

Governor Phil Murphy

# TRANSCRIPT: January 13th, 2021 Coronavirus Briefing Media

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Holding a COVID-19 briefing. WATCH:



**Governor Phil Murphy:** Good afternoon, everyone. I am joined by the woman on my right who needs no introduction, the Commissioner of the Department of Health, Judy Persichilli. To her right and as we had promised, we've asked Eddy to come in here each Wednesday to be here as a voice of authority and wisdom on vaccines especially, the state's former epidemiologist and current COVID-19 Response Medical Advisor Dr. Eddy Bresnitz; Eddy, it's great to have you back. The guy to my left and I'll comment more about his attire when I introduce him later, the Superintendent of the State Police Colonel Pat Callahan.

Before we dive in, a couple of things. Number one, since I think we were last here and Jared, I meant to raise this with you -- and Jared Maples here is the Director of our Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, Parimal Garg, Chief Counsel. I don't want to out your entire resume, Jared, and inadvertently tripping an intelligence wire but one of my former bosses, Bill Burns, who was the Deputy Secretary of State when I was US Ambassador in Germany has been named as Designee Director of the CIA. I will tell you, Bill is one of the most impressive guys I've ever met, or persons, in my life. He's just an extraordinary human being, an extraordinary professional. He was our Ambassador to Russia, I believe twice, he was Ambassador to Jordan. He was the so-called P, which is the Political Director of the State Department, and he was Deputy Secretary of State during my time and just an extraordinary human being. A great professional works, by the way, both sides of the aisle and he will, I'm sure among other things, completely depoliticize the intelligence community. And so hats off to Bill. I reached out to we had a nice exchange.

Let me also say, sadly, on behalf of my brothers and sisters in the Foreign Service, on behalf of our national interests, on behalf of our allies who help us pursue our national interests, we have alliances not just because we're good people in the United States, because those alliances further and advance our cold-blooded national interests of the United States of America. Mike Pompeo will leave as Secretary of State a week from today as the single worst Secretary of State in the history of our country, period. It's not because he's not smart. He graduated number one in his class at the United States Military Academy, and I take my hat off to him for his going there and his service in uniform to our nation. But he's literally been an awful Secretary of State. The morale in the building is at an all-time low. And it's not only that he's weak and awful, but he's making decisions as he's going out the door, which they know full well will tie the hands of the incoming Biden Administration. Despicable.

And I'll tie these two guys together. And again, one I can't say enough good things about and the other I can't say enough criticism about. But when Ambassador Chris Stevens was murdered in Benghazi and three colleagues, the bodies were flown to Rammstein Air Base in Germany when I was the Ambassador and I had the heavy, sad duty to receive those four bodies. It was an extraordinary moment. Ironically, I received them. They were put to rest in a shelter that night, and who came to fly them home to Dover Air Force Base, but Bill Burns? Mike Pompeo then spent the succeeding or the ensuing two years plus just attacking everything associated with what happened in Benghazi and we should have known then, he went to the Central Intelligence Agency first and politicized it there, then he went to the State Department and practically ruined the State Department.

So I say to my brothers and sisters in the Foreign Service, who are among the greatest professionals I've ever had the honor of working with when I served as Ambassador, help is on the way whether it's Tony Blinken at State, whether it's Bill Burns at CIA, whether it's President Joe Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris, the entire team, they deserve better. They will get better. Our allies deserve better and our national interests, cold-blooded national interests deserve better.

Okay, with that, Judy, I got that off my chest, let's get down to business. So based in large part on data that we were seeing in New Jersey on the ground, including hospitals, and we've got an extraordinarily good and close relationship with our 71 hospitals, largely through Judy and Eddy and their colleagues, we were seeing the appetite for pods to open up further to access a broader community for vaccinations. And then you add to that, what the incoming Biden administration has signaled about vaccines and then the Trump Administration, Judy, yesterday with you and Pat and me, sort of getting in sync with the incoming Biden team that they would unload all doses with some amount of high conviction that they'll have the second dose manufacturing in place. And then you add to that the encouragement that we further got from the CDC pronouncement yesterday, today, we're announcing that all New Jersey residents ages 65 and older, plus those between the ages of 16 and 64 with medical conditions as defined by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention that increase the risk of severe illness from the virus, may begin to receive their vaccinations as of tomorrow.

And I want to be careful, Judy and Eddy, to not use the word comorbidities. That's not what this is. This is folks with chronic, real-time health challenges between the ages of 16 and 64. Again, it is somewhat if not largely based on the anticipation -- not guarantee, but anticipation -- of increased deliveries of vaccines as the federal government will no longer be holding back doses, we are confident in taking these steps. And again, there's harmony right now, there

wasn't necessarily harmony before, but there is right now. We're the Trump team who were on with yesterday and the incoming Biden team who we are on with on a regular basis. We have set the infrastructure we need to do this job and we are now ready to begin to ramp up our vaccination efforts exponentially.

May I just say this upfront, I want to remind folks, please be patient. We are taking this step in advance of what we not just anticipate what we will likely have in terms of an increased vaccine dosage supply.

Secondly, we cannot allow to see in New Jersey what happened in Florida with seniors standing up all night around the block in very cold. That will not happen here. This will continue to be an appointments-based regime.

Thirdly, there is a supply-demand imbalance which we know full well as of tomorrow morning, we are adding to, in anticipation of that demand. But Judy, I'll get to this in a minute. We've got 260-odd distribution points that you have planned, that number is going up, 160-something of them are already up and running. We have six mega sites. We believe strongly that we can responsibly take this step. But folks, please be patient. We know this is going to open up the population 65 and older is 1,470,000, does that sound right to you? That is 75 and older, so this is even bigger. We suspect, Eddy, that 60 to 64 with chronic conditions is at least several hundred thousand people, we would think. That's a harder number to get, obviously. You think it's even higher.

So as we've previously said, we had expected to be able to expand our vaccination programs in waves, allowing more residents to enter the line before the entirety of the previous group had gone through. Outgoing Health Secretary Alex Azar said this yesterday and I thought it really resonated with us is when you board an airplane they start with 1A, they go to 1B, 1C, 1D. They don't wait for the last person or persons in 1A to get on the plane before they begin the process of 1B and so on and so forth. And that is what this is. Think about that in your mind's eye in terms of the steps we're taking.

Eligible residents will start receiving notification about scheduling an appointment on our system, NJVSS when they are eligible. If you have preregistered at our vaccine website and again, this is the place to go, covidvaccine.nj.gov and are now eligible, you should soon be receiving your email that it is your time to make an appointment at a site near you to get your first vaccine dose. So far this number has gone up, I think, almost 200,000 since you and I were together yesterday. More than 1.2 million people have already preregistered, which is a really encouraging sign, not just because of the number itself. But one of the big concerns we had, you'll recall a couple of months ago, was sort of the notion of anti-vaccine sentiment. This number is proving that it may be a lot better than we had anticipated.

And because of the steps, by the way, that we've already taken to streamline the process, we'll be able to properly track your vaccination to ensure you receive the proper follow-up dose as well.

And should the federal government continue to make more doses available, as we expect them to, we anticipate being able to allow more and more residents into the vaccination lines. We will keep you fully updated on the progress and will publicly announce every new group eligible to be vaccinated as we move forward. Again, remember supply-demand imbalance, which in the immediate term will only grow, please have patience. We are in the "if you build it, they will come" mode and they in that case are vaccine dosages.

As we move forward with this expansion, our pharmacy partners, in fact I have right in front of me, we have 259 points of distribution, 165 of which are already open as we sit here today, and the others are in the process of being opened. And of those 259, that includes the six mega sites.

As we move forward with this expansion, our pharmacy partners at CVS and Walgreens are continuing to move through their scheduled visits to our long-term care facilities to vaccinate residents and staff. As of the close of the day yesterday, 220 nursing home clinics have been completed and 28,500 nursing home residents and staff have received their first vaccinations. Overall, residents and staff at a total of 310 congregate long-term care facilities have received their first doses. That's a total of 33,000 vaccinations to date. Both CVS and Walgreens will continue their work to move through every facility accepted into the federal pharmacy partnership. I would say CVS has made more progress than Walgreens and we hope and expect that Walgreens will catch up. We're obviously working closely with each of them.

Let there be no mistake, our vaccination program is ramping up and is prepared for this task. We are working diligently to ensure that the vaccines we have received are distributed equitably to where they need to be.

Moving on, we have an update from the Department of Education and our continuing efforts to close the digital divide. The number of students, there's a nice eye chart for you, Pat, the number of students who are lacking either the equipment or internet accessibility for online learning decreased by another 1,100 last week. This decrease, as I understand it, is largely attributable to the entirety of East Orange's order for devices being fulfilled. A sizable portion of the remaining gap is in Lakewood, but officials there have received confirmation that their delivery is finally on track for this week, and we'll continue to work alongside Lakewood's education officials to ensure this delivery is in fact received.

But what was a 231,000-plus student divide is now just – and I say just – 7,717. That's still 7,717 too many, but we are at about almost 97% complete in closing the digital divide and we are not going to stop working until we bring that down to zero.

Finally, before we get to the numbers today, switching gears entirely, as you may recall, Friday is the last day for our Commissioner of Environmental Protection Catherine Mackay before she retires to spend time with her family. I'm pleased to announce today that the guy on the right, Sean la Tourette, who's the Deputy Commissioner and Chief of Staff will take over as Acting Commissioner of Environmental Protection beginning on January 16<sup>th</sup>, which is Saturday. Sean has been an integral part of every major decision we've made over the past three years from clean energy to environmental justice, and frankly, everything in between. I know he will ably lead the department going forward. I look forward very much to working alongside him. I wish Catherine nothing but the very best. I have the great honor of speaking with each of them yesterday. They've got a great team at DEP and it has been and will continue to be under great leadership.

With that, Judy, let's get to the numbers. As of mid-morning, a total of 264,681 vaccinations have been administered statewide and given our earlier announcement, we expect this number to grow, I'm going to use the word exponentially, over the coming weeks. Additionally, this is now on the testing, we've received another 6,922 positive PCR tests, I believe that is a single-day record, as well as another 1,265 presumed positive antigen rapid tests. That's a consolidated cumulative total of 602,630 breaking down between the numbers on the page there, 543,974 PCR, 58,656 antigen.

The positivity rate for all of the tests that were recorded last Saturday, and there were 25,913 of them, was 13.53%. Again, too high. Statewide rate of transmission today is 1.10 and that's about where we predicted it would be. It's up a little bit, but it's about where we thought it would be.

In our hospitals as of last night at 10:00 p.m., there were 3,726 total patients. That breaks between 3,448 known COVID positive and 278 persons under investigation awaiting results. Let's stay here for a second. This number and the number I'm going to turn to in a second are the two that we cannot allow ourselves to be on the wrong side of: 3,726., the peak in the spring, 8,270. Remember, we were disallowing any elective surgeries at that point. Those go on, but I know Judy, you and Eddy and the hospital's themselves and your team are watching that number and this number like a hawk, 648 patients were in intensive care, we'll stay there for a second. Let's compare that to the spring: 2,018 was the peak, ICU beds were at 648. Again, that's a number that we cannot allow ourselves to be on the wrong side of. Of this group, 452 were on ventilators.

Throughout the day yesterday, good news, 438 live patients were discharged across our 71 hospitals, but 460 patients were admitted. And again at the risk of comparing apples to oranges, 64 in-hospital deaths yesterday not yet confirmed. But with the heaviest of hearts, we are announcing an additional 95 confirmed COVID-related deaths

today. That brings the cumulative total of confirmed to 18,070. The number of probable deaths has been revised to 2,091. So all told, we have now crossed the threshold of 20,000 residents lost to COVID-19. For New Jersey, it's almost unfathomable. This is more than 25 times the number of residents we lost on 9/11 and we still mourn their loss. We mourn the loss of every one of those lives, as well as this unfathomable number of folks who have been lost to COVID.

For anyone who's still left denying that this is real, I don't think there's anything else we can say to try to convince you of reality. But for the overwhelming number of you – and it is the overwhelming number of you – who understand the battle we are waging and who understand the role that we all play and who are taking personal responsibility to new levels, don't give up. Better days are ahead, we just need to keep strong and the better days are not tomorrow, unfortunately. They're ahead measured in weeks and maybe a few months. We've got to stay strong over the next number of weeks in particular. I think this month into early February is make-or-break time based on our modelling and based on everything we know. So we need to keep strong for our friends and communities and in honor of those we have lost. And as we do every day, let's talk about a few of them.

We need to keep strong in honor of Rodney Dickerson, Jr. That's Rodney with the cat there. Otherwise known by the way, to many as Little Rodney. He was a lifelong resident of Trenton, a member of the Trenton Central High School Class of 1986, and one of our frontline healthcare workers. He was just 52 years old. Those of you, by the way, who watched my State of the State Address yesterday heard Rodney's name, as he was the father of Najon Dickerson, who's 21 years old, who is the son of Trenton public school educator Tawanda Taylor, and she referenced Rodney. He also leaves behind another son not just Najon, but also Nasir.

Rodney spent his time away from work playing multiple sports and sharing time with his family and friends, especially with Najon and Nasir. He was also the funeral director of Dickerson Funeral Chapel in Ewing. Besides his sons, he's survived by his parents, Rodney and Mary, and his two sisters Ronique and Ronja and many nieces and nephews, as well as several other aunts. He was predeceased by his sister Lisa. I had the honor of speaking with Tawanda yesterday, thanking her for being in the video but also talking with her and with Najon who got on with us about Rodney's life, and God love him. We thank Rodney for his commitment to providing health care for and comfort to his fellow residents. We thank him for being a role model for his sons and for many others. May God bless and watch over him.

We also need to keep strong the memory of another guy Anthony J. Galietti. Tony, as he was known, was a career police officer and his service included more than nine years as Chief of Police, Pat, in Woodland Park, his hometown, and I want to give a shout out to my dear friend and the mayor of Woodland Park, Keith Kazmark for raising Tony's passing with me. He was a member of the International Police Chiefs Association and the Passaic County Chiefs Association, and he sat on the New Jersey Honor Legion's Executive Board.

Tony, I mentioned Rodney was 52, Tony was only 59 years old. He leaves behind his wife Gina with whom I had the great honor of speaking, his children, Andrea, Anthony, Daniel, Michael and Matthew and his stepchildren Melissa and Austin, and his cherished granddaughter Piper Rose. Gina, by the way, his wife, they had been married for a year-and-a-half. She was also COVID positive and sick. And she said what a kick in the pants. Just four years ago, Tony beat Stage 4 cancer and thought he was home free and only to be gotten by this virus. He's also survived by his dad Anthony, keep him in your prayers, his siblings Karen, Ann, Frank and their families. We commend and thank Tony for a lifetime of service to his community and our state, and may God bless and watch over him.

And lastly, we need to keep strong because of Patricia Waters, who spent all of her 58 years as a resident of South Plainfield. I want to thank my friend, another dear friend Senator Pat Diegnan for raising Patty's passing with us. Again, 58. So 52, 59, 58 and all of these are recent deaths. We're not going back, there was a while there, Judy, when we were going back to March, April. These are all within the past couple of weeks.

Patty was a graduate of South Plainfield High and Rutgers University. She earned a degree there in economics. She dedicated her career to public education. She sent a generation of learners off on their journeys as a pre-k teacher at Riley Elementary in her hometown. Away from her classroom, Patty was an avid reader and crafter. Get ready for this, Pat, she was a competitive miniature golfer, taking great joy at beating all comers, but especially her husband, Scott. I had the great honor of speaking with Scott. He himself was COVID positive and was in the hospital himself for seven days.

And Patti loved watching her own children, Matthew who's 23 and Stephanie who's 20, play sports and I'm sure took the same joy when their teams won. She now leaves them. She also leaves a large extended family including her father-in-law Thomas, sister-in-law Sharon, her nieces Heather and Shannon, and nephew Kevin. She leaves many, many friends and many more grateful students. And by the way, to the point of these are recent deaths, her funeral was yesterday. Patty literally just died last week. Thank you, Patty, for your being a true leader in and out of the classroom and may God bless your memory and all who you have left behind and miss you.

As I noted, we've now lost more than 20,000 residents to this pandemic and many were just like Rodney and Tony and Patty, strong people. Let that sink in, folks, 20,000. That's more, by the way we did the math, that's more than the populations of 430 of our 565 municipalities. That is why we have to keep fighting this virus and why we all should put our names forward and wait our turn to get vaccinated. It's about saving lives and moving forward together.

Next, as we always also do, let's give a well-deserved shout out to one of the small businesses standing at the ready to help us move forward. This one actually relates very much to the cause that gathers us. Today we recognize Fred Murli, that's Fred in the circle there, founder and CEO of Freehold Bass PIER Practice Solutions. Fred's a Manalapan guy. Fred and his firm provide business solutions and insurance to numerous doctor's offices and other medical practices statewide. Fred opened the firm just before Hurricane Sandy ravaged our state and was there to help his clients pick up and get back to providing care to those they serve. And today, Fred and his team are doing the exact same thing. They've learned a thing or two about the needs of business in the face of immense challenge. It's a very interesting business model because if you're an independent practitioner in the medical community, you either have the burden of building your own middle and back office or engaging somebody like Fred who does it for you, which then frees you up to spend a lot more of your time doing what you're trained to do and studied to do and have a passion to do, which is practice your medical skills.

PIER Practice Solutions participated in the discount PPE program offered by the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, purchasing much-needed equipment for staff and clients at a steep discount. And with their PPE in hand, they can continue to serve their clients safely. Check them out, PIERps.com.

Next, a couple of quick things more before we close. I want to acknowledge Senate Majority Leader Loretta Weinberg, who is expected to make a big announcement later on today, and I will leave that announcement to Loretta. But I want to say that Senator Weinberg has been a singular voice in the Statehouse championing progressive action since she entered the General Assembly in 1992. She has proudly worn the mantle of New Jersey's unofficial Jewish grandmother. She has proven herself as a strong advocate and equally tough adversary, depending on which side of the aisle or which side of an issue you found yourself on. I've been on both, by the way, but she is all heart and I look forward to working with her not just in her current capacity, but for many years to come.

I don't think we need to speak about cementing a legacy. Loretta built an incredible one all by herself. She and I spoke today. I told her I love her. She said even if I'm nagging you, I love you no matter what. And I did say this to her. I think she's got a case to be made as the most consequential legislator in the history of our state. God bless you, Loretta.

I also want to give a quick shout out to the members of the New Jersey National Guard who continue their service protecting our nation's capital and securing our democracy from those who believe in insurrection over free elections. Congressman Andy Kim sent us this photo. That's Andy holding the Dunkin to-go coffee, as he had the

chance to stop by to visit New Jersey's Guard members and keep them fueled up for their task. He sent me literally a long text last night just gushing about the service for these men and women. So to every member, whether you're in DC or in Jersey or wherever you might be deployed of our National Guard, thank you for your service. Again to those in Washington, we look forward to seeing you return home soon and safely.

That is a good segue for me to state unequivocally my support for the House of Representatives to vote in support of the Articles of Impeachment against President Trump. His actions and words last week which incited the insurrection and violence and his lack of actions and words to stop it, or even to show any true sense of remorse, keep Brian Sicknick of South River Middlesex County, New Jersey, in your mind when you hear those words, cannot stand as allowable or excusable. I don't think I'll often find myself in agreement with Wyoming Representative Liz Cheney, the third-highest member of the House Republican Leadership, but I do here and I give her a huge shout out for being on the right side of this from moment one, never equivocated. I want to give a shout out to her father, who again, I have not been aligned with on much over the years, but he is the one that gathered the 10 living Secretaries of Defense to write the letter that they wrote last week, before this awful incident at the Capitol on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

Representative Cheney said of President Trump's actions last week, and I quote her, "There has never been a greater betrayal by a President of the United States of his office and his oath to the Constitution." And that hits it on the head. And to those of you who think, well, he's only got one week left. This is not about time. It's about doing what's right. It's about setting a higher bar for the Presidency of this country. It's about standing up for the Constitution and the rule of law. It gives me no pleasure to say so, but the President must be impeached and he must be removed from office. I would hope the Senate would take up the matter with all speed so that President Trump's actions become a cautionary example for future leaders that our Constitution is larger than they are. Otherwise, our democracy – already shaken – could crumble.

And by the way, it is not just The President, before I turn it over to you, Judy, I am getting a lot off my chest today. But I don't know if any of you heard Mikie Sherill last night saying that there were three members of Congress who she witnessed – and this is not just Mikey, I have now heard this from two other members with similar stories on January 5th, the day before this awful insurrection, actually showing people around the Capitol. If that is proven to be the case, it's one thing, even after that to stand up and continue to assault our Constitution and question the validity of the election, which has overwhelmingly been proven in courts and in Statehouses around the country. That's bad enough and those folks need to be held accountable. But if it's proven that there were members of the House of Representatives who were showing around folks who the next day were part of an insurrection, Parimal, I am going to practice law without a license, that's treason and the consequences of that, as you know, are grave.

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

**Commissioner of the Department of Health, Judith Persichilli:** Thank you, Governor and good afternoon. Well, as the Governor shared, starting tomorrow, residents aged 65 years and older, and those between the ages of 16 and 64 years of age with certain chronic medical conditions, are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccination. We know that individuals in these categories are at greater risk for severe COVID-19 illness and death. 80% of COVID-19 deaths in New Jersey have been among those 65 years and older. 67% of overall COVID-19 deaths had one or more underlying condition reported. However, we know this number is likely higher, because not all cases had data reported on whether those comorbidities or chronic conditions existed.

Expanding vaccine access to those 65 and older and those between 16 and 65 years of age with chronic conditions will help us protect the most vulnerable amongst us. Starting tomorrow, individuals between the ages of 16 and 65 with the following conditions are eligible: cancer, chronic kidney disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, COPD, Down's syndrome, heart conditions for example heart failure, coronary artery disease and cardiomyopathies, obesity and severe obesity, sickle cell disease, type two diabetes and the largest group, smokers. Smoking puts you at significant risk for an adverse result from COVID-19, and there are 2 million smokers in New Jersey that fit into this category. Individuals who are pregnant and those in an immunocompromised state, a weakened immune system from things like an organ transplant are also eligible but should follow CDC guidance and first discuss vaccination with your medical provider before receiving the vaccine.

Similar to other phases, no documentation of the medical condition or your age will be required. Individuals in these categories can register at [covid19.nj.gov/vaccine](https://covid19.nj.gov/vaccine). There are already 1.2 million individuals in New Jersey pre-registered. There are also some points of dispensing not participating in the state scheduling system so on that same page, [covid19.nj.gov/vaccine](https://covid19.nj.gov/vaccine), you can find a list of locations with contact information to schedule your appointment. For example, some of the counties such as Essex County, they have their own registration system. It's listed on the site, and some of the federally qualified health centers are taking appointments by phone. These sites will continue to be updated as more vaccination sites become available, and more sites are being stood up every day.

For example, today Camden County announced the opening of a site at the Camden County College. People will start receiving notifications from the registration system in phases when they are eligible to make an appointment. Again, those who are pre-registered can look at the list of locations on the COVID-19 information hub and call the individual sites to register at a location near them. I want to remind everyone that you must have an appointment at this time. Vaccination sites are not able to accommodate individual walkups.

As the Governor shared, 264,681 individuals have been vaccinated already, and vaccination capacity continues to grow daily. As we work to continue to vaccinate as many individuals as possible, we can see by the numbers reported daily that community spread remains high. On Monday, Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman announced that she tested positive for COVID-19. As part of her treatment, she received monoclonal antibodies, which are drugs, manmade proteins, that mimics the body's immune response and helps it fight the virus. The FDA issued an emergency use authorization for monoclonal antibodies to be administered for the treatment of mild to moderate COVID-19 in adults and pediatric patients who are at high risk for progressing to severe COVID-19 illness, such as individuals over 65 years of age, or those with underlying conditions such as diabetes and hypertension.

The treatment is for individuals who are not hospitalized and who have been diagnosed positive by a PCR test. Patients receive the treatment intravenously as an outpatient. Individuals should contact their healthcare provider to see if this treatment would be beneficial to them. So if you test positive and only have mild to moderate symptoms, call your healthcare provider. See if you are a candidate for monoclonal antibodies. Our hospitals are reporting over 100 patients a day are getting this treatment, and it is improving their condition and avoiding hospitalization.

Moving on to my daily report, as the Governor shared, our hospitals reported 3,726 hospitalizations of COVID-19 positive patients and PUIs, with 648 of those individuals in critical care, 70% on ventilators. We are meeting weekly with the collaborating CEOs from our regions. We are preparing for the predictive surge that may start as early as next week into the middle of February. We will have PPE, we will have ventilators. What we will not have is the appropriate level of staffing that people are familiar with, conventional staffing. So we will be working with our hospitals if they need to progress to what we call contingency staffing, and hopefully never crisis staffing.

There are no new reports of multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children. We have a total of 75 cases.

The Governor reviewed the new cases and deaths. The race and ethnicity is as follows: White continues to be 55.3%, Black 17.1, Hispanic 19.4, Asian 5.2 and other 3%.

At the state's veterans homes since Monday's briefing, there have been two new positive cases among residents in Vineland and one new case among a resident in Paramus. State psychiatric hospitals are reporting four new cases among patients at Ancora and one at the Trenton Psychiatric Hospital.

As of January 9<sup>th</sup>, the state positivity is 13.53, the Northern part of the state 13.17, Central part of the state 14.35, and the Southern part of the state 13.14. That concludes my report. Stay safe, continue to mask up, social distance, stay home when you're sick, get tested and if you're eligible, make an appointment and get vaccinated. Remember for each other, for us all, please take the call and download the COVID Alert NJ App.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Judy, thank you for everything. The monoclonal antibody point is a big one. The federal health experts have been pounding that drum, that it's a potential game changer. God bless Bonnie Watson Coleman, by the way, keep her in your prayers, a great leader. You raised Bonnie in connection with that. Is it fair to say that the take up is better at larger hospitals and less good at smaller hospitals? I know you and Eddy and the team are pounding away on that but there's a lot of evidence that it can be a game changer, particularly if you get it early and symptoms are not severe, I think, so good word to the wise on all the above.

Pat lots of moving parts here. Compliance, I know you've got a few cases. We've got obviously security as a general matter. These days it is a top of mind, and any other? I think weather is actually decent. Weather we don't have on our list today, which I hope it stays that way. But please, welcome and thank you for everything.

Oh, sorry, I have to say one thing. Pat is wearing the same attire he showed us yesterday. These are the original trooper uniforms in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the New Jersey State Police.

**State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan:** Thank you, Gov, just waiting for my horse.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Exactly.

**State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan:** Good afternoon, everybody. Since we last met, there are five EO violations to report. Newark responded to a very large gathering of more than 100 people. The organizer of that was cited. In Paterson, they responded to Belie Café and just, again, violations of the Executive Order. Also Paterson police reports that Gypsy Hookah Lounge was also cited for not complying with the order. In West Orange, police responded to La Dolce Vita. Again, no social distancing or masks. They were cited. And lastly, back in Newark, Newark Police also and again responded to a large gathering where they cited the organizer there.

As far as security, Director Maples, our federal, state and local partners are obviously monitoring what we're hearing with regard to protests around the country and certainly in New Jersey. We'll continue to monitor that and have our assets ready, Governor.

Weather, it's supposed to be about 50 degrees tomorrow; for the middle of January, we'll certainly take that and it'll be a good day for our Trooper of the Year ceremony.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I'm looking forward to that. Thank you, Pat, for everything. Again, on the security front, we'll probably keep it general but color us in the category of preparing for the worst and hoping for the best and erring on the side of over preparing as opposed to under preparing, which is what I think any of us would want in the state.

We'll start over here Dustin with you, if that's okay. I would just say we'll stay on the same rhythm this week. We'll be tomorrow virtual, Friday in person unless you hear otherwise. Judy, before we ask the questions, I was asked this question and I said the number of 5,000 on total hospitalizations would ring a lot of alarm bells. Do you have a number in your head right now on the total COVID beds or ICU beds?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Well, if our predictive modelling is accurate, we could see a moderate scenario for 4,500 and high scenario, over 6,000, that would be tough. Over 6,000 would be tough.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** And at that point we're going to have pull some levers that we're not pulling at the moment. And again, the good news is if there's any silver lining, 3,700 and something today is up by the way, it's been up for a few days in a row now, but still well below the numbers we saw in the spring and the ICU numbers at 600 and something are well below, but I don't want the reason I raise this is I don't want folks to think that that's the capacity. In other words, those numbers in the spring already factored in the reality that there were no elective surgeries, by example.

So again, virtual tomorrow. We will be with you, unless you hear otherwise from Dan or Mahen, one o'clock right here on Friday. With that, Dustin, Good afternoon.

**Dustin Racioppi, Bergen Record:** Good afternoon. You piqued my interest on the reconnaissance issue that Congresswoman Sherill talked about last night. Can you share any more details about where you heard that information?

When can people expect to see the \$300 in supplemental benefits? Why was there another IT issue with the Labor Department delaying those benefits? Can you talk about what differences there are in this way for rural parts of the state?

And we learned yesterday that former Governor Christie was the subject of a death threat. I'm wondering if there would be any consideration going forward given that threat and the hostile climate that we're in right now, to giving state police protection to former governors? Thank you.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Dustin, I missed the rural question.

**Dustin Racioppi, Bergen Record:** I am just curious if perhaps the Commissioner can just talk about what kind of differences there may be in this wave in those rural parts of this data.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Okay. I can safely assume that Rob Asaro Angelo is watching. If you could bear with me on that, on the question about the \$300 benefit, as well as the IT challenge. My guess is that we'll have an answer for you while we're still here.

I read the Mikie Sherill readout and it was from a conference call or an interview conference call that she did last night with, I think her constituents, as I understand it, Facebook Live? And it's not the only story, Dustin, that I've heard, and I'll leave the names of the other two representatives out because I don't have all the details. But there are at least two other representatives who happen to be Democrats who had stories that were in a similar realm. Quite concerning.

Judy, the rural piece, I don't want to preempt, but the big hospital versus the smaller hospital monoclonal antibodies, I assume is part of that narrative. But any comments you've got on the spread, and I saw the same reporting you did Dustin on Governor Christie. I don't think we probably want to talk about how we deploy security for individuals but obviously, you take something like that very, very seriously. Particularly to your point of your question at this particularly fragile moment in our country's history, again, we want to be in the category of being over responsive and not under responsive. We take all that seriously. We'll leave it there, folks. Is that fair?

Judy, any color on the rural question, which I think is a good one, for Dustin?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** At this point in New Jersey, the community spread covers the whole state. Everybody is in a high risk situation. The positivity rates between the counties all range between 13% to 15%, all the way up to 18%. But it's pretty widespread, pretty similar throughout the state.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** So you wouldn't make a distinction necessarily rural, suburban, urban?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** No, there's no actual designation in New Jersey for rural hospitals. It's all suburban and urban. But we look at it by county. The counties are all pretty similar. We have widespread community –

There's no question about it. Again, the only way, we're up against that. There's no question. We're in the throes of this second wave. But we're not, thank God, and I hope we don't have to come back and eat these words, we're not like Los Angeles County is right now, or Arizona, where they're literally portioning I believe in Los Angeles County, they were apportioning oxygen within the past couple of days. So it's everywhere. But we've at least, for the moment -- the other thing that's frightening and Eddy, you may want to comment on this as well, is that you see Ireland, which had gone into a big lockdown and then this variant has come in and their numbers have exploded. And people ask us a lot, do we have proof of this variant being in New Jersey? My answer, stock answer so far is I don't have the smoking gun, nothing personal, but we assume it's in our midst. Is that fair to say?

**Dr. Eddy Bresnitz:** I don't believe there's any documented cases with the variant in New Jersey, but we clearly had several states around the nation that have had several cases. But you know, overall, in comparison to the numbers of regular cases, if you will, it's just a handful. The data that's been reported is that these variants have higher incidence or risk of transmission, but not necessarily of severe disease. But right now, it's not a factor.

There was some data that Pfizer actually did taking some serum and antibodies from people who were in their clinical trials and testing it against these various strains. They found that based on those studies that it didn't seem to likely have an impact in terms of the efficacy of a vaccine, which is good news.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Good. Please God, that turns out to be the case. Dan, could you give Rob Angelo a shout out because uncharacteristically, I haven't heard from him yet so I'll come back to you on that one, Dustin, if that's all right. Matt, good afternoon. And if we don't have it, we'll come back to offline.

**Matt Arco, Star-Ledger:** Good afternoon. Commissioner, would you be able to clarify how many people you believe are now eligible in what we've been announcing today in terms of just being able to get a vaccine? We're looking now at this massive expansion in the number of people who can get vaccinated while some nursing home residents are still waiting to get the vaccine. Governor, is there anything that can be done to speed up those vaccinations in nursing homes by CVS and Walgreens?

New Jersey ranks 34th nationally when it comes to vaccinating per capita, according to the CDC. What can be done to take us out of this grouping and why are we not doing better?

And Governor, undocumented immigrants are rallying in Trenton today for driver's licenses which went into effect January 1<sup>st</sup>. Is there any update on when any training will begin at MVC or when this community will expect to start obtaining licenses?

And finally, from Brian Thompson. Colonel, will the State Police revoke the honorary badge given to President Trump that was reported on recently? Thank you.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Thank you. I'll let Pat answer that last one. I think you put a statement out already about this, right? So give me one second of that. But let me say the data, this is just a fact. Judy, I'll leave the state aside. We were marveling at a couple of states and the numbers they were putting on the boards and Judy had a conversation with one of our counterparts. And it turns out we think that some states are double counting. I wouldn't hang a lot of solace. And again, we want to be the best in class or in the top flight group in anything we try to do. It also is all over the place whether you're looking at it on a Wednesday versus a Tuesday or a Saturday. We're in a massive ramp up at the moment.

My view on this is we want to do this in an orderly fashion, so no lines around the block and camping out like you saw in Florida. We want to do this in an orderly fashion with communities one to the next. But our goal is to get shots in arms, period. To do it the right way, the most equitable way, but get as many shots in as many arms in New Jersey as soon as possible and as much as possible.

How many eligible, Judy, I was led to believe, I said this earlier and you corrected me, it was 75 and up as 1.4 million. This is a bigger number and we think many hundreds of thousands on the 16 to 64. I'll turn it over to you in a second. And Judy, you may want to also weigh in on the nursing homes.

But here's the thing. There's a schedule for both the CVS and the Walgreens. They're chopping through that schedule. I don't think I'm being uncharitable to say that CVS is pretty much on track and Walgreens isn't. And so what are we doing? We're pounding away to make sure that they get on track.

And as it relates to the undocumented, I saw them outside as I was driving in here myself. I don't blame them. This is something we're committed to and the MVC got clobbered, knock sideways, to use the verb, by the pandemic, by COVID-19. I don't have any update on timing. I think that the timing we pointed folks to was I hope by the spring would be my hope and I don't blame them for being frustrated. I'm frustrated too and I think the MVC team is also frustrated. But this is a fall out, unfortunately, from COVID.

Maybe, Judy, you first, any comments on how big the population for you and Eddy, how big the population we just announced today? Nursing homes that may be waiting, any other comment about our performance versus other states?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Plus 65, 1.47 million. When you go from 16 to 64 and you add in those with chronic conditions, you first have to, if you identify smoking as a chronic condition, there's 2 million of them. And then the remainder is up to about a million. These are pretty significant numbers, but the smokers really skew the 16 to 64.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Any comments beyond my comments on CVS and Walgreens and nursing homes?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Well, I think that just a level set where these doses are, 756,000 doses were ordered. Of that, 215,000 are reserved for long-term care so there are doses for long-term care, they will get their vaccinations. It's not that they have to wait in line for a dose. They have it. It's the vaccinators getting individuals into 655 facilities. That's long-term care and assisted living. So those facilities are being scheduled. It's a pretty significant task for CVS and Walgreens and as the Governor shared, CVS was quite prepared for this, Walgreens not so much. But we have the doses. Their vaccine is put aside. We then claimed that was actually sent to us from what we ordered 474,000 doses, of which 236,503 have been delivered and that's almost 50%. So it's a pretty high number overall.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Pat, do you want to address the trooper badge?

**State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan:** Certainly. I would just remind Brian and everybody else who asked, that cane and that token was presented in an unprecedented time. I was a lieutenant colonel of field operations and we had five line of duty deaths in a year. But contrary, Matt and Brian, to what was reported, that badge number and the President's name is not associated on our official roll call and it does not confer any rights or privileges upon the President, so there really would be nothing to revoke.

And lastly, I just re-echo what I've said before that the President's role in what we all witnessed last week runs directly counter to our core principles of honor, duty, and fidelity which we were founded upon 100 years ago. Thanks, Gov.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Pat, thank you. Back to Dustin, I've heard from not one cabinet member, but two. Chris Rein, who's runs technology, said he's just check with everybody, there have been no IT issues with Labor in the past 24 hours. So if it predates 24 hours, then Dan, you can follow up on that if you could. And then Rob himself said the following, there was an unforeseen issue paying the new \$300 at the same time as the old \$600. We're working it around the clock and still hopeful to get the \$300 payments out this week. Either way, regular unemployment insurance payments have no issues and no one will lose any eligibility for the \$300. Thank you for that. Sir, do you have anything? Please.

**Reporter:** I have three from News 12's Alex Adan. For the Governor or the Colonel, can you give us an update on the National Guard members in Washington, DC and whether they are now armed? Also, Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy says states that deploy too much of their National Guard to DC could put the state at risk. Are any of the 500 Guard members being recalled to New Jersey? And are there enough to protect the State House on Sunday?

And lastly, for you, Governor, were you or your staff involved in applying for a PPP loan that went to the soccer team you own Sky Blue FC? Thank you.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** So at the moment, I do not believe they are armed in Washington. Is that right? They are not armed, although you saw the Secretary of the Army made the point that they are at least considering arming National Guard. I think we addressed this yesterday but I do want to hit the second question hard. And that is, we cannot deal with rightful concerns and security issues in Washington at the expense of New Jersey security. That's just not going to happen. The numbers that are down there do not take away from our ability to do the proper protection and security in New Jersey. Anything you want to add to that?

**State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan:** I would just add I've been back and forth with the Adjutant General Hou this morning and she also confirmed that with me, Governor, without getting into specifics of numbers, that we will have certainly sufficient numbers of National Guard members. She purposely did not leave us exposed or vulnerable in that regard. I can make that assurance based upon my conversations, and I will be on the phone with her when this press conference ends.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Amen. I had nothing to do with it, either me or my staff with the PPP loan. I believe it's one of nine sports teams that actually applied for it and I'm happy to say I own a big chunk of it but I don't have any involvement day to day in running the team, which is good news for everybody. But they were able to, in fairness, they were able to keep everybody employed throughout this and that was sort of the intention of those sorts of loans. But beyond that, I've had no involvement. Thank you.

I have got more color on IT or unemployment, but I think I've already said, a number of people are now coming at me, but I think I've given you the totality of the answer and if we think there's any cleanup Dustin will come back to you. Sir, give me one second here just to get myself back, make sure there's nothing I'm missing here on what was just asked on IT. Okay, I'm good. Thank you.

**Reporter:** Governor before I asked my question today I just want to say that I grew up in South Plainfield, two blocks away from the elementary school where Patricia Waters worked. I didn't know her, but I appreciate you taking the time to memorialize my neighbors. This pandemic truly affects everything and everyone.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** God bless her and thank you for saying that.

**Reporter:** So this is question from Leah Mishkin in our newsroom. You vetoed Senator Sarlo's first bill to expand outdoor dining because, among other reasons, you wanted ABC in the loop and wanted local municipalities to decide on possible permit fees. Restaurant owners want to know why the state is creating more red tape around this and why they may need to spend more money on permits they already have. Also, will you sign the bill now that changes have been made, and it's passed both houses?

From Ian and Colleen, the Legislature's message to you about marijuana is clear, sign the two bills on your desk or conditionally veto them. What do you plan to do? And is anyone going to be held accountable for the delay in the \$300 federal bump for unemployment benefits?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I think I've answered the \$300 that no one is going to be held accountable because this is a system issue. Remember, the \$300 is coming out of a FEMA allocation. The only reason it's coming out of FEMA is that money was appropriated in advance for a disaster. When the President, for whatever reason, couldn't get his colleagues in the Senate, in particular, to put forward a stimulus bill and he had nowhere else to look to find a pot of money, that's where they went. And it's, as you can imagine, it's not the traditional UI system so you're building something from scratch. That's the reason for it.

I'm going in reverse order, other than to say thanks for what you said about Patty and God rest her soul and thanks for being a good neighbor.

Listen, I remain optimistic on marijuana. I won't get into the specifics of how this ends up but we've been guided by two principles as it relates to the open item here and we've been clear since day one. Number one, we don't want any more kids, particularly kids of color getting tangled up in our criminal justice system. That's the last thing we need. And secondly, nobody has ever, including yours truly, spoken about legalizing marijuana, recreational marijuana for kids. That's never been in the cards. Look at the referendum that the voters voted on and it's crystal clear. It's 21 and up. Those principles have been inviolate. They've been there from moment one, they remain there and we've just got to find a way. We've had constructive engagement back and forth. We have just got to find a way to respect both of those principles. And again, I remain optimistic.

The headlines around this, we vetoed outdoor dining. That's the last thing from the truth. I think if you look at our dining reality, both indoors and outdoors, we have been as consistent as any state in America. And that's not to make restaurant owners feel good, because this has been an awful avalanche of misery. I get that. But when we opened up indoors on September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 25%, we have not wavered for one minute since then, up or down. I wish we could go up but as you can see with the numbers, that's not in the cards right now. And we encouraged outdoor dining, it started June 15<sup>th</sup>, Monday, June 15<sup>th</sup>, as aggressively as any American state working with municipalities, working with the ABC, carry out liquor. So with all due respect to the way the press has reported this, we have been on the right side of this one.

Having said that, you can't take away authority from municipalities. You can't take ABC's authority away. Some folks would like to say that that that bill that we vetoed didn't do that. Well, it did. I hate to break the news. But the good news is this and Parimal will correct me if I'm wrong. We're in very constructive discussions and I thank Senator Sarlo for his great leadership on this and Senator Pou and others. We are in very good discussions with them and I'm optimistic we'll end up in a good place. That fair? Okay, thank you for all that. Dave, one of these days we'll start with you.

**David Matthau, NJ 101.5:** Well, it's whatever, no worries.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** It's Judy's fault.

**David Matthau, NJ 101.5:** I would figure.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** She gives me the orders.

**David Matthau, NJ 101.5:** That answers our question on that. The issue with the plan for vaccine distribution, now that we're expanding the pool. My understanding is if you've preregistered, there's going to be a list that you will be able to pick from to make your appointment. Does that have to be that location that you pick in the county where you live?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** It does not. This is a good point. And we made this point I think in Gloucester the other day at Rowan College. It's open to anybody who lives, works, or studies in New Jersey. You don't have to be living in that town or that county, unless Judy corrects me otherwise.

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** No, that's true, but we would like if you go to Gloucester for your first shot that you go there for your second,

**Governor Phil Murphy:** That's the important footnote. Don't go to your drugstore for one and Eddy's for the second.

instances of that.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** You need consistency and that's a very good footnote. And by the way, I think it's easier on everybody if you do choose something that's more convenient for you, it's not required but that makes logical sense to either where you live or work or study.

**David Matthau, NJ 101.5:** Also, if you have not preregistered and you're 65 or older, you find out hey, I can get a vaccine. How do you go about making an appointment? What do you do?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Go on the site. You can preregister. You can do it now.

**David Matthau, NJ 101.5:** Are you required to now?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** You can't just show up.

**David Matthau, NJ 101.5:** So you have to make an appointment to preregister?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** You have to either preregister and make an appointment or call, because not every site interfaces with the appointment scheduling. If the site around the corner from you is not it'll identify that on the website; you call and make your appointment.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Again, this is in the category of patients, we're building the plane as we're flying it. This is the most complex distribution challenge in the history of our country, never mind the state, and we've got 259 distribution points, 165 of which are open. I promise you they're not all at the same punching weight. They ultimately, God willing, will but this is obviously a work in progress.

**David Matthau, NJ 101.5:** And final question. Some are questioning whether the online call that is apparently anonymous, for some kind of an armed protest in the United States, the capitals in our country, including Trenton, would apply to New Jersey because of our very strict gun carry laws. Anybody who shows up is going to get arrested and face felony charges if they are carrying a weapon and don't have a permit. Governor, what are you expecting to see? What do you want people who might be considering getting involved in some kind of violent activity, what do you want these people to keep in mind as this weekend approaches and the inauguration next week? Thank you.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Yep, thank you. We don't normally pick these questions off one at a time and answer them so I'm normally looking through a list and this is an unusual circumstance. A couple of things. I've got no issue with the Second Amendment. I don't think any of us do. That's not what this is about. This is about respecting our Constitution, respecting law and order and doing the right thing. As I mentioned, I won't get into specifics, but this is something that has been noticed for all 50 capitals, including ours, right here in the capital city. I know Director Maples and Colonel Callahan and our entire leadership team, the Attorney General, our federal partners are all, as you can imagine, all over this. I hope it turns out that we hope for the best, prepared for the worst, and we got a good result in terms of take up, etc.

Even at Wednesday, I think my colleagues and I'll ask Jared to come in here in a second and add any color along with Pat, even on a Wednesday before a Sunday, it's probably even still too early to get a sense of how much real chatter there is online or elsewhere in terms of how much take up there is. I would ask folks to stay home. Sorry, you asked if they want to take up violent protests, if that's their intention, they will be dealt with to the full extent of the law and there will be no corner for them. I would hope that they understand that. You're seeing the feds right now aggressively follow up on the Capitol, we may have had a huge national failure preempting that, but I think they're committed to making sure that as an after-action matter, that folks are aggressively pursued and without getting into the details, that includes folks in New Jersey, as you can imagine. And I think at least one case has been publicized.

If you are not intending to do violence and you just want to go out and protest, I would say we respect your complete right to protest on whatever side of the issue you're on but don't do it in the next week. This is a bad week to be out there. I don't mean these good folks out there right now because they're basically in an area and there's no one really else around them. You've got some troopers from Troop C out there, but their heart is in the right place. I'm actually with them in terms of the spirit, but if it's this weekend, if it's next Wednesday, just please, I'm begging people to stay home and stay safe. Jared, anything you want to add and Pat?

**Director of Homeland Security and Preparedness Jared Maples:** So I'll just add two quick points. One is there is no known specific or credible threat to our state's capital, but we are preparing for the worst and making sure that no violence occurs. And the second point was to really emphasize the Governor's point. We've been on the phone with the FBI and with our state and local partners throughout this, almost hourly. While we were here, Director Wray of the FBI actually hosted a nationwide call and our senior leadership team was along with the State Police senior leadership team to ensure that we had the most relevant information. So if that changes and to the Governor's point, as the days go on, we'll certainly update but right now there is no known specific or credible threat.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Thank you, Jared. You're good, Pat? So again, this is a general call to protest. And to Jared's point, that's a lot different than we have a particular piece of information or corroboration of multiple pieces of information. Unusual time. I mean, the fact that we're even talking about this tells you a little bit about the moment we're in. Eddy, anything you want to add? I want to make sure you get your money's worth for showing up today.

**Dr. Eddy Bresnitz:** If I could just say a couple of things about the monoclonals. I want to make a pitch for healthcare providers who can provide these infusions for patients who are eligible to get the monoclonals. If you look again at the pattern of hospitalizations, you'll notice as I mentioned last time, it is too high, but it seems to have leveled off since mid-December. The monoclonal became available around mid-November and then they were not there. I'm not saying that's the reason for the plateauing but I think it might have made a contribution.

It is a therapeutic drug but it is also preventive in terms of preventing people from being hospitalized. We've got plenty of that drug in the state, the feds have been encouraging the states to use it. You know, not just in hospitals, but in infusion centers. There's a partnership with pharmacies, they're also providing those in other infusion centers as well. I think that more and more hospitals should be, as the Commissioner said, there are some that are using a lot of it and there are others that are using very little. There are reasons for that, but I think it's certainly worth the effort to get it.

And the one thing I think people need to understand is that you need to get it as quickly as possible. Beyond 10 days from the time you first have symptoms it's not going to work. So if somebody has symptoms, they need to get tested, PCR tested. And as soon as it's positive, they shouldn't sort of be struggling with their symptoms, they should contact the health physician or health system and ask to see whether you know, they can get the monoclonal.

Finally, we're also planning to provide information in our testing centers for individuals, so that when they get their results and it's positive, they know that this therapy is available.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** These are great points. And we haven't talked, we haven't used the word therapeutic a whole lot lately. We were using it morning, noon and night, Judy and Eddy, many months ago. And we used we were saying at the time, I know I said it many times, there will be vaccines, but they're not here yet. There will be therapeutics that are effective that aren't here yet. So the vaccines are here and again, our vibrations are we're going to see some more vaccines, not just the Moderna and Pfizer, but potentially others. We have no inside knowledge on that but that's what it feels like.

And this is a big point Eddy makes, and Judy had made it earlier, just to really underscore this. This doesn't prevent you from getting it. In fact, by definition, you've got it when you take it. But it could well, and in fact, in many cases does prevent a worsening of the symptoms and prevent you going to the hospital. But speed is of the essence and I guess level of symptom is of the essence, right? So early on when you've tested positive, and also that it's that you're either asymptomatic or light symptoms, you get it at that moment in time, it's a world of difference based on all the scientific evidence we have. And again, it's an uneven execution on this and it happens to be, and I know Judy, you and Eddy and the team are on this. It happens to be the bigger hospitals and the bigger hospital systems have been more aggressive in using it than the smaller ones. That's something I know you're pushing to see change, and it can make a real difference.

**Dr. Eddy Bresnitz:** And it's available to all hospitals.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Yeah, it's broadly available, which is another important point here. So with that, Judy, Eddy thank you. Eddy, we'll see you God willing next week. We may be a little bit of a different schedule next week because we've got Martin Luther King Day on Monday, so I believe I can break news now that probably our first meeting next week will be Tuesday, and then we'll figure out where we go from there. But Judy and Eddy, thank you. Pat, whether it's in the 100-year attire or your normal kit, great to have you with us, Jared, Parimal, Dan. To everybody out there, stay the course, keep fighting. I'd say this is the make or break few weeks right now, and we get through this, you combine that with more vaccine doses, hopefully one of these days warmer weather, the modelling showing the epidemiological curves cresting, that combination which is right now really lethal and against us, ultimately then we have leveraged on the backside of that. We're hopefully sooner than later in a whole different and better place.

Last comment, nothing to do with COVID, echoing what Jared, Pat and I have said, folks, stay safe. Use your common sense. When in doubt, this is probably not a bad week to be home, particularly this weekend or on Inauguration Day, at home, watching a movie curled up on the couch, just be safe. And if you want to go out and express yourself peacefully, we respect that completely. I just don't think this is the week you want to do it, over the next week. And if you want to protest and use violent means, we will have no patience and we will have no reservations about using the fullest extent of the law against you. Please don't test us. Many thanks, everybody.

## Governor Phil Murphy

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