

Governor Phil Murphy

# TRANSCRIPT: April 1st, 2020 Coronavirus Briefing Media

04/1/2020

Holding a COVID-19 briefing. WATCH:



**Governor Phil Murphy:** Good afternoon. I would love nothing more than to sit here and say April Fool's and then everything would be back the way it was. Unfortunately, that is not the case and this is the reality that we're dealing with. And we're all going to have to adjust to what is most likely even a new reality once this emergency passes.

I am joined at the table by an august group of colleagues, beginning with the woman to my right who needs no introduction, Commissioner of the Department of Health Judy Persichilli, Judy. To her right, State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan – Dr. Tan, honored. And to my left, the far end, State Police Superintendent Col. Pat Callahan.

I want to give a shoutout. I know he gave me a shoutout, and the shoutout in return is richly deserved to Governor Andrew Cuomo. And you can't do this by yourself. You can't, and no matter how good you might be within your own borders you need partners – in particular, your neighbors. And there has been no better partner than Governor Cuomo, and I would also add high on that list Governor Lamont in Connecticut, Governor Wolf in Pennsylvania, Governor Carney in Delaware and Governors from around the country who are not contiguous and who are not directly neighbors but folks with whom we have shared best practices, compared notes. We're all trying to learn from this at the same time.

 Back to top

We got on this very early. We started meeting and speaking about it in January. I think I established our whole of government taskforce on February 2nd. But it doesn't make it any easier, and I know Governor Cuomo was early on this as well. But we're in the fight of our lives, let there be no doubt about it and it helps to have partners. I also want to acknowledge that the Director of the Department of Homeland Security Jared Maples is with us.

As we have done of late, I'm going to start with a report on the new cases and sadly the newly-reported COVID-19-related deaths. Over the past 24 hours, we have received an additional 3649 positive test results, pushing our state total to 22,255. Judy will go through those positives in more detail. And during the same time, since yesterday we sadly have lost another 91 of our fellow New Jerseyans to COVID-19-related complications. This means we have now lost a total of 355 members of our great, blessed and diverse New Jersey family, and it gets to easier to report that.

I should note, if you're doing the math at home, that three previously-reported deaths are undergoing additional verifications. So, they have been removed from this count pending those results. And I think we alluded to this yesterday, Judy, that in certain places, particularly long-term care facilities, cause of death can be complicated. You've got a lot of end-of-life situations sadly to begin with, and then you add this virus on top of that.

Every single one of these lost lives is irreplaceable, period. We pray for their souls, we pray for their families and friends. One of those we have lost during this emergency was Janice Preschel of Teaneck. You can see Janice's beautiful picture there on the left as well as on the right with some of the young folks in Teaneck. She was the founder of the Helping Hands Food Pantry that has fed countless families for more than a decade. She was active in her temple, Temple Emeth, and was a past President of the Teaneck Rotary. She was 60 years old. And I quote Teaneck's extraordinary Mayor and the Township of Teaneck as they put it, they lost a "true woman of valor."

I would expand on that to say that we have lost at least 355 people of valor up and down our state, young and old, persons of all backgrounds. And we mourn for each of them from afar. And even in mourning we have to continue practicing our social distancing. As I said yesterday, we all have to remember to stay at home before this hits home. The only way we can protect our families and our communities and to flatten the curve behind us so we don't have to mourn one more or more precious lives is by taking social distancing to heart.

Last week, I noted the words thanks to Pat Callahan of Father Jim Greenfield, the President of DeSales University, who said we should think of this as a time of social solidarity, because by staying apart we're actually coming closer together in common cause to defeat COVID-19. And I feel that. I feel that in my bones, I feel it all over the state. I hear it all over the state, this perverse reality of on the one hand being alone and isolated and distant from each other and at the same time feeling like we've never been closer together.

By whichever means you think of this, whether it's Father Jim's social solidarity or the more commonly used social distancing, it is both our best offense and our best defense against COVID-19.

Stay on the charts for a second. Again, the one on the left – and these are hard to read but the punchline isn't hard to read. The one on the left is if we had taken a decision from moment one in January and early February to let this virus run amok, run its course. You see a huge spike in the need for hospital beds, almost 80,000 in a state with 18,000 hospital beds. So, we basically got a little north of 20% of what we would have needed. There's no state in America or the world that could have made up that gap between that blue spike and that red line that goes straight across.

The graph on the right is a better reality. It's still not a perfect reality but as you can see, the blue spike is a lot lower. It comes in at around 35,000 beds, and we've got as I've said about 18,000 with plans to put a lot more in place. But at least you've closed that gap such that you're at 50% of what we need as opposed to 20%-ish of what we need.

Our job collectively, the 9 million of us – our job is to flatten that blue curve even further. That right graph assumes an average performance based on prior pandemics. We are not an average state. We are the quintessential American state. We can do the impossible or seemingly impossible. Our job collectively, all 9 million of us, is to take that right curve down as far as we can take it.

Judy and Christina and their colleagues, and Pat and the Army Corps and FEMA, they're working on taking that red line up. So, as we bring the blue line down they bring the red line up, and God willing we meet in a place that allows us to get through this and with the healthcare system that is up to the task before us.

Switching gears, last night I spoke and had the honor to speak with Admiral Dr. Brett Giroir and I received word from our federal partners, that after my repeated and our repeated requests another 350 ventilators are being released from the Strategic National Stockpile and heading to New Jersey. This is on top of the 300 that we took possession of I believe yesterday morning and that we're checking and going through and which we are testing as I say and preparing to deploy. And this is also on top of the 200 that, John, you originally asked about that we had gotten some weeks back.

I want to give George Helmy a particular shoutout. I don't know where we'd be without my Chief of Staff who is at the ROIC in the War Room with Pat and Jared and others. And I just want to give him a huge shoutout.

So, if you add the 200 from a couple weeks ago to the 300 we got yesterday morning, to the 350 that they agreed to give us last night, which I believe are enroute, that means we've received a total of 850 additional ventilators. But we still need more, and I will continue to press the White House, FEMA, and frankly anyone who will take my call for more ventilators, more PPE, more direct state aid – whatever it is that we will need to not only get ourselves through this crisis, but as I've said many times, and we will, to come out stronger on the other side of it.

I am grateful again to President Trump, Vice President Pence, the White House team and FEMA among others for working with us to get these necessary items. And if they're listening, I just want to warn you ahead of time, you'll be hearing from me and from us again real soon.

And make no mistake, while every bit of federal assistance is essential, New Jersey continues to lead on its own. Yesterday, we showed a slide that laid out nearly 1 million pieces of PPE we have secured and distributed to the frontlines of this war. This state has continued to lead and I'm proud to announce that we had, on our own procured nearly 10 million pieces of personal protective equipment that are beginning to flow into our warehouses and will be allocated to the frontlines – 10 million pieces.

We are not in the PPE business in a normal state of play. This is not the line of business that the State of New Jersey or frankly I'm sure any other state is normally in. But I am proud to say that our colleagues in state government, including the folks with me today have risen to this extraordinary challenge, and we have procured on our own – in addition to whatever we're getting out of the federal side – nearly 10 million pieces of personal protective equipment.

While these items come at a significant cost to the state – and by the way, significant as in tens and tens of millions of dollars – I have said definitively that there is no price too high to save a life, and there is no price too high to protect our healthcare workers and those on the frontlines of the battlefield that we find ourselves on. These products will be hitting our warehouses in waves in the coming weeks and will be used to backfill the depleted supply chains of our healthcare networks. We have their backs and we will not let them fail.

A few other announcements, please bear with me. First on testing – of our two FEMA-partnered drive-through sites, tomorrow April 2, only the Bergen Community College site will be open starting at 8:00 AM. The PNC Bank Arts Center site will be closed tomorrow. To get tested at Bergen Community College you must be a New Jersey resident and you must be exhibiting symptoms of respiratory illness to get tested.

And as I mentioned yesterday, there are more testing sites coming online and available throughout the state. I won't show my normal exhibit but I counted now, depending on how you count them, at least 32 testing sites. Please visit our general website as you can see it up behind me, [www.covid19.nj.gov](http://www.covid19.nj.gov) (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov>) to find the nearest testing site near you and to also take a self-assessment. So, there's a symptoms page on the website. So far, just shy of 180,000 folks have gone on that page to assess their own symptoms relative to expected symptoms of COVID-19.

And I would also say as it relates to testing, I've mentioned this several times – in a perfect world, with full supplies coming from the feds, both of the stuff we need to collect specimens but also the personal protective equipment to protect the healthcare workers taking the specimens – we'd be testing everybody. That's a perfect world, South Korea. We have to play the hand that we have. We don't have those supplies at

the level we needed them from Day One from the federal side so we have been testing and will continue to test symptomatic persons. That's not only the smart thing to do for the individual who's sick, clearly, but also it gives Judy and Christina and their colleagues incredibly valuable data, both the positives and the negatives.

In a perfect world, and we don't have, we're not in a perfect world – Judy has mentioned this in long-term care facilities. There's now a study that's coming out of Minnesota which Vin Gopal who's been really good at working with us brought to my attention just before coming over here. There is an ample amount of evidence, and I think you've seen it again in long-term care facilities, that it's the asymptomatic workers who are going into these facilities who are unknowingly, unwittingly potentially passing on the virus.

So, if I had a perfect world, the next ring out would be, I suspect Judy and Christina would join me, would be testing all healthcare workers, symptomatic or not. We just are not in that mode because we don't have the supplies that we need to do that. But many of you ask me offline what's the next ring out? That would be mine, I'd raise my hand for the next ring out because then we would at least be able to get a sense of how much of this is travelling into things like long-term care facilities.

Switching gears completely, to mirror the action already taken by the IRS, I am extending the New Jersey income tax filing deadline for both individuals and businesses to July 15th. This is an automatic extension. Again, any business or resident who has not yet filed their income tax returns for 2019 now has until July 15th. And there is no need to file for an extension. This extension is automatic.

Second, and certainly relatedly, as it was announced earlier today Senate President Steve Sweeny, Speaker Craig Coughlin and I reached an agreement – and by the way, it wasn't terribly hard to reach this agreement – to extend the current fiscal year deadline from June 30 to September 30. We will work together to enact a supplemental appropriations bill to carry government operations from July 1 until September 30, and then work to enact a final fiscal package to cover next year's fiscal year which is from October 1, 2020 until June 30, 2021.

We are taking this unprecedented step for a couple of reasons. The first is the necessity to have all hands on deck to see us through this emergency. We simply do not have the luxury of time. We must all be focused on our need to see our state and our people through this emergency and to ensure that our immediate needs are met. And let's not forget that now is not the time for us to have packed hearing rooms in a packed State House. We must practice the social distancing that we are preaching to keep everybody safe.

The second broad reason is more pragmatic. We must enact a fiscally-responsible budget. There is simply too much economic and fiscal uncertainty at this time. We will need a little time to emerge from this emergency and take full stock of the pace of our economic recovery so we can make smart decisions and enact a well-informed budget. But let me be clear: we will pass a FY2021 budget that will run, again, from October 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021.

We will use our time to ensure that the impacts of COVID-19 are fully and appropriately accounted for, and that so too is every penny of federal help that comes in, whether it's from the prior federal assistance packages or the next ones to come. And to be sure, as I said yesterday, I'll continue to push in my conversations not just with our Delegation, which is extraordinary, but with Leader Chuck Schumer and Speaker Nancy Pelosi and with the White House, I'll continue to push for the need for direct financial assistance for our state and the need for full SALT deduction relief.

Again, I'm grateful to both the Senate President and Speaker, to the Senate Budget Chair Paul Sarlo, Assembly Budget Chairwoman Eliana Pintor Marin, and Minority Leaders Senator Tom Kean and Assemblyman John Bramnick for their partnership. These are certainly unprecedented times and they require unprecedented action and cooperation, but that action will ensure a more fiscally prudent state budget.

It's an obvious point to make but it needs to be made, and I think I've made it here already – when the feds extend that federal tax deadline from April 15 three months to July 15, it is still within the federal fiscal year. It's an obvious point, but normally when folks file their income taxes on April 15 in New Jersey, we've got by the end of April a pretty darn good sense of what the income revenue side is going to look like for the balance of the year. And then you've got a couple of months, May and June essentially, to go through hearings and to negotiate for a responsible budget.

We want to give folks some breathing room, so extending the state tax deadline from April 15 to July 15 on the surface is a no-brainer, and that's why we pursued this. But guess what? April 15 is in one fiscal year, July 15 is in another. So, we won't know in this case until the end of July where the numbers are coming out, and on top of that we've got an extraordinary crisis. So, the notion of extending the fiscal year to September 30th made sense at so many different levels.

So, let me switch gears again. Today, I also signed an executive order to provide additional flexibility and protections for our hospitals and frontline healthcare responders. This order removes bureaucratic roadblocks, as you can see, so we can more quickly bring more healthcare practitioners into our efforts, whether they be healthcare professionals who have recently retired or perhaps doctors who are licensed in other countries.

The order also waives scope of practice requirements for advanced practice nurses and physician assistants who are already being called upon to shoulder extraordinary burdens. And my order makes clear that the healthcare professionals who we are calling upon to help in our state's COVID-19 response will be immune from civil liabilities for actions taken in good faith.

And on the issue of volunteers, we still welcome anyone with prior medical experience to help us here in New Jersey. We urge you to join the thousands – Judy, I believe you told me a short while ago 5200 people – who have already stepped forward to help by visiting [www.covid19.nj.gov/volunteer](http://www.covid19.nj.gov/volunteer) (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov/volunteer>) as you can see, and entering all of your information regarding your area of specialty. Your talents will then be matched to where our needs are the greatest and we will get in touch with you. In fact, Judy, you told me you've got a team on this already – I believe you've got five nurses from your Survey Team already sorting through names by credential and county and if available by license number. And I know you'll get into a little bit more detail on that.

Let me just put on the Uncle Sam hat. We need you. If you're watching and you're a healthcare worker who may have retired, from out of state, a doctor from out of the country. I know this is not covered by my executive order because it didn't have to be, but we're also unleashing nurses and doctors and others who are studying in their last semester of studies. We need you. We need you in a big way. Whether you're in New Jersey or not is not relevant. We'll take folks from anywhere we can find them, as long as they're properly licensed elsewhere. Again, please go on [www.covid19.nj.gov/volunteer](http://www.covid19.nj.gov/volunteer) (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov/volunteer>). And I promise you, if you sign up we're going to find a way to put you to work.

Shifting other gears, I am also announcing that the deadline for eligible college students to apply for a renewal of state tuition aid for the 2020-2021 academic year has also been extended, in this case from April 15th to June 1st. So, to all students receiving aid through the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority, otherwise known as HESAA, you have until June 1st to get your FAFSA form in – June 1st. Again, not April 15 but now June 1.

Next, the Economic Development Authority's application window for its newly-created Small Business Emergency Assistance Grant Program will be open at 9:00 AM this Friday, April 3rd. Again, that's this Friday morning. The application will be posted on our COVID-19 business information hub, and I'm going to give you two choices here – the one you see behind me, [www.cv.business.nj.gov](http://www.cv.business.nj.gov) (<http://www.cv.business.nj.gov>), again, [www.cv.business.nj.gov](http://www.cv.business.nj.gov) (<http://www.cv.business.nj.gov>). But that's also achievable by going on the central repository [www.covid19.nj.gov](http://www.covid19.nj.gov) (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov>). This grant program is intended for small businesses that are facing a dire need for direct grant assistance for survival. Again, the grant application window will open at 9:00 AM this Friday April 3rd, and small business owners can either go to [www.cv.business.nj.gov](http://www.cv.business.nj.gov) (<http://www.cv.business.nj.gov>) or go to our central website [www.covid19.nj.gov](http://www.covid19.nj.gov) (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov>).

Switching another gear, throughout the past several weeks I've highlighted many of the New Jersey businesses and corporate citizens who have stepped up with meaningful support as we all work through this emergency together. It really does take a village. Today, I learned that the New Jersey Devils and owners Josh Harris and David Blitzler will be making a direct and significant donation to the RWJ Barnabas Health Emergency Response Fund. This donation will help RWJ Barnabas purchase much-needed personal protective equipment for its frontline health responders. The Devils have a long history of support in the

community and I thank them for stepping up to help once again. And notwithstanding the fact I was born in Boston, as part of this agreement I have committed to Josh and David to become forevermore a New Jersey Devils fan.

Also, we were informed that First Energy, the parent company of JCP&L is also making a significant contribution to food banks in the areas in which it serves on top of accelerating its giving to the United Ways in its service areas. This is a great reminder that it's not just our public health and safety responders who need a helping hand right now but there are many families who also need help to put food on their tables. And I thank First Energy for taking this step.

And there was a striking article in today's New York Times on the front page of how many people are going to foodbanks who have never been to them before. It is overwhelming, the impact that this emergency and this crisis has had on families all over this state and our country, and indeed the world.

Another gear change, Judy, if I may before we hand things over to you. Tomorrow morning I will be visiting The Meadowlands Convention Center in Secaucus to tour the field medical station or hospital that is being stood up there. I will be with Major General Jeffrey Millhorn, the Commanding General of the US Army Corps of Engineers North Atlantic Division, and Lt. Col. David Park of the US Army Corps of Engineers who we all met, sitting where Matt is sitting today, last week. Col. Pat Callahan will also join us as well.

Our briefing, and this is only subject, Mahen, to whether there's a White House VTC tomorrow – there have been Mondays and Thursdays over the past several weeks. But unless you hear otherwise, we'll be back here in this same room at 1:00 PM tomorrow.

I also have to go off-script and make a final note that today is traditionally Census Day, and as I mentioned on Saturday I believe, being counted in the Census is something you can do while practicing that critical social distancing. Making sure that every New Jerseyan is properly and accurately counted in the 2020 Census is incredibly important. The Census is more – and this is really important, folks, and we're living it right now – this is more than just a population count. It's the data that the federal government and quite frankly that we use in state government, rely upon to make decisions that impact our communities.

We know that New Jersey was undercounted in 2010 and because of that we have left, over the course of the past decade by the way, and even today when we really need it, untold billions of dollars of federal aid on the table. And if that money isn't coming to New Jersey it's going to go to some other state. Let's make sure that we get it here and God knows we need it. So, take a moment, as you can see – go online to [www.2020census.gov](http://www.2020census.gov) (<http://www.2020census.gov>), [www.2020census.gov](http://www.2020census.gov) (<http://www.2020census.gov>) and make sure you are counted in the Census.

That said, I want to say something that I've said every single day we've been together. I want to thank every single New Jerseyan who is doing their part to get us through this crisis. Whether you're a frontline essential worker keeping our communities going or simply doing all that you can by social distancing and staying home and washing your hands with soap and water – even the little things. Everything we do together will get us through this crisis. And we need all 9 million of us to do just that.

And I want to thank, Pat, the men and women of the New Jersey State Police who are partnering, a particular shoutout, with the Ocean County Prosecutor's Office, the Ocean County Sherriff and the Lakewood Police specifically for their frontline work to ensure full compliance with our stay at home order. In Lakewood, in Newark – and I know you're going to comment, if you don't mind, after Judy speaks we'll turn to you for a quick compliance report. The overwhelming majority of folks in Lakewood, in Newark and other places have been complying, as residents, again, have been in communities up and down the state. But we need everybody to comply.

Col. Callahan, again, will comment on compliance overnight but also to this particular partnership. And let's remind each other – this is no time to turn on each other. This is a time to come together. So, we have zero tolerance normally, we have less than zero tolerance right now for any vilification of any community, any stereotyping. It is completely and utterly unacceptable. And we can say both things, that stereotyping and vilifying is utterly, totally unacceptable and won't be tolerated and at the same time, we demand 100% compliance in every single community with the mandates that we have put forward.

I can't say it enough. We are a family. We laugh together, we mourn together, we even disagree together. But right now, I've said this time and again, I think we're more together than we have been at least in a long time, perhaps than ever before. We're New Jerseyans. We're tough. We've got incredible backbones, we've got character, we've got attitude. We're tough as nails, and if we each do our part we will get through this together and stronger as one family than ever before.

Again, if you've got any questions the website is behind me, [www.covid19.nj.gov](http://www.covid19.nj.gov) (<http://www.covid19.nj.gov>). And with that, please allow me to turn things over to the person who needs no introduction, the Commissioner of the Department of Health Judy Persichilli.

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

Well, as the confirmed cases of COVID-19 are increasing in our state, we're seeing an increasing demand on our healthcare system. We predicted a statewide surge during the second week of April, and as we broke the predictions down by region, we predicted that critical care capacity particularly in the north would be reached in the first week of April if no further critical care beds were opened. Increasing critical care capacity is the key to managing the surge.

Well, it looks like the surge is beginning to occur in the northern part of the state. Last night, seven hospitals in the northern part of the state reported to the Department of Health that they were on divert status. That was divert status for various reasons – some due to overcrowding in their emergency rooms and some due to overall high census. We also got a call from two hospitals that they required ventilators. We were able to support those needs, and based on the Governor's relationships that he's formed during this crisis and Chief of Staff Helmy, we were able to secure 350 additional ventilators. And I understand that they were to be delivered today and we certainly need them.

Due to the activity in the northern part of the state, we're looking at possible alternative care sites. We are expecting the field hospital to be available next week and staffed accordingly. The field hospital will be available for lower-acuity patients who can be safely transferred to that site.

We're extremely thankful for the expertise of Dr. Jeff Brenner, a physician that may be familiar to all of you. He was the founding physician of the Camden Coalition; and Kathleen Stillo, who are on loan to the State of New Jersey from UnitedHealthcare. They will be leading our alternative care site facilities. We cannot thank UnitedHealthcare enough for sharing such outstanding professionals with us.

As the Governor shared, we now have 5200 volunteers. About 35% of them are licensed professionals – nurses, respiratory therapists, and some physicians. We have five nurses from our Survey Team sorting through the names, identifying their credentials; working with DCA for a quick check to make sure that their backgrounds are in order, and also sorting them by county. So, our first priority with the 5200 will be to fulfill the staffing needs of our field hospitals.

Throughout our preparation and response, the Department has also been working with healthcare facilities and providers to respond to their need for information. We've held meetings and numerous conference calls with a spectrum of providers. Today, we partnered with the Nicholson Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and the Office of the Attorney General's Division of Consumer Affairs to hold the start of a series of video conferences for primary care physicians and outpatient providers to share with them infection control protocols, the epidemiological perspective, and also the telehealth opportunities that are available to them.

We have the ability to sign on 1000 providers. It is oversubscribed. The last count was far in excess of 1000, so we will be videotaping this and sending it out to our primary providers in the communities. This will be an ongoing series to engage more and more people in the communities, more and more providers so that they can appropriately give the advice and care to their community residents. This communication is vital as we see the increasing number of COVID-19. Community spread is here in New Jersey and it's here to stay for awhile.

As the Governor mentioned, we're reporting 3649 new cases of COVID-19 and they continue to increase. It always saddens me to report our number of deaths. Today we're reporting 91 new deaths. They're primarily in the northern counties. We now have a total of 355. As the Governor reported, three of the deaths are still

under investigation that we reported yesterday. The primary cause or the primary diagnoses may or may not be COVID-19. It's still under investigation, and COVID-19 may be a secondary diagnosis.

Of the overall deaths of 355, 51% are male, 42% female (sp); 47% are over the age of 80 with 39% of that group documenting preexisting conditions. 21% are associated with long-term care facilities. Two of the deaths that we're reporting today were residents of long-term care facilities. Today, we are reporting that 93 of our long-term care facilities are reporting at least one COVID-positive case.

Of the new deaths reported today, there were 33 in Bergen County; 22 in Essex; 13 in Hudson; 5 each in Morris, Ocean and Union Counties; 4 each in Middlesex and Passaic Counties; 3 in both Monmouth and Sussex; 2 in Mercer; and 1 each in Somerset and Warren Counties. And our thoughts and prayers are certainly with their families.

The county breakdown of new cases is as follows: 10 in Atlantic, 338 in Bergen, 51 in Burlington, 60 in Camden, 9 in Cape May, 8 in Cumberland, 277 in Essex, 34 in Gloucester, 200 in Hudson, 15 in Hunterdon, 54 in Mercer, 190 in Middlesex, 144 in Monmouth, 64 in Morris, 126 in Ocean, 130 in Passaic, 7 in Salem, 38 in Somerset, 20 in Sussex, 138 in Union, and 18 in Warren. And we are still gathering information on 1718 of these new cases.

Currently, all four of our State Psychiatric Hospitals have at least one confirmed case of COVID-19. Most recently, three patients and three staff members of Trenton Psychiatric Hospital have tested positive. We are working with the facility to conduct surveillance and implement the appropriate infection prevention and control measures.

As I stated, 93 long-term care facilities in the state have at least one COVID-19 case. Of those 93, I can report that long-term care facilities in the following counties have positive cases: Bergen, Burlington, Essex, Gloucester, Hudson, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union, Warren, Camden and Hunterdon. Again, we're being vigilant about all of the residents of facilities in New Jersey, especially the most vulnerable – those in mental health facilities, long-term care facilities, pediatric long-term care, and state and county jails.

The increased demand on our healthcare facilities in the northern region just underscores how important social distancing measures are. When you stay home, you are all helping us slow the spread of this virus, and you are doing your part to save lives. Please continue to do the right thing by staying home, protecting yourself and your families and your communities. Thank you.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Judy, thank you. A couple of quick points for everybody. Again, tell me if I've got these, if I have your blessing on this – 93 long-term care facilities with at least one positive case. The denominator is 375, so that's now creeping up to about a quarter of the long-term care facilities. If you roll the tape back perhaps to a week ago at most, maybe even six days, that percentage... The numbers were in the teens and that percentage was at about 5%. So, that number continues to move up, both the raw number as well as the percentage.

Secondly, total cases, I usually give you the total cases by county in order. Number one continues to be Bergen, 3494; Essex number two with 2262; Hudson third, 1910; Union next at 1661; Passaic is fifth at 1494, but it must be said Middlesex is sixth at 1493.

I have not rehearsed this so if I get this wrong, will you correct me? I got a note from someone in the Shore Medical Hospital community. We got asked about layoffs yesterday and I got a shocked note from someone who said, "No, not true. No doctors and nurses are being laid off, none. Our Shore Medical Executives led by Ron Johnson and David Hughes were struck with horror that anyone should think that they would dismiss any physicians or nurses, or really anyone of their medical staff. They are dedicated senior executives," and they went on to say some more things. Have I got that right? Is that your understanding as well? Okay.

Pat, you've got some updates on compliance. I know you've got some personal news and anything on the Ocean County partnership, and anything else you've got.

**State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan:** Thank you, Governor. Of note, overnight was specifically there were four incidents. There was a gentleman operating an indoor soccer arena that had been warned on March 23rd. He was not warned last night. He was cited for violating the EO. In Lakewood, there

was a gathering which resulted in ten adults being charged with violation of the EO as well as two adults being charged with six counts of child neglect.

And to the Governor's point earlier, we are in partnership with the Ocean County Prosecutor's Office, the Ocean County Sheriff's Department, and the Lakewood Police Department to supplement their efforts, in an effort to ensure 100% compliance with the executive order.

Also, in Edison last night there was a gentleman operating an in-person auction. He was verbally warned and failed to comply, and he too was cited. And once again, for the second day in a row, the Newark Police Department had a zero tolerance approach. Over 131 incidents issued a total of 125 summonses and closed five businesses.

And to the Governor's point, with regard to the seriousness of how we're taking this and how everybody should, it was not an easy phone call to make last night, my wife and I made to my daughter who's supposed to be married in June. And we had to call her that we are postponing her wedding last night. That was not an easy phone call. Her reaction was one that you can well imagine of heartbreak but that's how important this is. The bridal shower, the invitations, all those things that every young woman should have the ability to experience – and I share it with you. I know it's personal but it's beyond personal. It's about every single resident in this state who needs to step up and stay home. I think we've said that a few times, Governor.

So, I just share that with you to let you know that we're doing all that we can, even down to the Callahan Family to make sure that we do our part in stopping the spread. Thank you, Governor.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Thank you, Pat, and God bless your daughter. And I know when it does happen it'll be a great celebration.

A couple things: Judy and I both agree that the overnight deaths, that Bergen number was 23. So, the top three counties overnight: tragically Bergen 23, Essex 22, Hudson 13. Those are the double-digit overnight.

A couple of personal things, nothing nearly as important as your daughter's wedding – and by the way, in addition to that, back to the compliance. We're going to be out every night, every day and night, I can say that – local, county, State Police. We have got to get 100% compliance. And we're not going to be nice about it. As you've already heard, action is being taken and will continue to be taken.

I've been asked how I'm spending my time by several folks, and the only public things that I do are when we're together really. The visit to the popup field hospital tomorrow is an exception to that. We go to the ROIC when we have VTCs with the President and/or Vice President, and so we may have one of those tomorrow. But I'm either home or I'm in my office far from any other persons, including members of my family.

We've burned through, over the past several weeks, four Sean Connery Bond movies. I was asked late at night what we were up to. Three Matt Damon Borne movies; we haven't gotten to the Jeremy Renner yet. And I'm more sort of grasping for whatever I and we can learn from leadership.

There was a particular period in WWII that particularly focuses on Great Britain between the time that the continent had fallen and the time that the United States had gotten into the Second World War. And I've been searching to try to, even if I could get even a speck of fingernail of lessons channeled out of what Winston Churchill did as a leader during that time, I thought that I'd be a better leader. We'd be better leaders. And as if by some divine providence, a book was literally published last week on that period called *The Splendid and the Vile*. I'm not allowed, Matt Platkin won't let me promote any books so I'm not promoting this but it's called *The Splendid and the Vile* by Erik Larson who's written some other great books, including about one of my predecessors as Ambassador to Germany.

And the relevance is this, is that there was extraordinary feeling of insecurity and not knowing what was around that next corner; and the need, not just among leaders but for everybody to come together with the pending threat – in their case of the Germans both bombing and then the likelihood of invading Great Britain, all at a time before the United States' psyche, never mind the government, was prepared to enter into yet another World War. And both the big leaders like Churchill and the small acts of leadership by families, by even kids was overwhelming. The period of this book is from May 10th, 1940 to May 10th, 1941 – basically hanging in there, knowing what was potentially to come and at every level of society with an incredible unknown, incredible threat; doing everyone's part to make sure that they got through that period.

Now, we all know where that ended, right? We won. Churchill I think went down as the greatest if not one of the greatest leaders of the 20th century. But it wasn't just him. It was millions of folks who banded together as one family in the face of unknowns, in the face of incredible insecurity and threat, and they pulled through that. Now, they didn't pull through it without us. At the end of the day, Dwight Eisenhower, President Roosevelt, George Patton, Douglas MacArthur, George Marshall – the list is long of American heroes as well. But for that period, when no one knew what was around that next corner, the acts of leadership at all levels big and small were inspiring.

And I think they're a great lesson for all of us as we deal with this, which has so many unknowns and so much anxiety associated with it. Just remember, we're all in this together. And if each one of us, no matter how big or how small, if each one of us does our part we will get through this unequivocally. We will win. We will win this war as we won that war, and we'll come through stronger and closer than ever before.

John, as promised, today we're going to start with you. Matt's got the microphone with blue gloves.

-

#### Q&A Session:

**John Mooney, NJ Spotlight:** I have a few questions from various people. First off, on the budget matters, can you talk about with everything shut down tax revenue is apparently slowing. Will you have enough money to make payroll after July 1st? Will you be able to do pension payments? Will you be able to help out schools and towns, especially those that aren't on the same type of fiscal year as the state? New Jersey Transit employees are worried about PPE and many of them are complaining about packed busses because of the reduced schedule and packed trains. Are you doing anything to get PPE to the New Jersey Transit employees and are you procuring anything specifically for employees like that, agencies that deal with the public but not necessarily healthcare? And can you talk a little bit about the peak? You say the surge is here in North Jersey. Do you expect the peak, as Governor Cuomo said, they're expecting in New York till the end of April – does that change New Jersey's projections? Can you give a hint of where are we? And Governor, a week or so ago, I forget which day, you said you expect this to last until mid-May – are you still thinking that way? And can we get an update on the guidelines, particularly the triage guidelines for nurses and healthcare professionals as it relates to patient treatment as well as ventilator usage? I know the medical side was meeting on Monday. And the EO about foreign doctors, any details on screening for foreign doctors? And limitations on countries where they would come from and any details on that?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Okay, let me. Judy, I'll take a few of these and throw them to you, is that alright? All of this, as you can imagine on the budget front a lot of this is to be determined. I want to use this, but the answer is we'll meet our obligations. Boy, I'll tell you something, just to use this as an opportunity to re-plug the fact that we need as much flexible direct cash assistance from the federal government as possible.

We're still parsing through all that came out of the bill that was signed by the President on Friday. I think there's been publicly reported that – leaving NJ Transit to the side for a moment – there's \$3.4 billion plus or minus for New Jersey in that, plus another \$1 billion plus for NJ Transit. We need every penny of that and a whole lot more, but a lot of this is to be determined, John, on exactly how this plays out.

Our PPE again, stood up from scratch, our PPE procurement is entirely right now one funnel in and then coordinated one funnel out. So, there aren't separate, healthcare workers are over here and etc., etc. Obviously the priority is healthcare workers are at the top of the list, followed very closely behind by first responders. And so, we've heard the same reality out of NJ Transit folks. I have not spoke to the Union leadership lately and that's something that I need to do, but we're doing everything we can. As I said, we've procured almost 10 million pieces. We're doing everything we can. You've heard me say here retail workers and essential retail lines of business have a similar challenge. I know NJ Transit has upped its protocols dramatically, this is at least a month old, in terms of cleaning surfaces and disinfecting. But beyond that, we are doing the best we can, working with them. We appreciate their heroism and their hard work, and the fact that they're on the frontlines.

I said this would bleed meaningfully at least until mid-May. I think it's at least that, and I'll let Judy, who's a healthcare professional, opine on that. But this is, unfortunately we're going to be in the hunkered down mode for awhile. And you heard that from the White House I think yesterday as well.

The only thing I'd say as far as foreign doctors, I didn't see anything specific stipulating one country or another, but they have to go through... Matt Platkin, they've got to go through a certain protocol, prove their licensure, make the application, etc. Is that fair to say?

**Chief Counsel Matt Platkin:** Correct. The executive order directs the Division of Consumer Affairs within Law and Public Safety to issue a form that they will have to fill out. And they'll work with the Department of Health as to the parameters of that form.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Yeah, we said DCA earlier, that's Division of Consumer Affairs.

**Chief Counsel Matt Platkin:** Little DCA as we call them.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** The little DCA as it's called. Judy, on peak, on guidelines for treatment, anything on foreign doctors or anything else.

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Let's talk about the surge and the impact on critical care. We had identified that, on a statewide basis, if we did nothing it would be here today. So, we know that it's not here today because on a statewide basis we are not feeling the same capacity issues in the central to the south part of the state. So, we broke it down into the north part of the state – and again, if we did absolutely nothing we would be feeling it exactly today. But we do feel that some of the social distancing, even though it's not in for the full 14 days – I think the last order was the 21st.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Yep.

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** So, we're counting 14 days from the 21st. What I'm saying is in the northern part of the state we're beginning to feel the real stress and strain on the critical care complement. I do know that many of the hospitals have increased their critical care complement. I can give you an example of Hackensack Meridian. They absolutely doubled. I think they have almost 80 critical care beds now. So, we believe the beds will be there. We want to make sure that the supplies and the ventilators are there.

Guidelines for the allocation of supplies is not... We don't believe we're going to run out of IV pumps and everything else that you would need to take care of a critical care patient. The guidelines are focused specifically on ventilators. So, starting today, the hospitals are reporting how many ventilators they have, how many are in use; the breakdown of ventilators – universal ventilators, adult ventilators, pediatric ventilators, transport ventilators, anesthesia machines which I know are now being used to effectively ventilate individuals. So, it's not an allocation, a rationalization; it's the same level of care.

We plan on collecting that this week. We believe with the stockpile, with the work that the Governor and that Chief of Staff Helmy, the amount that they were able to get to be delivered this week – we believe we're going to be okay. But we do believe we're going to be moving ventilators around from the south to the north, across regions when we'll be using all of the available ventilators that we have, including our anesthesia machines. However, if we have to make allocation decisions we will do that in coordination with our intensivists, our pulmonary specialists that are forming together in groups to advise the Department of Health. And we just are not at that point yet.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Just a couple of quick things, may I add, Judy? You mentioned it, I meant to mention it earlier – just everyone remember, we took a whole series of aggressive steps to shut the state down. But the last really comprehensive set of steps was 11 days ago. The test results that we're reporting today are probably somewhere seven to 12 days old at least in some cases where specimens were submitted. So, we're still – Judy, tell me if you disagree – we're still at least a week away from having a real sense of that final set of steps that we took.

Secondly, I'm proud of the extraordinary efforts of folks to get the ventilators from the federal government, to find the PPE and acquire it; the efforts to build out beds. Let me just say, that's, those are all works in progress. We have still a very significant ask in the White House for ventilators and that's still a significant number. We still are light on PPE, and that's without even expanding the definition of who deserves it, and many more people admittedly deserve it. There's a lot of progress on beds but you saw from the curve earlier that there's a big distance between that peak and where we start from. So, I just want to make sure that we all reiterate that.

Thank you, John. Matt, to Matt and then we'll go to Charlie.

**Matt Arco, NJ.com:** Thanks. Governor, so you started off with the graph that we've been seeing for the past few days. You've been referring to that graph. I know that you've been asked this, so I just want to re-ask this question 'cause I'm curious – because from those charts you haven't given the underlying projections of the total cases and the total hospitalized patients that led you to get to those charts that we continue to refer to. So, I'm curious how we got there. So, four things on that: what's the total number of projected cases you're expecting in New Jersey can we say? Again, we continue to use these charts. How many total of those need to be hospitalized and how many will require ventilators? Commissioner, I apologize, I may have issued this – just curious of where you see the daily peak based on these numbers? I know this was just asked, apologies if I missed that. And then, finally Governor, you said on Monday people assumed 5% of the total cases would require hospitalization and 1% will need ventilators. So, if you're saying – and I think the last number that you were at was 4000, you had requested 4000 ventilators for the peak. Does that mean we'll have 400,000 total cases at peak?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Okay, so lots. Anything else or you're good with that? Okay.

Lots of questions in there which Judy is really overwhelmingly more qualified to answer. The outstanding ask of the federal Stockpile on ventilators is 1650, so just know that that number is the outstanding ask. And that's not theoretical – we need them. Now, if we can be assured that we're getting these in regular installments and the installments come in ahead of need, we'll be able to stay out ahead of the need. But I just want to make sure that folks get that number as well, 1650 ventilators is still the balance of the ask.

I think on total cases, I'm going to give you a general answer and Judy can go through hers. Your 1 in 5 are the assumptions that underpin these graphs – can we pull the graphs back up, Mahen, is that possible? So, if you look, the one on the left is unabated Armageddon, we didn't do anything to stop the virus; the one on the right assumes historical social distancing compliance. We've got to beat this, folks. And I believe, Judy, this assumes doubling of cases on each side of every six days to the best of my knowledge.

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Yes.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I don't have the assumptions anymore in front of me but you've got them.

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Yep.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** So again, this is based, you know, any modeling, you have to put inputs in here. In some cases, it's too early for us to know for sure what the New Jersey reality is. So, social distancing, this is an average compliance. It's too early to tell. My guess is, as I said a minute ago, we're seven plus days away from having a really decent handle on how our compliance can then influence that curve. And God knows, I hope it's north of 31%. Can you address total cases, etc.?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Sure. Just to remind everyone what you're looking at, this is the CHIME model that was developed by Penn. And it predicts the impact on hospital resources. So, what we're looking at is at the peak, if we did nothing that we would need almost 80,000 hospital beds. So, the goal is to flatten that out so that we have the resources to be able to take care of the patients that need care. So, this is the impact on hospital resources. We're running some other models to look at total cases, but without mass testing, I think it would be difficult to be able to predict total cases. Right now, we just want to make sure that we have the resources to take care of people who need care. So, this is hospital resources.

We're trying to flatten out that 80,000, spread this over time. We're not suggesting that that number will change significantly. People will still require care, and if we follow the national statistics and some of the international statistics, we still expect that 80% of the people that could test positive have mild to moderate disease and can stay home. We think that's happening now actually, and then, another 15% may need to be admitted into the hospital; and a percentage of them into ICU. And a percentage of them, right now our model predicts 50% of them, would need ventilators. That may change. That would be the only part of this model that I say, as we run it again and get more experience, that the percentage of individuals who need ventilators will probably go up.

So, right now we believe we're okay with ventilators. That percentage goes up, the 1600 that we're asking for will be imperative.

**Matt Arco, NJ.com:** I'm a little bit confused here. Originally, you said 1650 is what's remaining from the feds, but at some point I thought that you said the state was trying to acquire ventilators by themselves. And sill, can we answer the 400,000 peak? I mean, you're saying from the sound of it that if we need 4000 total, that it's 400,000 plus? Is that what you're saying?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Let me start on the ventilators. The answer is we had gotten 200 a while ago; we then had an outstanding ask of 2300, 300 of which came in yesterday morning – I'm getting my days confused. Another 350 are on their way right now, so the federal outstanding is 1650. And as I sit here today, we have not been able – and this is partly the world we're living in right now – we have not been able to get a nonfederal source for acquisition successfully, and we're not alone in this respect.

This doesn't include, again, Matt, remember this doesn't include outpatient medical facilities that are no longer doing elective surgery, which we've vacuumed up – I don't have a number for you that we've vacuumed up; and other sources that are in-state. But we have not been able, and we're not alone, New Jersey's not alone here... And by the way, most of the folks, and how many – and Matt, I'm looking at you, or Pat – how many emails or texts, "I've got a guy who's got X or Y, and overwhelmingly they turn out to be there's no there, there.

Judy, do you want to just hit the second part of that?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** You know, we have projected that we needed to increase critical care beds by 100% - go from 2000 to 4000. We also projected that we'd like to have one ventilator for each critical care bed. I think that's where that number comes from. As we get more experience we'll be able to determine exactly whether that 1:1 ratio holds. I have a sense it's going to. I have a sense that in about two weeks we'll see that for every patient that goes into critical care, they're put on a ventilator.

I also, after speaking with some hospitals last night, they were very pleased to hear that the anesthesia machines – of which we have a lot of – have been effectively and efficaciously used for individuals in critical care. And that's very good news.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Again, we remain light on ventilators, PPE and beds, and there's a plan for each. One other point I want to make and then we can put the website back up – notice that the flattened curve comes later. So, I think, John, you asked, not Matt but you asked is the peak still where we think it is? If the peak slips and the reason it slips is because social distancing is working and we're able to more, the healthcare system is better able to withstand the amount of patients flowing through the system that's not necessarily a bad thing. I know it's more time on the clock which is probably the last thing people want to hear, but the fact is, if it allows the healthcare system to withstand the volume in a more manageable fashion, that's a good thing. Charlie?

**Charlie Kratovil, New Brunswick Today:** Good afternoon. A question: the President last night said that both you and Governor Cuomo got off to a very late start. Do you have any reaction to that? I mean, you've been making this, stressing how from the outset, the early creation of the Coronavirus Taskforce – you mentioned it at the beginning of this briefing today and I'm wondering if that's partly a reflection of you know, your response in a way. And also, have you had a chance to push back on that? I mean, have you had contact with their staff or the President or Vice President today? I don't know who you've spoken to today, maybe to kind of disabuse them of that or push back in any way?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Anything else?

**Charlie Kratovil, New Brunswick Today:** I have another one but it's underlaid.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** That's okay. Let's take them all and then we'll dish them out.

**Charlie Kratovil, New Brunswick Today:** Okay. From Public Health officer explained to me that Health Officers are not permitted under the – maybe the Colonel can address this – under the Attorney General's executive order are not permitted to immediately tell first responders or police officers in their towns of an infected or a confirmed case. They have to first go through the County OEMs and wait for that information to be routed back to the police officers first, creating this unnecessary lag time of information – potentially critical time. Can you respond to that? I'd like to hear the first ones first.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Yeah, I'll give you the first one, and then, Pat, do you want to hit the second? Yeah, I'm not sure what the President was referring to. I don't think there's any objective evidence that suggests... And I think the same is for New York. I'll speak for New Jersey but I think in fairness, Governor Cuomo was right there at the get-go. I don't know that there's any state in America who was on this earlier than we were. I mean, perhaps Washington because they had the first case and they had the long-term care facility tragedy, which was overwhelming in a very short amount of time. But we started meeting on this in January – as I said, Super Bowl Sunday I believe we formed the Taskforce that Judy has been leading since. So, the facts don't support that, period full stop.

If the facts don't support something I don't spend a whole lot of time worrying about it. It hasn't impacted... Literally, I think right as the President might have been saying that, George Helmy and I with Admiral Giroir and with others in the White House were working on the extra 350 ventilators. It hasn't crept into any exchange we've had with the Administration whatsoever. No one has ever said to us, including the President I have to say, "By the way, you guys were late, otherwise we wouldn't be..." It hasn't come up ever because it isn't true. So, with all due respect just I'll stand on our facts and our record. I don't spend a lot of time worrying about correcting that record because A.) it's barely come up; and secondly, in our substantive dealings with the Administration it's never come up.

Pat, do you want to hit the County OEM?

**State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan:** Sure. That actually came up this morning, Charlie. We had the County OEM Coordinators call this morning, that concern with regard to – they thought the locals providing it to the police chiefs and fire and EMS was working better. As soon as I hung up with that call I got on the phone with the Office of the Attorney General and the minute before we walked out Commissioner Persichilli and I were talking about it behind this curtain, because I think it needs to be reassessed. That idea of a central repository at the county was going to be a good idea but I think it is creating that lag time that we were going to try to address in very short order. So, thank you.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Thank you, Charlie. Nikita?

**Nikita Biryukov, New Jersey Globe:** So, I know the Treasurer addressed this in some regard, but I'm wondering for the supplemental appropriation and then for the next budget, are those budgets going to reflect the one that you announced in February or do you expect any significant changes? And then, will you give a second budget address for the upcoming fiscal year? And then, also separately, I guess questions for you on politics in the short term, I know you said a few weeks ago that you were still very much involved with the DGA. I'm just wondering, can you estimate the amount of hours per week you spend working with the organization? And then, do you plan to make any political endorsements particularly for President while we're in the crisis? And then lastly, should the Democratic National Committee make contingencies for its July Convention in your opinion?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Okay. Supplemental and next budget, too early to tell so please bear with us. We just ultimately got to where we got to yesterday, and again, I want to thank everybody on both sides of the aisle for helping us end in a good place. Too early to tell but if I'd make an obvious point, the world has changed dramatically since the budget address I gave. And so, we're going to have to account for that. There's no other way around it, but how exactly we account for it too early to tell.

I haven't even thought about the address question. That's a good one, so that's one I think we'll come back to you on. I think we need to know a lot more than we know now, particularly the impact of the federal money, both what was done last week and any potential.

Very little time on the DGA. Most of the time that I'd normally spend on the DGA is raising money. I haven't spent a minute on raising money for anything in the past month other than promoting good causes to help us out with this Pandemic Relief Fund, etc. So, not a minute on that. I've had a couple of exchanges just on the state of races, but literally, a tiny, tiny, tiny amount.

I'm not planning on any endorsements right now but if that changes I'll let you know. It's hard... I haven't spoken to Chairman Tom Perez who is, I think doing a great job, and challenging whether my own personal opinion is it's going to be hard to not have to consider doing something with the Convention in Milwaukee. I don't see how you get around it when you've got The Olympics being postponed, the Indy 500, all these sorts

of things that are happening even in summer months right now that are getting postponed. Hard for me to believe that that's not on a list of considerations but I've got no insight. If I were in his shoes you'd have to be making contingency plans right now.

Thank you. You got one, sir? In the back, Matt.

**Reporter:** Governor, today's the first of the month and rent is due, and there's some confusion about whether or not people still have to pay rent today, residential and commercial. Can you clarify how your policies affect rent payment and collection? Are landlords still collecting rent from tenants and then also getting relief money from banks and the federal government? And then, for the Health Commissioner, you mentioned seven hospitals called last night to say they're on diversion status. Can you help us understand does that mean they're at capacity, they're turning patients away? And is there any aid from the state that's headed to those hospitals?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Let me start and I want Matt Platkin to join me on this. People need to pay their rent but we're also asking landlords who are benefiting from some act, including the 90-day holiday from the mortgage banks. If they're getting a holiday we are imploring if not mandating that they pass that holiday on in a symmetric way to whoever's renting from them. And I would assume the same, I would just make the same statement as it relates to any federal relief that folks are getting – we expect that to be symmetric as well. I know the Department of Community Affairs, Big DCA, is working on a whole number of plans as it pertains to renters, but Matt, could you jump in on that and then Judy, you can come back in on diversion?

**Chief Counsel Matt Platkin:** Yeah. I think you hit on a very key point, Governor. We provided mortgage relief for residents in the State of New Jersey. Some of those may be landlords and you have stated a clear expectation that those landlords would pass that relief off to their tenants. Renters are just a more complicated set of individuals to regulate because they're private contracts between people but we're doing everything we can to find relief for the people of New Jersey who rent.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** And we're still working on that, so that continues to be a work in progress. We just literally had a meeting this morning on this. Judy, one suggestion might be for folks to understand, who don't understand the generic word 'divert,' what that actually means as you jump into this. Does that sound alright? Thank you, ma'am.

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Yes, absolutely. I planned to do that. We first have to understand what that means, when a hospital goes on divert. It's related to two things – do I have the workforce to take care of the patients that are coming in the door appropriately; and do I have the capacity, the volume, the beds? There's lots of reasons to go on divert. Sometimes your emergency room gets crowded and it takes you three to four hours to make sure you place those patients appropriately in the hospital.

We know one of the hospitals went on divert for emergency room because they had 80 individuals waiting for beds in their main hospital. They usually clear that out as individuals go home, beds get cleaned. Terminal cleaning of rooms is very important right now so they're spending a lot of time on that. Then the patients get placed. Sometimes you go on divert because you don't have critical care beds. So, if your critical care beds get full you might have room in the rest of the hospital, so you say, "My diversion is for critical care."

What happens is they notify the Department of Health. We have a system and they put that information in. They also notify the local EMS. The local EMS has a good picture of where the beds are and what the availability is, so no one ends up at the front door of a hospital and gets turned away. If you show up at the front door of the hospital you will be assessed and triaged and appropriately taken care of. It happens before you get to that front door, and there's lots of different reasons.

The hospitals are packed. We still have flu season, we still have everyone else that goes to a hospital with a medical or an emergency surgical problem. That doesn't go away during a crisis. People have heart attacks, they have congestive heart failure, they have appendicitis. So, all of that gets managed and the hospital makes the best decisions at that point in time and they may go on divert. Some go on divert for two hours; some go on divert for a whole shift. Does that help?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Thank you. Let's go to Dave down in front here. Thank you.

**David Levinsky, Burlington County Times:** So, Governor, a question for you. If you could just flesh out the whole idea of pushing out the fiscal year, how this affects different departments, agencies and so forth. Maybe they've made plans to buy equipment, to spend money in a certain way. Are you giving them any guidance, suggestions? Is it going to cause problems? And then, for the woman who needs no introduction, maybe you can flesh out this point a little more on diversion because I know there may be some concern about well, if we wind up diverting some cases to Central Jersey hospitals and then to South Jersey hospitals, what's going to happen when the surge continues to spread out and affect different hospitals? And is there going to be enough room? Will we wind up with people from North Jersey in Central Jersey and then so on and so forth, down through the areas that are not really affected right now?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Anything else?

**David Levinsky, Burlington County Times:** Believe it or not, that's it for the moment.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Good. I think it's too, on the fiscal year too early to tell. We just came to this agreement yesterday so we're still working that through, but clearly, we'll go through this process. [phone buzzes] Excuse me, I want to make sure this isn't the White House. We'll go through this process with all of our departments as we normally would. Again, we need to know a little bit more, particularly where the federal side of this is going to shake out.

This was not only the most elegant, it was the most logical and frankly the most compelling step to take, particularly when I mentioned earlier – and this is an important point – it's one thing for the feds to move their income tax filing when they move it to within their current and same fiscal year. For us to make that move, you're leapfrogging into a different year, and at the same time it was overwhelmingly compelling for a lot of folks to do that. Once you do that, you've got to look at a different timeframe. But too early to tell, and I think we'll be able to come back to you over the course of the next week or so.

**David Levinsky, Burlington County Times:** Yes, you've not heard from any specific department or agency though, "Oh my God, Governor, what are we going to do? We were supposed to do X, Y, Z?"

**Governor Phil Murphy:** No, we just did this. We're in the process of that. As you know, the Treasurer had frozen \$900 million and something of expenditures that were still part of the FY2020 budget and that is still the case. And we'll be going through department by department. People have asked a lot about school aid. That's one thing we want to make sure we get right, for instance.

Diversions, Judy, and specifically regional implications?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** That's a great question. If we moved all patients from north to central and then central to south, what happens when the central area and the southern part of the state start seeing a significant amount of cases? That's why we're using the regional strategy. The first level is to keep people closer to home and within their region. So, at the ROIC as the hospitals start reporting, we will know every available bed and coordinate first through the region. Patients would only get moved if there was nothing else left, and that's why we're using the Level 1's, because our Level 1 Trauma Centers have the ability to transport not only by ground but also by helicopter if needed.

What also happens is, for every patient who is coming into the hospital, some are actually recovering and leaving. Regular medical/surgical patients, surgical, emergency surgical patients – they do get better and leave the hospital so there's a constant turnover. So, we are actually going to be looking at this in eight-hour shifts. We'll be looking at it in the morning at 7:00 AM – they'll be reporting around 10:00 AM; and then, we'll look at it at the end of what we call the day shift, the end of the evening shift. Because the constant movement of patients in and out of a hospital emergency room and a hospital inpatient stay causes us to constantly look at what's open. So, we don't plan to get into the situation that you described. That would be a static situation where everybody came into the hospital and never left. Thank God that's not the situation that we have.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Yeah, that gets back to some of the other questions we've gotten as well today and other days. Not everybody is in the bed at the same time. Thank God, right? So, you've got a fluidity, a dynamic reality here as opposed to something that's a static photograph that is at one moment in time. Elise?

**Elise Young, Bloomberg:** Hi, my first question is from John Reitmeyer at NJ Spotlight. He asks how do you extend the fiscal year to September 30th, both mechanically and legally, given the constitutional requirement for an annual budget and one in the same fiscal year? He also asks why not just pass a sort of barebones shell budget by June 30th and then do supplementals and other changes if necessary once more is known about the state finances several months down the road? And my own questions: the number of fatalities yesterday seems to represent the biggest jump so far. Are any hospitals running out of morgue space? And the Commissioner said she is comfortable with the ventilator numbers, but does that comfort come from fulfilling the entire federal ask and using all the ambulatory surgical centers' equipment and co-venting? In other words, at this point with what you have on-hand you're comfortable, or are you expecting with what may come through then you will be comfortable?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Is that it, Elise? To John's question, again, the reason why a shell budget doesn't make sense if we're going to extend the state tax filing to match the feds, which is overwhelmingly the right, smart thing to do, we don't know where those numbers are coming out. And remember, that's filings in what people experienced in 2019 which was a relatively strong year in the economy, so we can't responsibly put even a stopgap budget together without knowing what that number is. Matt, I think it's pretty clear as it relates to what the Constitution says about one budget, it doesn't necessarily say it's twelve months, right?

**Chief Counsel Matt Platkin:** Correct. The Constitution says you have to have an annual appropriations act for a fiscal year but it accounts for changes in that fiscal year. Fiscal year is set in statute so what we'll need to do is pass a new... The legislature will have to pass a bill that you'll sign into law, Governor, that changes the fiscal year to end on September 30th.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I'll start on the next two and Judy will come in, and I'll give you my personal opinion. Given the amount of fatalities, which again, Elise, is another big number today. And those numbers are going sadly, with the heaviest of hearts I have to report those numbers are going to continue to rise. More capacity is increasingly an issue and we've in fact begun conversations with the feds and the Department of Defense on that front. And I'm going to put words in your mouth but I think it's a fact – we're comfortable as of this moment in time but we need every single one of the ventilators that the feds, that we're asking for plus all other sources we can find in order to withstand the peak. Is that fair to say?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Absolutely. Absolutely. On the ventilators, and then I'll go to the other question you had about morgue space – on the ventilators, right now all of our projections are 1:2, that 50% of the patients will be going on ventilators. As that changes, and I expect it will – it will go up – we'll need even more. We have projected 1:1 and that's what we're looking for, and that's where the ask comes in. Right now, we're seeing that half of the patients in ICU are going on ventilators, but that changes every day and we have to keep an eye on it every day.

On the morgue space, we are concerned. The Chief Medical Examiner Dr. Falzon has been on this. He's been working with not only the funeral directors but with procurement to secure refrigerated trucks if we need them. What's happening is some funeral services are delayed, families trying to determine how to honor their deceased loved ones. And it is causing some backup in that regard.

**Elise Young, Bloomberg:** And a quick follow-up on the capacity for the dead. So, this would be a refrigerator truck-type need.

**State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan:** That is correct. And just to one other piece that I think is a key that the State Medical Examiner's Office, I think yesterday issued basically authorization for Medical Examiners to release decedents without the results back on the COVID, because there was a lot of holding on. And we're trying to alleviate the stresses on hospitals and that, to the Commissioner's point, with regard to working with the funeral directors and having them work side by side with us to address that, Elise.

**Elise Young, Bloomberg:** How quickly do you expect we'll have this need, this storage need?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I don't have a specific day but soon. And let me just use that as a jumping off point to point to anybody out there who's watching this who may not believe that this is real. The fact that we're having this conversation, folks, this is real. And the number one thing we can do, the 9 million of us, is to stay

home. Social distance, wash your hands with soap and water, help us break the back of this virus, flatten the curve and allow us to have a healthcare system and frankly a society and an economy which can handle this crisis.

I would just say this, and we'll do a quick sweep back. Right now as we look out over the next, do we have enough ventilators? No. Do we have enough PPE? No. Do we have enough beds? No. Do we have enough healthcare workers? No. Four emphatic no's. Do we have a plan for each of those? Yes, but we need a lot of things to go right across all four of those dimensions. But we are not where we need to be or will have to be.

Elise, are you good otherwise? Okay. Dave, anything, you're good? Back, you're good? Real quick? We're coming around, Matt's coming around.

**Reporter:** Governor, we're looking for an update on what is happening in the state's prisons. Staff have tested positive and we hear reports that inmates are in medical isolation but the DOC insists no inmate has tested positive. Do we have an idea of how many staff have tested positive, how many have contacted prisoners and where, how many prisoners have you tested and how many are positive? If you've not tested prisoners, why not given reports that some prisoners at least are showing signs of the virus?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Okay, I have very little to add on that other than we've been reporting I think whenever we've found positive cases including among staff. Is that correct?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Yeah, we monitor that, looking at every positive case. We're doing contact tracing, if there is a positive case, who they have been in contact with and yes, we are isolating as appropriate. I can probably get you the statistic. I try to report that as they come up. I have done so every day but I don't have the cumulative number with me.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Mahen, can you go to Marcus Hicks and just get a more specific answer on that? Obviously, we take this... The decision was taken, as you know, at county jails by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. We want to make sure... We're not going to break the back of this virus unless we're dealing with all of us in this state regardless of their circumstance. We haven't talked about homeless folks today. We have too many to begin with. As usual, if you have a crisis the folks who are already left behind are left further behind. Folks in our prison systems, county or state, very fair; obviously, long-term care facilities we've been talking about obsessively. We've got to make sure we're addressing the entire dimension of the state, so thank you.

You're good, Nikita? Charlie, anything?

**Charlie Kratovil, New Brunswick Today:** Just a quick question. The Governor of Florida just announced a statewide stay at home order after coming under pressure. I asked that in lieu of your comments yesterday about banning lowest common denominators from coming to New Jersey. How much did you have people from Florida in mind given the activity and our relationship with that state?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Yep, it wasn't just Florida but the fact of the matter is we need everybody in a similar mindset, and the one that we've been in now for many weeks, in fact I think measured in some cases in months. And so, I said this last night to somebody: I think when you make the decision based on science, data, facts, the conclusion's pretty clear what you have to do. And I'm very gratified to hear that the Governor has taken that step. And you know, this is, as Governor Cuomo has said and I've said it my own way, New York and New Jersey are the canary in the coalmine. What we're going through, sadly – I don't take any satisfaction in saying this – sadly our country's going to have to go through. So, I'm gratified to hear he's taken that step.

Real quick, anything else? You left Charlie hanging. We can't leave Charlie hanging ever.

**Charlie Kratovil, New Brunswick Today:** That's okay. I just, on how much was your decision, those statements yesterday driven by Florida, especially those images of Spring Break and his decision to, his resistance to passing a statewide ban? But especially those images became iconic really.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Yeah, it wasn't yesterday; I have to say it wasn't only Florida. I wasn't thinking about just Florida. But I will say this, the images of the packed beaches at Spring Break I think we talked about a couple weeks ago – they were quite jarring. It was pretty clear at that point where this was headed and that

was quite concerning. Thank you.

Matt, are you good? John, you good?

**John Mooney, NJ Spotlight:** You've talked a lot about ventilators and you think you're okay. There's a lot of talk about the actual ventilators themselves, the machines. Any indication that you might be short of supplies – intubation tubes as well as possible anesthesia drugs related if so many people are going to be sedated and ventilated for so long?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** We have asked the CEOs to let us know particularly about medication supplies because there are some shortages of medications. And we did get from one hospital up in the north that some medications that are used to sedate patients, their volume that they have on the shelves is going low. So, we're looking into that. But I've only heard from one right now, but it's exactly the types of medications that you would use particularly for someone on a ventilator – fentanyl, Versed, things like that.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** So, thank you, everybody. I want to thank Judy Persichilli, Dr. Christina Tan, Col. Pat Callahan. As I left yesterday I forgot to thank Catherine McCabe for joining us and Dr. Ed Lifshitz. From time to time we'll bring other leaders from government to come in or private sector – we've had hospital leadership – to give folks a broader sense of the sort of whole of government, whole of society, whole of state reality.

We'll be together unless you hear otherwise tomorrow right here at 1:00 PM. Again, I'm going to go up and review the field hospital in Secaucus before that, and otherwise we'll be here unless you hear otherwise at 1:00 PM.

And I would just repeat what we've said time and time again, everybody, thank you for everything you're doing. We understand the anxiety. We understand the isolation, the impatience. This is a marathon. We each must do our part. We will succeed unequivocally. We'll beat this virus. We'll come out the other side stronger than ever before but only if each and every single one of us, including everybody watching and all your family and friends and neighbors – only if we stay home, we social distance, do the little things as well as the big things. And if we do that we will win. Thank you.

## Governor Phil Murphy

[Home \(/governor/\)](#)

### Administration

[Governor Phil Murphy \(/governor/admin/about/\)](#)

[Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver \(/governor/admin/lt/\)](#)

[First Lady Tammy Snyder Murphy \(/governor/admin/fl/\)](#)

[Cabinet \(/governor/admin/cabinet/\)](#)

[Office of Health Care Affordability and Transparency](#)

[\(/governor/admin/affordablehealthcare/index.shtml\)](#)

[Boards, Commissions & Authorities \(/governor/admin/bca/\)](#)

[Internship Opportunities \(/governor/admin/internship.shtml\)](#)

[Governor's Residence - Drumthwacket \(http://drumthwacket.org/\)](http://drumthwacket.org/)

## Key Initiatives

[Economy & Jobs \(/governor/initiatives/#Economy\)](/governor/initiatives/#Economy)

[Education \(/governor/initiatives/#Education\)](/governor/initiatives/#Education)

[Environment \(/governor/initiatives/#Environment\)](/governor/initiatives/#Environment)

[Health \(/governor/initiatives/#Health\)](/governor/initiatives/#Health)

[Law & Justice \(/governor/initiatives/#Justice\)](/governor/initiatives/#Justice)

[Transportation \(/governor/initiatives/#Transportation\)](/governor/initiatives/#Transportation)

## News & Events

[Press Releases \(/governor/news/news/562022/approved/news\\_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/news/562022/approved/news_archive.shtml)

[Photos \(https://www.flickr.com/photos/govmurphy\)](https://www.flickr.com/photos/govmurphy)

[Public Addresses \(/governor/news/addresses\)](/governor/news/addresses)

[Executive Orders \(/infobank/eo/056murphy/approved/eo\\_archive.html\)](/infobank/eo/056murphy/approved/eo_archive.html)

[Administrative Orders \(/governor/news/ao/approved/ao\\_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/ao/approved/ao_archive.shtml)

[Direct Appointments \(/governor/news/appointments\)](/governor/news/appointments)

[Advice and Consent Appointments \(/governor/news/acappointments\)](/governor/news/acappointments)

Statements on Legislation

[\(/governor/news/statements/approved/statements\\_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/statements/approved/statements_archive.shtml)

[Administration Reports \(/governor/news/adminreports/approved/archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/adminreports/approved/archive.shtml)

[Transition Reports \(/governor/news/reports/approved/reports\\_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/reports/approved/reports_archive.shtml)

[Press Kits \(/governor/news/press\)](/governor/news/press)

## Social

[Facebook \(https://www.facebook.com/governorphilmurphy/\)](https://www.facebook.com/governorphilmurphy/)

[Twitter \(https://twitter.com/GovMurphy\)](https://twitter.com/GovMurphy)

[Instagram \(https://www.instagram.com/govmurphy/\)](https://www.instagram.com/govmurphy/)

[Snapchat \(https://www.snapchat.com/add/philmurphy\)](https://www.snapchat.com/add/philmurphy)

[YouTube \(https://www.youtube.com/njgovernorsoffice\)](https://www.youtube.com/njgovernorsoffice)

[TikTok \(https://www.tiktok.com/@njgov?\)](https://www.tiktok.com/@njgov?)

## Contact Us

[Scheduling Requests \(/governor/contact/scheduling/\)](/governor/contact/scheduling/)

[Contact Us \(/governor/contact/all/\)](/governor/contact/all/)

## Statewide

[NJ Home \(//www.nj.gov\)](http://www.nj.gov)

[Services A to Z \(//www.nj.gov/nj/gov/njgov/alphaserv.html\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/gov/njgov/alphaserv.html)

[Departments/Agencies \(//www.nj.gov/nj/gov/deptserv/\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/gov/deptserv/)

[FAQs \(//www.nj.gov/faqs/\)](http://www.nj.gov/faqs/)

[Contact Us \(//www.nj.gov/nj/feedback.html\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/feedback.html)

[Privacy Notice \(//www.nj.gov/nj/privacy.html\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/privacy.html)

[Legal Statement & Disclaimers \(//www.nj.gov/nj/legal.html\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/legal.html)

[Accessibility Statement \(//www.nj.gov/nj/accessibility.html\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/accessibility.html)

[\(//nj.gov/opra/\)](http://nj.gov/opra/)

[\(https://my.state.nj.us/openam/UI/Login\)](https://my.state.nj.us/openam/UI/Login)

Copyright © State of New Jersey, 1996-2023  
Office of Governor PO Box 001  
Trenton, NJ 08625  
609-292-6000

[\(https://tech.nj.gov/\)](https://tech.nj.gov/)