as protests, people not wearing it blatantly, violating the order? Would you consider something like a heat wave or some kind of hot weather something that somebody might try to argue is a risk to their health and safety and they could argue, I'm not gonna wear the mask because of the heat wave? Going back to the organized resistance, how would you crack down on that if people are blatantly not wearing masks?

Regarding dining, the sort of indoor outdoor situation, it seems like restaurants with a significant amount of square footage would be the only ones that have this option available. Won't a lot of physically smaller restaurants be left out and essentially be the losers in this case? Do you expect restaurants would, start say like breaking open certain walls or slapping together something to be able to –

Governor Phil Murphy: I hadn't thought about that, but I suppose it's possible.

Daniel Munoz, NJBIZ: Some sort of last minute arrangement.

Governor Phil Murphy: I hope they give a heads up before they do it.

Daniel Munoz, NJBIZ: And I guess are you looking at any restrictions that could be tightened or wargaming what restrictions will have to be tightened if the pandemic worsens, if the spread continues in a direction that you don't want?

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you. Listen, Matt mentioned strenuous exercise and that's clearly an area that I think we're going to be careful with. I run. I run pathetically these days, but when I run outdoors, Tammy and I wear a face covering and it's not fun. I have to say it's not fun. And so strenuous exercise in the heat, I do think are things that we've got to be careful of. I don't, frankly, if people want to protest about something that is saving lives, you've got to wonder what they're thinking. And by the way, we'll do what we've been doing and Pat is not here but I'll speak for him. If you're protesting, you know, you have a right to protest. I hope you do it online, but if you protest you've got to wear face coverings and social distance, regardless of what you're protesting. But the point is, this is not politics.

On restaurants, listen, I hope the indoor, as I've said many times, Judy and I and Ed hope that the indoor dining reality is not a forever and always, just because we've pushed it back. I don't know that I would reconfigure your restaurant just for the sake of a period of time here. Are there winners or losers based on how the restaurant is configured? Sadly, probably yes. There are some that can do this and some that can't, but we're trying to do everything. We've allowed outdoor dining. We've really worked with municipalities and

counties to get roads blocked off and get more space for restaurants. Take out alcohol, as I mentioned, opening up walls that you can open up, we're doing everything we can and God willing, we'll get to indoor dining at some point. I hope at some point in a reasonable future.

Listen, we just took a big step today, so don't underestimate the thought that Judy and her team and the rest of us put into mandating face coverings outdoors. That's not a slide back, but that's a pretty important step that we're not taking lightly. And at the moment, other than stressing what the current rules of the road are, including self-quarantining if you're coming in from a hotspot, wearing a face covering, social distancing, washing hands with soap and water, we're going to be in a holding pattern for the time being. If we have to go back, we will. I hope we don't. Sir, do you have any?

Reporter: Governor, do you support Assembly Minority Leader Jon Bramnick's bill that would have the state reimburse restaurant owners for costs that came from the abruptly delayed restart of indoor dining? And also, what do you expect from the final report of the EDA task force that's set to be released tomorrow? Do you think the investigation so far has been valuable? Thank you.

Governor Phil Murphy: I don't comment, and won't in this case change my answer in terms of commenting on pending legislation, but I would say to Jon, who's a good friend, where's the money coming from? So we need to borrow the money that the Senate has so far not gotten there on, the Assembly has. And secondly, we need federal cash assistance direct, and we've also got to have revenue options on the table. I want nothing more.

And by the way, the EDA has been really good with the limited resources that we have, delivering I used Hayday Coffee today as an example. We had The Curvy Bride the other day. These are real businesses that are being helped in real ways by the EDA, but there's no amount of money that any state has right now to be able to do what the small business community writ large needs in our state, especially the hospitality piece. I completely have complete empathy and I completely support the notion, but we have to have a source of money that can back up that notion.

I have no insight into their report that's coming out tomorrow. I've not seen these reports before they come out and this won't be an exception. Sadly, they've been of, I think enormous value. They have shone a light on this whole notion that there's a bubble and inside the bubble, it's working really well for special interests and cases based on what they've come up with, folks who have in some cases have jobbed the system and it's been at the expense of the rest of us. So that has been an extraordinary valuable outcome of their work. Where it goes from there, I don't have any particular knowledge, but they have shone a light on a really ugly reality that I think we all kind of expected, but it was a lot uglier and a lot more graphic, I'll speak for myself, than I expected. Thank you. Let's go back first, and then we'll come down if that's all right. Good afternoon.

Reporter: Good afternoon, Governor. What's your reaction to Amy Kennedy's win? How do you think the state did with yesterday's vote-by-mail primary? Many key races have been called around the state while the ballots of those who voted yesterday won't be counted for a week. How do you convince those who voted yesterday that their votes mattered? And how is the state encouraging travelers from states on the list to actually quarantine? Is there any evidence that people are heeding the advisory? How many people are staying at the safe quarantine sites throughout the state? Are any travelers staying there? Thank you.

Governor Phil Murphy: Listen, I endorsed Amy so I'm thrilled that she won, and it was a good field of Democrats. I salute all of them, but I stood by her side last night and had the honor of introducing her. I think she's an outstanding candidate and I think she'll make a great Congresswoman. She's now got a general election in front of her but I'm thrilled she won. I mean, I think she's, in so many ways, as an educator, as a mom, as a mental health expert, a great personal story. Four generations South Jersey family, married into one of the great political families of either party in the history of our country. It's a team sport for Amy and Patrick and their family, and Amy's mom and dad, who was with us last night and I'm thrilled by her victory.

I think I already answered your second question. I think so far our sense is it went well. It wasn't a vote by mail entirely primary, it's a hybrid primary. You know, that doesn't mean that in every instance in every place that we batted 1,000 but I promise you, we take every vote seriously and we will do everything we can to get every vote counted and to undo whatever kinks may have come up. If the folks have postmarked their ballot as of yesterday, there's a seven-day window which we had expanded, and their votes will be counted, period.

And again, the Secretary of State's done an extraordinary job. Each of the county clerks are doing their jobs, and we need to give faith to everybody that your vote is going to count, whether you did it in person or whether you did it by mail.

I mean, largely on quarantining, Judy, we are still, I mean, this is not an easy lift either, right, because it's the United States of America. Emphasis on united. We can't stop people at our borders, so there's a big amount of personal responsibility. You've seen the signage, I see it on 195 coming across the state every day. You see it now at airports, but any more color, Judy, you want to give to that?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: As far as individuals that have stayed at state quarantine sites, two weeks ago we did have 14 individuals that needed 14-day quarantine. They were released on Friday. And over the holiday weekend, we had a family who had traveled from another state that needed to be quarantined for various reasons and they stayed at one of our sites. I don't have the total number of how many beds are occupied at this point in time, but I'll be able to get that for you.

And additionally, by either the end of this week or the beginning of next week, I think I'll be able to share the app that we're putting together for travelers that will feed right into our local health departments so that they'll be able to follow up.

Governor Phil Murphy: So I just want to repeat, thank you for that. I want to repeat something that we've said the other day, maybe once or twice. Normally, we do a shakedown cruise and anything we're going to announce and make sure that we've worked as best we can, we don't always get it right completely, but we've worked out at many levels of details before we use the bully pulpit of this press conference to make an announcement. This one, Judy and I and our teams deliberately reversed that. We immediately seized the bully pulpit. Remember, with Governor Cuomo and Governor Lamont, to begin the notion of personal responsibility, accepting the fact that we can't stop people at our borders. As I said that day, if I could, I never thought I'd say the words, if we could build a wall around us I would, but we can't. So we've deliberately reversed that using our megaphone, the notion of personal responsibility, do the right thing, knowing that things like signage, paperwork, apps, etc. were going to have to come online at a later point. Thank you. Dave, good afternoon.

David Matthau, NJ 101.5: Hi, Governor. Just a point of clarification with regard to the outside mask wearing. If you're taking a walk in your neighborhood, I'm assuming if you can social distance, you see somebody else coming, one person goes on the street, the other one stays on the sidewalk, that would be okay. I'm assuming, or maybe you can verify?

Governor Phil Murphy: I think we can assume that, and I'll cut you off on that one and just say listen, if you're not inside of – or even I'd be even more conservative, and it's not for a meaningful amount of time like you're standing in line next to each other, but you're out for a walk by yourself or with a family member and they're in your bubble, I think you're okay.

David Matthau, NJ 101.5: With regard to the MVC, a lot of people were upset about the lack of communication from the MVC. What do you think of the idea of maybe a manager going outside and either trying to let people know, listen, we've got 700 people here, we can only deal with 200 today, why don't you guys go home? There was also I know I was at Baker's Basin, social distancing, mask wearing out the window because it was like a mob scene. So is there a way to try to encourage people, again, maybe an MVC person going outside and saying, folks, we need you to do XYZ?

Governor Phil Murphy: I think the short answer on that, I don't normally do this, but the short answer is yes. There was some of that but we need to do more of that and again, I've got to repeat, they're doing everything they can. This is a pent-up demand. That doesn't make you feel any less frustrated, folks. I get that, I'm frustrated too. But go online and make sure there isn't something you could have knocked off in your home before you even get there. Please.

David Matthau, NJ 101.5: The other last point on the MVC, it's been suggested from several people, maybe an appointment only system would be better. I mean, we did that with Real ID and that certainly helped to contain things and then, you know, they got a sense of how fast they could do it. So would this be something possibly to look at?

And then with regard to mask wearing in your office, if you are called back to work and people are in the office, is that recommended or mandated? Is it dependent on social distancing desks or cubicles? Thank you.

Governor Phil Murphy: I think the appointment only is a good idea but they all pale, and I'll make sure I feed that back in, they all pale by the fact that we're going to add a day, unfurlough workers and please go online njmvc.gov.

Listen, in our offices, Matt, we're wearing them, right? Where would you, on the spectrum of strongly recommended to mandated, are you on that?

Chief Counsel Matt Platkin: The order says each office would have to have a policy for when their employees are in frequent contact for masking, so there's some discretion there but obviously the order, given its mandating masking more broadly, it's strongly encouraging masking, but mandate for businesses specifically as a policy.

Governor Phil Murphy: You know, it's a different reality. I assume you'd share this, it's a different reality if I'm in my office by myself with the door closed, making condolence calls, which I do regularly, that's a different reality than if Matt and George Helmy and I just had a meeting before coming over here and the three of us were masked up. We were six feet apart, by the way, but we were still masked up. Thank you. Let's go back and do a banana in here. So we'll start with you, sir.

Phil Andrews, NJ News Network: Good afternoon, Governor. Phil Andrews, New Jersey News Network. I have three quick questions. The President has threatened to deny federal aid to any state that doesn't make the effort to reopen schools and send their kids back. I know the Governor Cuomo said that he's not going to be bullied into doing that. I was just wondering where you stood on that.

Next Saturday, of course, is the Haskell Stakes. You've got horses coming from outside the state, their handlers, their jockeys, their trainers. I understand that they may need a waiver to avoid the quarantine situation. With the Haskell still in mind, now that facility, the grandstands seat 8,000 spectators, but overall they can get like 60,000 in there. You've limited it to 25%. Why is it 25% when it's basically an outdoor arena? Thank you.

Governor Phil Murphy: I thought you had three. Is it just the two? You gave me three? Okay.

Phil Andrews, NJ News Network: I gave you education, the waivers for the people coming out of state for the horse racing, and then why the limit on the number of people –

Governor Phil Murphy: Okay, not necessarily specific to the Haskell. Listen, we put out our plan to reopen schools with Dr. Repollet before he moved on. He did great work with Judy and her team. I don't see it necessarily as a bullying thing. We want to be back to school. You know, we're giving districts a significant amount of latitude, but we're given some pretty specific parameters on the sorts of things we expect. We were all at the White House yesterday, education was part of that discussion, but I thought it was a reasonable discussion, but we're going to do the right thing as it relates to healthcare. So if we think whatever step we're taking, if we think we're putting people's lives at risk, we're going to make sure we do everything we can to not do that. I don't, please God, don't anticipate that's the case when we turn the corner seven or eight weeks from now, but that's where I would be.

I thought you were going to ask me if we were going to make the horses quarantine if they're coming in from out of state.

Phil Andrews, NJ News Network: They are waiting for waivers from you. I'm wondering what your thoughts are on that and when will those waivers be signed?

Governor Phil Murphy: Yeah, I don't have any color on the waivers. Matt, do you have anything to add on that?

Chief Counsel Matt Platkin: They're not waiting on waivers. The order, the FAQ put out by the Department of Health makes this very clear that business activity is exempted from the quarantine order, and that would cover people coming in for professional activity, so we're not aware of anyone making any requests for orders. And with respect to the capacity, you actually – it's not accurate to say 25%. There was an administrative order issued on July 2nd that lays out very clearly the various capacities for the horse racing

facilities. We worked in collaboration with the tracks. It is broken down by their restaurant capacity. They have sports book capacities at the tracks, and then there's the capacity, the gathering limit with respect to the people in the actual grandstand. I would just ask you to consult that order, because that lays out very clearly the parameters, and the tracks operated last week under them.

Phil Andrews, NJ News Network: They're telling us that only 2,000 people allowed in to watch this race when the capacity is –

Governor Phil Murphy: That was negotiated directly with them, am I right?

Chief Counsel Matt Platkin: Yeah, pursuant to both health guidance and the realities of a horse track being a large facility over many, many acres, in many instances, but we've worked directly with them and the order is the order. It was issued just last week so I highly doubt it will change.

Governor Phil Murphy: If you hear on the waiting waivers, if you've got specific people, get to Dan right behind you or Matt, and we will disavow them of that, because that's not the way the executive order is written. Thank you. Elise, good afternoon.

Elise Young, Bloomberg: Hi, good afternoon. You were drenched a few weeks ago dining outdoors. For the indoor restaurants that can open under your new open air guidelines, are you risking more anger from owners who now have to keep an eye on the weather and plan food buys and staffing around that? Thank you.

Governor Phil Murphy: I don't know, is the answer. I mean, we're trying to give as much running room as possible to the restaurant community. And so it seemed to me that if you've got a fixed roof, it seems to us, Judy, forget me, but to you if you've got a fixed roof, and you can get at least two sides of that open and you've got at least 50% of your wall space to be open door, we're trying everything we can to give more oxygen to the community, literally, in this case, and figuratively.

As was asked earlier, some folks don't have that ability and we accept that. It brings us no joy that they don't have that ability. But again, also, we hope this is not a forever and always. I have to remind folks, this virus, and Ed and Judy will back this up, is dramatically more lethal indoors than outdoors. We just can't ignore that fact. We can't ignore the fact that our rate of transmission has gone up. We can't ignore the fact that the virus is exploding in other states right now in the country and we'll do everything we can but at a certain point, we have to, you know, remember public health creates economic health. We cannot jump the gun or transpose those steps. But thank you. Brent.

Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger: Good afternoon. So I have a few on masks and then two other topics. So what is the actual penalty for those who violate this new mask order? Who will enforce the order? Will kids playing youth sports be exempt? How much citizen's policing should we expect? You know, people being Karen's, I guess they call them, you know, saying you should be wearing a mask? What about masks while you're waiting for food or drink outdoors?

And then two unrelated, do you think your late endorsement of Amy Kennedy helped her victory? Do you see her victory as a response to George Norcross and the South Jersey Democratic machine? And do you think she can beat Jeff Van Drew in a tough district?

And then last, it's been four months of isolation for children who live in pediatric long-term care facilities. Families are worried about their mental decline. Some facilities say they are waiting guidelines from the state to allow visitation. Where does the state stand on this issue?

Governor Phil Murphy: I will ask Judy to address the last one but that's one that we're painfully aware of and have enormous sympathy. I think on the masking, let's wait, I'm going to use Matt's answer from earlier to Dustin. Let's get the order actually out there, but it does not include kids playing sports. And again, I think we touched on that earlier. And I absolutely will say if you're waiting in line for anything, food, drink or anything, please have a face covering on. And again, this is when you're outside and social distancing is not practicable.

Amy Kennedy, I am thrilled she won. Again I incorporate my earlier answer by reference. It has nothing whatsoever to do with any block of Democrats, South Jersey or otherwise. And can she beat Jeff Van Drew? You betcha she can beat him. This is not a political gathering, but you betcha she can beat him. It's going to

be a tough race. He's an incumbent, but he made a decision and he's going to have to live with that and I think she's a great candidate, and will really represent folks on both sides of the aisle exceptionally well if she's elected as a Congresswoman. And again, I'm a huge, huge fan. Judy, anything on pediatric long-term children?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: We're working on guidance for allowing visitation at some level for pediatric long-term care for all of the reasons that you spoke about. We're as concerned as well.

Governor Phil Murphy: And again, we'll let the order come out on masking. That'll be part of the order. I will, when in Rome, we should mask up, so here we go. Thank you all for that. Again, lots of moving parts. Bear with us on the order on outdoor face coverings. When in doubt, regardless of what the order says to the letter of the law, put on a face covering if you're going out. It's literally that simple. And I think Dave, to your question is, if you're literally by yourself or with your own family in your bubble and you're outside, clearly that's your backyard, different story than if you're – obviously again, I think a lot of this comes to common sense and personal responsibility. You know, were you in a state that's raging? If you were, please do the right thing and self-quarantine and test. If you're going out and you know you're going to be, to Brent's question you're waiting on a line and you might be packed in, wear a face covering. Certainly if you're going to the Motor Vehicles Commission right now, wear a face covering. Again, a huge amount of this is personal responsibility and common sense.

And the great news is, as we say, literally almost every single day, New Jersey has been a 10 out of 10. Yeah, there have been some exceptions, but boy, folks by the millions have done the right thing, whether it was staying at home at the beginning, learning in school remotely, putting the right pieces in place in retail establishments, doing the outdoor dining things so creatively and so well. We need that level of responsibility to continue whether it's face coverings, whether it's coming in from out of state and quarantining, whatever it might be, keep it up, folks. You've been extraordinary.

We've got to make sure that we don't lose the ground that, at a great toll, we have gained. Again, on Motor Vehicles, check the website out, njmvc.gov. If you're frustrated, I don't blame you. Do everything you can, we'll do everything we can, to get through this huge backlog together. Judy, thank you so much for today and always. Keep Pat and his family in your prayers. Jared, Dan, Matt, everybody else, God bless.

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