

Governor Phil Murphy

# TRANSCRIPT: July 27th, 2020 Coronavirus Briefing Media

07/27/2020

Holding a COVID-19 briefing. WATCH:



**Governor Phil Murphy:** Good afternoon.

With me to my right is the woman who needs no introduction, the Commissioner of the Department of Health, Judy Persichilli. To her right, another familiar face to all, the state's epidemiologist, Dr. Christina Tan. Great to have you both here. Guy to my left also does not need an introduction, Superintendent of the State Police, Colonel Pat Callahan, Pat. Director of the Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, Jared Maples is with us. For those of you who have been keeping count, today is the 100th time that we have come together for one of these briefings. We've seen a lot and reported a lot to you through these 100 briefings, the good and the bad, but thankfully, this is New Jersey, and we know that we're in for many better days ahead.

Yesterday marked the 30th anniversary of the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act. There is President George H.W. Bush signing it 30 years ago yesterday, so it's a good opportunity to say this, and I think Judy and Tina would want me to say this. In the spirit of the ADA, it is important to recognize that while facemasks and coverings are critically important in slowing the spread of coronavirus, there are individuals among us because of developmental or physical ability who cannot wear – safely wear a mask, so when the rest of us wear our masks, we are helping to protect some of our most vulnerable residents. Remember this, folks. Wearing a mask is not – it has nothing to do with politics. It is about community. It is about courtesy to your fellow New Jerseyans, particularly the most vulnerable among us. Please mask up, and before we



on, I want to give a big shout-out to Paul Aronson, our ombudsman for persons with disabilities, former mayor from Bergen County, a guy for all of this is hardly abstract. I just want to give Paul a particular shout-out.

Next up, we are proud to announce that beginning today, RUCDR Infinite Biologics is providing – that's Rutgers – is providing daily 30,000 of its rapid response, saliva-based, coronavirus tests to our broad-based testing initiatives. Having these tests means we now have 30,000 tests a day, and they come with a 48-hour turnaround. Importantly, and Judy and Tina again would want me to say this, they don't rely on the same reagents and raw materials that the other tests, the PCR tests, rely upon, so this is – the RUCDR folks are committing to a 48-hour turnaround. As test turnaround has lagged nationally given the flair-ups all around the country, this is welcome news. Working through Judy and the Department of Health and local stakeholders, we will be deploying these test kits to the priority populations which we serve including our frontline responders and most vulnerable residents further building on our ability to identify potential hotspots and problem areas and continue our work to further slow the spread of COVID-19.

Next, I want to reiterate some of the points we made here on Friday as it pertains to the upcoming school year. First, let's all start with the simple recognition – and I think I said this on Friday. This will not be a normal school year. There's no way it can be. Regardless of where we and the local districts come out in terms of the precise model and what it looks like, it will be a challenge for everyone, so let's acknowledge that and commend everyone that's working so hard to work out a path forward. Our goal is to provide as much flexibility – and we mentioned that on Friday as well – as possible to local school districts, to parents, to kids, to educators to implement plans that best fit their communities. Safety and education have to go hand in hand.

With regard to this upcoming school year, we'll be guided, again, as I mentioned briefly on Friday, by three principles. First, the health and safety of students, their families, educators, administrators, and staff – and all of our decisions will be guided by health and safety protocols. Health comes first. Second, we'll be guided by how best to educate our students. We enter this with the best public education system in America. That's educators, that's kids, that's their families, parents, the whole community around education. Third, and just as importantly, we will be guided by ensuring equity for families who depend more heavily on in-person education. Health, best education possible, equity.

We also must acknowledge that every education expert we've spoken to over the past few months has confirmed that in-person education is critical and that remote learning is only an acceptable substitute when absolutely necessary. If done safely, I believe we must try to include at least some aspect of in-person education for our children this fall. We have in place a concrete plan to close the digital divide, but there's no question that remote learning is easier for affluent communities and their families. As families with children of special needs know, it isn't easy or sometimes even possible for them. All of this must be a part of our thinking as we move to September. As I said, this is going to be a school year unlike any other, including the one we just finished, which was also unlike any other, but we are committed to ensuring that the concerns of students and families and educators and administrators will be heard and that New Jersey will continue to be a national education leader.

Now, with that, let's turn our attention to the overnight numbers. Today, we're reporting an additional 446 new positive coronavirus test results. That brings the statewide total to 179,812. Before I go on, Judy, it's fair to say that we've had some lab catch-up in these numbers over the past number of days. Tina, I think you'd agree with that. You saw us print over the weekend, today again, 446; yesterday, 512; Saturday, 547; Friday, 488. I think we all believe – as we know we've had some testing backlogs, some data reliability challenges in these labs – that this is a little bit of making up for lost time. It's not all making up for lost time, and there's no question people are still testing positive in New Jersey. More on that in a minute. The daily positivity rate for tests from July 23rd is 1.72%. That's really good. The rate of transmission, however, has ticked up, and currently stands at 1.09.

In all of these cases, as I mentioned, the numbers have been impacted in some way by the return of test results that have been part of a backlog for some of the labs, but it's undeniable there are positive cases. We know – we spoke this morning, Judy and Tina and Pat. We know there are flair-ups. I got an update this morning from the Middletown folks. The past seven days, 65 positive tests in Middletown alone, 52 of them between the age of 15 and 19. I'm happy to say that the folks, the parents have been cooperating, and I want

to give them a shout-out. They now have in Middletown 59 of the names from that house party I mentioned. Judy, you mentioned Long Beach Island, Harvey Cedars, several lifeguards, over 20, I think, in two communities.

I just saw on the television screen, Pat – I hope this is not true – that there was a house party in Jackson last night with over seven – with 700 people. It must have been quite a house. Rutgers University football program is shuttered for the time being. My friend Tom Pollando reached out with some positives in the athletic community in Sayreville. This is among us, folks. Any of us who thinks we can just put our feet up and relax and let this take its course is not paying attention. Particularly congregating inside in close proximity, poor ventilation without face coverings, you're looking for trouble. You're absolutely looking for trouble no matter how old you are.

In our hospitals, as of the latest data on our dashboard, there were 695 total hospitalizations. I don't remember the last time we had a six handle on that number. 345, Judy, of that 695 – tell me, I think you'd agree with this – were known positive COVID-19. Another 350 is persons under investigation pending the return of their test results. Of that total, 128 in intensive care. 54 ventilators in use. All of the metrics in our healthcare system continue to turn positively, and we're seeing our standing in the national rankings decrease, which is also a good thing. However, today we're reporting that another 17 deaths statewide are now confirmed to have been from COVID-19 related causes. God bless each and every one of them, but of that 17, only two occurred in the last five days. As of the latest available hospital data – and Judy will get into this in more detail – there were two additional deaths to report, but they're still pending lab confirmation and are not included in our totals.

I want to speak on behalf of the two of us. We are knowingly over the past couple of weeks giving you apples and oranges here. We're presenting in that chart every day lab-confirmed fatalities, but we've begun – and Judy's been really good at this – giving you a window just to give you some sense how many deaths we've been seeing over the past 24 hours in our hospitals, which is a real time. Those need to be confirmed still, and they will be reported down the road at some point once they're confirmed, but that is to give you all some sense of the picture. You can see that the total confirmed COVID-19 deaths currently stand at 13,884 with an additional 1,920 probable deaths from COVID-19 related complications.

As we do, let's remember a few of the New Jerseyans who we've lost to this pandemic. Let's begin with Patricia Nordman. She was born in Jersey City but called Mount Olive in Morris County home. Pat, as she was known, began a career as a technical illustrator in New York City, but when she and her husband Rudolf started a family, she paired her time spent raising her kids on the one hand with working in transportation for the Mount Olive Board of Education, a job she held and loved, I might add, for 25 years. After she retired with her children now adults, she went back to school herself and earned a master's degree in English literature in 2009 at the age of 67.

A strong woman of faith, Pat truly believed in giving back more than she received, whether that be in stuffing Christmas stockings that were taller than her children or in serving as a foster parent for children in need of a safe and loving home or participating in missions to deliver medical and school supplies to Kenya as a member of the United Presbyterian Church of Flanders, where she served as an elder. In fact, donations have been made in Pat's name to fund the Kasasule Health Center in Kenya, and the center recently announced that they have been funded in excess of a year, and that's all on Pat. Pat leaves behind Rudolf, her husband and partner for the past 57 years. Please keep him in your prayers. He's 82 years old. He's got big health challenges herself. She also leaves behind her four children, Bethanne, Suzanne, Rudolf, and Eberhard – there's a big German theme, by the way, through today's memorials – and their families, who blessed her with eight grandchildren. She also leaves behind man extended family and dear friends.

I had the honor of speaking with Pat's daughter Suzanne at the end of the week, and she's had a heck of a run. Her dad is not well. Her dog just died. She lost her son Tyler to a road – a street bike accident four years ago, and if that weren't enough, she was out kayaking recently and her cellphone with all the photographs of her son's – her son Tyler's prom and memories was lost in a reservoir. We're trying to help her out on that front, so please keep everybody in that family in your prayers. Pat lived her life helping others, and we thank her for her example of selflessness, and may God bless and watch over her and her family.

Next, we go to Warren County and remember Liselotta Helk of White Township. We lost Liselotta at the age of 94. She was born in Hanau, Germany, a town I know well. She came – as do any GIs who served in Germany will know Hanau. She came to the United States in 1956 with her oldest son Roland to rejoin her husband Paul who had come here six months earlier. She was a skilled seamstress and made a career working at several exclusive women's clothing boutiques. In 1961, Liselotta became an American citizen. She and Paul – by the way, also a German – made their home in several communities across New Jersey; Union, Newark, Rockaway, and Blairstown. And after Paul's passing in 1993, Liselotta eventually moved to a retirement community in White Township. But even though New Jersey was home, she always loved to travel with family and friends, seeing much of North America as well as returning to her native Germany and Europe. Liselotta leaves behind her sons, Rowland, who lives in Belmar, and Gordon, with whom I had the great honor of speaking to Friday - he's in Hardwick – and their families including three grandchildren. She's also survived by her sister, Helga and three nieces.

Like so many millions, Liselotta came to New Jersey from a far-off place and found her place here. It was quite striking, Pat, that Gordon told me her dad was a veteran, so Paul, who was Liselotta's husband, was a veteran, but he was a veteran of the German navy. They settled in New Jersey, and one of their best friends became a US Army vet who had been wounded in World War II by the Germans, and it just goes to show you there's more that keeps us in common in humanity that separates us. We are honored that Liselotta part of our family and may God bless her and those she left behind. [Foreign language 16:32].

Finally today, we remember Nancy Martel, one of our frontline healthcare heroes, a dedicated patient care technician at Palisades Medical Center and the Vice-President of Health Professional and Allied Employees local 5030. Nancy was born and raised in Lima, Peru. She exhibited leadership early in life by helping her schoolmates with their own homework and after high school, entered the School of Nurses of the Peruvian Navy with the goal to become a professor of obstetrics. In 1990, she earned her degree to become an obstetrician. She began a career in teaching but came to the United States in 1997 with her son. She attended Hudson County Community College to learn English and soon after began working as a certified nursing assistant at Palisades Medical Center.

For 19 years, right up until her passing from COVID-19, Nancy was committed to the patients in her care and the colleagues in her midst. And even when she fell ill, the well-being of others was never far from her mind. Her son, Christopher, with whom I had the great honor of speaking on Friday, eulogized her mother with the following, and I quote him. "For those who knew her, she leaves us with a life lesson that we must follow as an example for the service of our community." Nancy's two life goals were to see Christopher get his college degree and to buy her own home. She accomplished both; her American Dream was fulfilled. Nancy leaves behind her husband, Jorge, by the way, whose own dad died two months ago, along with Christopher and Christopher's in Teaneck, but she leaves behind a much larger family at Palisades Medical Center at HPAAE. I exchanged notes with the President of HPAAE, Debbie White, on Friday, who's a great leader and a very dear friend. And we were both bemoaning the loss of Nancy. And that family, whether it's at Palisades Medical Center or HPAAE, will never forget her dedication and fighting spirit. And Nancy was only 58 years old. We thank Nancy for her commitment to others and may she rest in peace and may her memory bring peace to all who mourn her loss.

So we remember Nancy, and Liselotta, and Pat as we remember everyone we have lost. In their own ways, each wove a special thread into the vivid tapestry that is New Jersey.

Now moving on, I mentioned at the top that this marks our 100<sup>th</sup> briefing of this pandemic. However, this is not the only milestone we're passing today. Today, the Economic Development Authority announced that its COVID-19 response efforts have now supported more than 10,000 businesses since the emergency began. That's more than \$44.2 million in support to a total of 10,624 businesses through grants, low-cost loans, and partnerships with investors and community development financial institutions. These programs have provided a lifeline to many small businesses as we navigate how to reopen and conduct business while continuing to prioritize public health. As committed as we are to defeating this virus, our administration is equally committed to helping businesses weather this economic crisis.

So one of those businesses we have partnered with is Musically Yours, a nationally recognized music store in Hackensack that has provided audio and lighting equipment to bands, DJs, restaurants, and catering halls across the tri-state area. And for the past 30 years, it has been owned and operated by Edward Decker, and

that's Edward with whom I had the great honor of speaking on Friday, and that's – those are his daughters, Madeline and Chloe. When COVID-19 hit and stages across the region went dark, Musically Yours closed for almost two months. But thanks to the EDA, Ed was able to secure more than \$90,000 through an interest-free loan as well as a grant and to help cover short-term costs, to pay his rent and utilities, and keep his employees on the payroll. Ed is also redesigning Musically Yours store, rebuilding its website, and retooling the rental department so when his clients are back in business, he'll be better equipped to serve them.

And one final note on Ed: he's not just a good businessman. He's also a jazz guitarist who's been touring the world with a jazz singer/songwriter and pianist Tony DeSare for the past 11 years and will continue to tour after the pandemic is over and allows him to do so again. Ed recently recorded a CD, *Dear Mr. Pizzarelli*, which he dedicated to his mentor and fellow New Jerseyan, the great Bucky Pizzarelli, who passed away on April 1<sup>st</sup> due to complications of COVID-19. And by the way, we eulogize Bucky some number of months ago. So to you, Ed, thank you for all your doing to keep Musically Yours up and running and for being a mainstay and leader in Hackensack's small business community. And I know the future remains bright.

And with that, for the 100<sup>th</sup> time, please help me welcome the woman who needs no introduction, the Commissioner of the Department of Health, Judy Persichilli.

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

Well, we continue to see outbreaks arising from gatherings among young people. Last week, we saw how a party in Middletown spread coronavirus. Now in Long Beach Island, we are seeing an outbreak stemming from social gatherings attended by lifeguards. Local health officials have identified 35 cases related to this common social gathering so far. We must take all precautions to limit the spread of this virus. Although they don't experience what we would call severe illness as often, young people still can transmit COVID-19 to those that they love. We need them to take this public health threat seriously. Residents should social distance, stay at least six physical feet away from one another, wear a mask or face covering, wash your hands frequently. Stay home if you're sick.

Although COVID-19 is a new emerging public health threat, the department continues its work to prevent transmission of communicable diseases in our state. Tomorrow is World Hepatitis Day, which is held to raise awareness of the global burden of viral hepatitis. Hepatitis A and B can be prevented with safe and effective vaccinations. While there is no vaccine to prevent hepatitis C, there is treatment available and it is curable. There are steps individuals can take to prevent transmission of hep C. This includes never sharing needles, syringes, and other injecting equipment, and using condoms consistently and correctly. Universal screening for hep C is recommended regardless of your risk factors. It is also recommended that pregnant women are tested for hepatitis C during each pregnancy. It is critical that all healthcare providers talk with patients about their risk for hepatitis and the steps that they can take to protect themselves.

Moving on to my daily report, as the Governor has shared, our hospitalizations are at a low of 695. There are 128 individuals in critical care, and only 42% of those critical care patients are on ventilators. There are thankfully no new reports of multi-system inflammatory syndrome in children for a total of 55 cases in our state. The children affected have either tested positive for the active COVID-19 infection or had antibodies that were positive. In New Jersey, there are no deaths reported at this time. The ages of the children range from 1 to 18; two children are currently hospitalized. The breakdown of race and ethnicity of these cases is white, 14; black, 33%; Hispanic, 43%; Asian, 6; and other, 4%.

The Governor reviewed new cases and deaths reported. In terms of the race and ethnicity breakdown, white is 54.1%; black, 18.3%; Hispanic, 20.3%; Asian, 5.5; and other, 1.8. Of the 17 newly reported deaths, six are associated with long-term care. Two have occurred within the past two weeks; and four have occurred totally in July. Our hospitals reported in the last 24 hours ending 10 PM last evening a total of seven deaths. The prior 24 hours, they reported six and prior to that, another six.

At the state veterans' homes, the numbers remain the same as they do at our psychiatric hospitals. The daily percent positivity as of the 23<sup>rd</sup>, overall for New Jersey, is 1.72. The north reports 1.09; central, 1.60; the south, 3.30%. So that concludes my daily report. Please protect yourselves during this extreme heat today. Drink plenty of water or other non-alcohol beverages. Make sure children and elderly are drinking water and ensure that persons with mobility problems or a disability have adequate fluids in easy reach. If you do not have air conditioning, check with your municipality to see if cooling centers are available. Wear loose and

light-colored clothing. Wear a hat when outdoors. Avoid any outdoor activity during the hottest hours of the day. Minimize physical activity for cooler times of the day, early morning or evening. So stay connected, stay safe, stay healthy, get tested, and mask up. Thank you.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Judy, thank you. A question on the inflammatory syndrome, I'm looking for silver linings here. No deaths and it appears as though the kids recover. You've only got 2 in the hospital and 55 in total, right? Let's hope it stays that way, alright? And in the increasing cases, the curve, it jumped early and sort of has flattened over the past sort of month or so, right?

**Department of Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli:** Should be flatter.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Let's hope it stays that way and again, you say it every day, and thank you so much for saying it. COVID-19 did not create the inequities, particularly across racial lines in this state, but it has laid them bare in this country, so thank you for reminding us of that every day.

Pat, anything on compliance or other matters but the other piece of this is – and we've talked about this – a concern that I have, I know you have as well, Judy and Tina have – is that we're not allowing indoor bars or indoor dining, and I hope we get to both at some point, but we're sufficiently concerned. We're not there yet. And the data – we need better data, but the concern I think – an obvious one is it's driving some of these otherwise gatherings underground. Any thoughts you have on that? And also I want to plead with parents out there because the cases we're talking about – Middletown was teenagers. I'm not sure how old the lifeguards were, but they're not people my age. These are overwhelming gatherings of young people, and Judy makes the point yeah, we have only two fatalities still under the age of 18, and both of those blessed souls had big co-morbidities, but there's very little knowledge on how this virus gets transmitted. There's a big concern a young person can get it and go home or go visit grandma or grandpa and pass this on unwittingly. I'm more venting than I am giving an answer on this one, but any thoughts you've got and anything you think we can do at the local level other than pleading with folks to be responsible, do the right thing. If you're going to gather, gather outside and wear one of these and social distance. Pat, with that, that's quite an introduction today. I apologize.

**State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan:** For the 100<sup>th</sup> press conference, it was a good intro. Thanks, Gov, good afternoon.

To your point, certainly that house party in Jackson – the three organizers of that party were cited for the EO violation. That came in based on a call from – I think there was maybe a hundred-plus cars there. And to your point, Governor, I do think the fact that bars and restaurant are closed then create this "underground" situation which is certainly not one that we want because to your point as well, young people, even if you're asymptomatic and you're positive, the fact that you can transmit that to your family members certainly one that concerns us. Another EO violation just over the weekend, that gym owner in Belmar was cited for contempt for failing to remain closed as per the Superior Court judge's order.

And the heat, we're looking at a hot week. I think a heat advisory's in place until tomorrow night at 8 o'clock, so I know the commissioner's point, keep an eye on one another. The only bright side is that DOT isn't brining the roads for the first time in a long time. Other than that, we're keeping an eye certainly on the East Coast as well with regards to tropical storms and depressions, Gov. Thank you.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Pat, thank you, and 211 is the place to go for a cooling center?

**State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan:** That's correct.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Okay, 211, either email or call. Again, I want to just hit this point one more time and then we'll start over here, Dante. First of all, I want to – before I forget, we will be virtual tomorrow. We'll be with you electronically. We have a White House call tomorrow and then we'll be back with you, unless you hear otherwise, at 1 o'clock on Wednesday.

I just want to make this point that we've just hit, several of us have just hit. We're begging you to please be responsible at your own home if you've got a gathering. And what's responsible? By the way, we don't condone underage drinking or anything illegal, but my comments right now are not related to that. Don't congregate indoors. I mean, I know it's hot but the good news, it's hot. You can do this outside. If you're going to have a group over, gather in your backyard. Wear face coverings, please. Don't be on top of each other. If

you do that, we'll probably be okay. It's not that you can't gather. In fact, we have an outdoor gathering limit of 500 people. We've seen countless towns do their graduations and do it really well. We're seeing overwhelmingly good behavior at beaches and parks. So we're not saying you can't gather, but it is literally irresponsible. You're playing with fire if you gather indoors without face coverings, without social distance in close proximity. There's no good that will come from that, and we've now got examples to say multiple under states and up and down the state where that has led to outbreaks. So please, I'm asking parents, we're asking kids themselves, it's okay to gather. Behave yourselves, but that's not the purpose of this remark. Gather outside. Gather responsibly. Put a face covering on. Stay away from each other, and if you do that, it's okay to do that. But the opposite is not okay.

So with that, Dante, good afternoon. We'll start with you. Matt?

**Reporter:** Good afternoon. From Dan Munoz, Governor, is the state's unemployment system prepared to handle what will likely be a sudden change in unemployment such as the \$600 a week going away or getting lowered? Are you concerned that it will be too much for the antiquated system and what's being done to prep the system? Curious if you have any reaction to Rutgers's quarantining the football program over the weekend? Will it spur you to reassess sports-related guidance in any way? Is there any chance at all that you see indoor dining resuming before schools reopen in the fall? When you pulled the plug on indoor dining, you said it would likely be a matter of weeks, not months. We're approaching a month. And lastly, I just want to get your thoughts. I mean, are you concerned about what looks like a significant jump in the uptick of the rate of transmission? I know that you cited labs, but do you think it's more the lab or these new clusters that we've been seeing?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Yep. Is that it? On Dan, I would rather wait if I could get Rob Asaro-Angelo to answer that. Mahen, could you get Rob connected with Matt? I will use this. So the answer is I assume we're prepared for that, because there could be a sudden shift as early as this Friday. But you've given me an opportunity to tee off, so allow me to.

To leave individuals hanging out there right now who are unemployed is probably the last thing we should be doing. To not fund robust testing supplies, capacity, and continue to fund is a federal government matter. Right now is about the last thing we should be doing. Not delivering states and local – county and local entities direct federal cash is about the last thing we should be doing right now. I had good conversations yesterday with Speaker Pelosi, today with Leader Schumer, but the fact of the matter is I believe the Republicans are dropping today – Matt Platkin, am I right? – their version of a bill that includes very little – either none of what I've just said in the case of state and local direct aid or a fraction of what's needed in terms of unemployment extensions, what we need for testing, what we need for education, getting schools opened, for small businesses, et cetera. So please, please, I plead to the leadership, particularly Senator McConnell in the Senate to please see that light, realize it isn't a blue/red thing. There's no politics. These are people's lives and please help us. On the specifics, Matt, I'm going to follow up with you.

Yeah, Pat Hobbs, to his great credit as Rutgers has done all along, Pat and I spoke. Greg Schiano and I had an exchange. I don't want to get out over my skis here, but I believe the incidents had nothing to do with athletic activity. And so it does not – I'll speak for myself personally. It does not change my personal assessment of whether or not we can go ahead with fall sports because I don't believe it was related to any of the athletic side of it. If that's wrong, I'm sure Rutgers or we'll correct the record.

Indoor dining, I hope sooner than later. I don't have an answer for you, and I know there's an enormous amount of thirst for it. We're just seeing in too many other places anecdotal evidence we just got back from Pennsylvania, who's been a great partner. When restaurants are open inside and outside, because of the heat, folks were choosing the inside with no masking. That's going to lead to bad things, probably not as bad, in fairness, as a bar, and I still think when inside dining does come – and I hope it's sooner than later – it's going to be service at your table, bar service that's delivered by a waiter or waitress to your table as opposed to bars opening and congregating at the same time.

The RT concerns me, yes, and the amount of anecdotal evidence that the three of us have spoken to concerns us, and that's no doubt contributing to the rise. I actually don't hear a lot about out-of-state challenges and folks returning. Now, some of those parties could've included – I actually don't know in this

case. We've asked several of these towns to give us any color they've got on whether or not it was triggered by someone who had come in from out-of-state or it was inside New Jersey community spread. But I'm concerned. I assume you are as well. Tina, how concerned are you?

**State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan:** We're monitoring this every single day and again, day to day fluctuations, we don't go totally crazy. Again, we look at several different metrics, the cases, the positivity, the syndrome and surveillance, and they're – those three metrics are very highly correlated, actually. And we haven't seen anything unusual, but we certainly echo the message about not being complacent. Regardless of whether you – the exposure might've occurred from an out-of-state or an in-state exposure, the fact is we still have community transmission here in New Jersey. So it doesn't matter where, ultimately. We still have to take the same precautions.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** A fair point, it is – the numbers are the numbers. We want to get to the source, but you make a very fair point as to what that source may be is one thing, but putting the fire out is another. I'm just reading a headline of an Asbury Park press story, Pat. "Jackson House Party, Cops Spent Nearly 5 Hours Breaking Up a Party of Over 700 People." Come on, folks. Come on! By the way, putting the health of the police at risk here, as well, which we talked a lot about early on. We haven't talked about as much lately. That's needlessly putting men and women in uniform and their personal health and their families' health at risk. Thank you. Matt, we'll get back to you on that first one.

Dustin, good afternoon.

**Dustin Racioppi, Bergen Record:** Good afternoon. I just want to drill down on indoor dining since that's an issue –

**Governor Phil Murphy:** On what, sorry?

**Dustin Racioppi, Bergen Record:** Indoor dining. That's an issue that you just acknowledged of widespread interest. When you compare the metrics today to what you cited on June 22<sup>nd</sup> when you announced that you would allow indoor dining, all are lower except for the rate of transmission. So just going back to what I'd asked last week, has your calculus changed since last month and can you specify what it'll take for you to decide to allow indoor dining and other indoor activities? Or is it now more contingent on what happens in other states?

Also, how can the public expect your administration to effectively deal with any spikes or second wave when there's this apparent lack of trust between the Health Department and the top aides in your office? Are you considering allowing school districts and not just parents the option to do remote learning in the upcoming school year? And do you have any update on what revenue raisers you're looking for in the next budget? Thanks.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** On the last one, no update, but as I mentioned here earlier, assume everything is on the table. I don't expect districts will come back with an all-remote option. I'm not saying we wouldn't consider it, but we explicitly put that out on Friday to give more flexibility to districts and to parents. And by the way, that addresses – I think I mentioned this Friday. It indirectly addresses another concern that I know educators have rightfully raised and that's capacity and density of how many kids you have in a classroom. So if you've got some amount of flexibility for parents who can afford it – by the way, remember, equity is one of our principles here that is a positive factor.

I don't accept the premise of - I'm going in reverse order, sorry – the premise of your question that there's a lack of trust. That's a – I just reject the premise and therefore won't answer it. There's an enormous amount of trust.

Indoor dining, you said with the exception that RT is higher – I don't have June 22 in front of me, but I accept that that's the one that's higher, but that is a little bit akin to asking Mrs. Lincoln other than that, how was the show? RT up is bad and do other states and the experience they're going through – I mentioned the Pennsylvania anecdotal evidence where people are gathering inside, the house parties inside. Other states, Arizona, Texas, Florida, California, that does still weigh on us because we know it's overwhelmingly coming from inside activity. I mentioned in answer to Matt's question, I do think when we do get to inside – and I hope it's sooner than later – it is sequenced. I would except – Judy, you're going to have to bless this, but I

would assume that there's going to be – it won't be just one – everybody can get back indoors. It's going to be capacity restrictions, social distancing, masking when you're not actually eating or drinking. I'm sure universal – just as we're seeing with outdoor dining, which by the way as far as I can tell is going great. But it will be – it will not be people congregating around bars. If the restaurant serves liquor, and [inaudible 42:34] Murphy, I hope they do, that I'll be – you would take that order at your table and a waiter or waitress will go get it and deliver it to you as opposed to congregating. Thank you for that.

Good afternoon, Alex.

**Reporter:** Good afternoon, Governor. Col. Callahan, the word you were looking for before was speakeasy, and so I do want to see if you can expand on that a little bit. Are you seeing more instances of these house parties because people are unable to go out to the bar and go out to eat? Separately, there was a report that the air conditioning at the Bergen County Jail is not working. Are you aware of that? Is it true? Is OEM assisting in any way? And I want to ask Commissioner Persichilli, likewise with people unable to go out or people sort of confined to their homes, are you concerned about a spike in opioid overdoses and deaths? And for Governor Murphy, you pointed out of course this is the 100<sup>th</sup> briefing. What do you think has been your biggest mistake so far? What do you think has been your biggest success? Obviously you must go back and kind of Monday morning quarterback yourself on some of these. Where do you think you might've made a wrong move? And lastly, just a general question, how much do political considerations influence the decisions you make? Obviously it can't be zero; the number can't be zero. Or is it like LBJ told his people in the White House, "I'll be the politician. You bring me the advice"? Do political considerations have any impact whatsoever on your decisions?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** You don't get LBJ in a question often, so I got to think about that one. The question about speakeasy was to the – are we concerned that they're going to exist?

**State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan:** I think aside from yesterday's party, I do think that with bars and indoor dining shut at this point, there are gatherings at homes but to the Governor's point, if they're outside, social distancing, it can be done in a safe manner, but when the max capacity is 500 and there's 700-plus people there, it's just unacceptable and moreover, it's just not safe.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** And by the way, we're not sure who was indoors or outdoors, but the indoor capacity's 100 and that's assuming you're socially distanced, or 25% of capacity. I'm not sure how you define capacity of somebody's house, whichever is the lower of the two. I'm normally better than this. I apologize, Alex. You had a question for Judy, which was...

**Reporter:** Regarding opioid overdoses.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Yeah, I just want to say one thing before Judy answers that. I just got an update this morning from our team on mental health matters generally and overdose deaths are up. And there's a lot of steps we've taken, telehealth, putting some CARES money into programs. In fact, I said to Mahen earlier, we owe a revisiting with us as well as maybe Christine Norbut-Beyer or Carole Johnson so to address some of the – both the mental health challenges, which are real. I mean, domestic violence, drug abuse, suicide, sadly all of these things, not just in New Jersey, are up all over the place. But Judy, anything you want to add to that?

**Department of Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli:** Just want to emphasize that the work of the department goes on and looking at overdose deaths on a regular basis from our opioid division is still going on. We want to open up fully the harm reduction centers. We have seven of them and want to make sure Narcan is available. And so all of that work is going on, but we have seen an uptick primarily with overdoses from fentanyl. So we keep an eye on it and the work goes on as it does with maternal health and all of the things that we do. But overdoses, it's an issue, and mental health is a huge issue. We had a briefing last week on the impact and particularly to first responders, nurses, healthcare workers, on PTSD, and the impact of this pandemic on the mental health and wellness of the general population. We plan to have a series of meetings to determine what at the Department of Health we can do to support people that are suffering emotionally from what they've been through.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Again, we've had some successes. Telehealth keeps coming up. It's a big success. I mentioned that a couple of weeks ago, but in the great minds think alike category, we literally were having this conversation this morning that we owe folks an update on not just what the facts are, and the facts are not pretty, but also what we've done to try to mitigate, address some of those facts. That's a little bit like asking the head coach due to the press conference in the middle of the third quarter, so I won't get into this in much detail. I think as a nation – and I'll certainly include myself in this – and we were early. We were about as early as any state in America to take a lot of the steps. Judy still chairs – Pat's the vice-chair, I believe, of our inter-governmental coronavirus task force, which we established on Super Bowl Sunday. There aren't many states that were in that. So having said all that, I think all of us wish we were earlier even than that, particularly in the metro New York reality and the commuting county – the big six commuting counties in and out of New York. It was clear that was there before any of us knew. The sense of the New York people at least is it came China but via Europe and traveled from Europe. I'm not smart enough to know that, but that's – any of us who were associated with us I suspect in any state, if you knew on December 2<sup>nd</sup> what we knew was coming on February 2<sup>nd</sup> or the first case that came on March 4<sup>th</sup> – if we knew that much earlier, that would've been a huge asset for any of us, and that includes yours truly.

I've never heard that LBJ quote. I love the fact that you threw LBJ into a question. I literally don't think about politics at all. I literally don't think about it at all. When I pick up the phone to call a mayor, I don't care if it's a democrat or republican. In fact, in many cases, we have been overwhelmingly reliant on folks, in my case, from the other side of the aisle. The best example is beach opening and management. I'll give you an example. Mayor Vaz on Thursday or Friday last week at Seaside Heights said you know what? He didn't like what he saw in terms of capacity on his beaches, and he made a step to limit capacity in Seaside Heights, the amount – I assume through the amount of day badges that he was selling. I give him a huge shout-out. Landessa Derrit [0:49:13] in Cape May County and Sea Isle City – I literally don't care either their politics or mine or what consequences there are from any action we take. We're going to keep focused as best we can on the data, the science, the facts, and try to save as many lives as we can, period. Thank you.

Anything, sir? Sir, one sec. You're good? Oh, I'm sorry. Dante, you okay there?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Okay, good. Dave, are you okay, more importantly?

**Reporter:** Yes, hay fever is beginning, so that's the reason that I'm trying to clear my throat. Good afternoon, couple of questions. You've talked a lot with Commissioner Persichilli about the knucklehead young person factor kicking in here. Besides the fact that everybody's concerned about this, what, if anything, can be done? I mean, I know there had been a discussion about doing like a snappy PR campaign, social media. Is that still going to happen? Might law enforcement try to get a little tougher and just not only give tickets to people that are hosting the parties but anybody who goes there, there's a threat that you may get a summons? Because this seems like it's really serious and could spiral out of control.

Are there concerns about – I know the CDC revised their back-to-school guidelines and saying now that parents should be the one to take temperature when their kids head back to school. In the earlier guidance, the CDC had recommended that the schools do it. I believe our idea here, Governor, is that we're going to ask the schools to take the kids' temperatures, but what should parents be aware of and what should they be doing and thinking about if the kids are heading back?

And a tie-in to that as my last question here, at what point might we have to cancel the in-person schooling if there is a flare-up and so forth, and has there been any discussion about childcare? A lot of these especially lower income families can't afford to not go to work. So if the kids are doing at-home schooling, what's going to happen if the parents have to go to work? I think that's it. Thank you.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Hope you get over the hay fever. So I think it's a combination of things, Dave, on the – this is the first question knucklehead or as Pat will want me to say, wingnut behavior, second-place finisher. I think it's a combination of things. It's moral suasion. It's using our bully pulpit, open-minded to some public campaign, law enforcement. You saw it in Jackson. They did break it up. They got a complaint; they went. The fact that it took them five hours to break a party up is somewhat unfathomable. It gives you an idea of how big that party was. We just plead to both adults and kids. There's a way to do this and there's a way not to do this. I think it's probably just because we know the specifics, there's probably overwhelming compliance with doing it smartly. Otherwise, we'd be talking about 10 or 20 of these a day and we're not. But I think it's a

combination of all that, including law enforcement, having them probably turn it up a notch. Most importantly, parents and kids thinking about this the right way, doing the right thing. Again, outdoors, wearing a face covering, socially distant. I'm not condoning underage drinking. Put that aside though. Socially distant, wearing a face covering, washing hands with soap and water. Don't show up if you're not feeling well. It's fairly straightforward and it's easy for us to say that in July. That'll be harder to execute in December. And God willing, we're in a better place, meaningfully better place as a public health matter by December.

I haven't read the CDC guidelines in great detail. There's a general sense that they're less stringent than the original version. I'll leave the politics out of that, but that's the general sense. I think Judy, you want me to remind everybody that while temperature is a frequent symptom, it's not always a symptom, particularly somebody who's completely asymptomatic. I think we're going to wait here over the next – we're going to start – the district plans are going to be produced now over the next – are being produced but they'll come out in the next week or so. Let's defer on that til we see it.

Yeah, and you raised what happens if – what's the protocol, and this is something that is also being hotly discussed with districts. What's the protocol if you do get a positive case? And what does that look like in terms of the stresses that you rightfully point out? This is one of those things where the hip bone is connected to the thigh bone. You've got – and again, that's why it's health, education, and equity are our three principles here. Around that, flexibility, and I say equity because in your very good question, Dave, you've got a lot of parents who are not sitting at home with at least one of them able to afford to be there, that rely much more heavily on in-person education and we cannot forget that. That's why we say often that no school – two school districts are exactly alike. But to cut through it, there's huge gaps between suburban and rural on the one hand and urban on the other. And so that's – bear with us because we're all trying to – I know at the district level, and we are at the state level – I think this is country if not world level, folks trying to figure out how all that works. If you shut down, how much do you shut? How long do you shut? Where do the kids go? What happens to mom and dad who are both working full-time? None of that's easy, so bear with us on that front.

With that, I'm going to mask up. We had thought about wearing see-through masks for persons with disability who can't speak or can't hear. And if that's all you've got – and I'm speaking particularly to those communities – then it's better than nothing. I think, Tina, in fairness, it's not nearly as efficacious as the ones that are actual face coverings, right?

**State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan:** Yeah, they're currently recommended right now for certain groups like metaschool and other setting where it will be important to have that type of communications but it's generally not recommended for most.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Again, in some cases, you've got no choice and it's better than nothing but generally, you reminded us, Judy, a couple weeks ago that just those shields you see a lot of people wear, that's fine, but you need one of these under the shield. By the way, combination, that's even better than one of these, so we like that, but one without the other – so Judy and Tina, thank you, Pat, Jared, Matt, Mahan, the whole squad, Dante. We'll be with you virtually tomorrow. We'll be with you live unless you hear otherwise at 1 PM on Wednesday. Again, overwhelming thanks for what everyone is doing and doing the right thing by the millions. We want to get indoors, trust me. believe me, we do. But we got to do it right at the right moment in the right configuration. I just want to plead one more time to parents and kids. Don't congregate inside. Please don't do that. If you're going to gather, get outside. Wear a face covering. Stay away from each other. If you do that, the chances of your getting hit by this virus go down dramatically. It's not to say it can't happen, but it's not likely to happen. But Judy, if you're inside right now and there's no ventilation and it's packed and you're not wearing one of these, good luck. Please, folks, don't do that. Thank you all. God bless.

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