

Governor Phil Murphy

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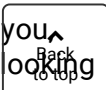
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Announcing our roadmap for restoring New Jersey's economic health...



Governor Phil Murphy: Good afternoon everyone. I am honored to be joined by the woman to my right, my partner in government, Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver. Great to have you back with us, Sheila. To her right, the Commissioner of Health, who needs no introduction – Judy, this is the farthest I've been from you in a long time – Judy Persichilli. Judy, great to have you here with us. Also, on my far left, great to have, as always, the Superintendent of the State Police Colonel Pat Callahan is with us. And with us today, another special guest, immediately to my left, is Congressman Tom Malinowski, who will be able to give us an important federal perspective. Great to have each and every one of you here. And if that weren't enough, in Row 1, sitting not 10 feet to my right at two o'clock is Communicable Disease Services Medical Director in the Department of Health. Dr. Ed Lifshitz. Ed, it's great to have you with us as well. Jared Maples is here from the Department of Homeland Security and Preparedness. Thanks to you, Jared.

Let's start, as we usually do, with updated numbers and charts. And because we're going a little bit earlier today, Judy, these numbers are as of last night, so don't read a lot into the Sunday or the Monday numbers on their own, we have weekend unevenness. If that weren't enough, we've got a little bit of a delay in getting these today because we're starting earlier. We have 2,146 new positive test results to report for a total statewide 111,188. And as I said, these numbers may not be quite entirely complete, so we would ask you to give us until tomorrow and Wednesday, look back a few days and then average those days in, if you're



for trend lines. As we look at the curve, Mahen, of new COVID-19 cases it remains flat, but as we'll discuss in a few minutes, before we can get ourselves on the road to recovery, we need this curve to bend down and to stay down.

Sadly, with the heaviest of hearts, we report an additional 106 lives lost, meaning that we have now lost a total of 6,044 blessed brothers and sisters of the New Jersey family to COVID-19 related complications. In our healthcare system, as of last night's reporting, there were 6,407 patients hospitalized for COVID-19. That number has, as you can see, begun to trend downward and that's a good thing. Our field medical stations reported 75 patients. There were 1,801 patients in either critical or intensive care. And again, this number is down roughly 9% from where it was last Monday. That number needs to continue to go down. Ventilator use continues to trend downward to 1,303 currently in use. This is down about 18% from a week ago. There were 314 new hospitalizations yesterday and the trend line continues to point in the right direction. And for the 24 hours preceding 10:00 p.m. last evening, our hospitals reported 480 discharges. We continue to see discharges exceed new admissions and we need to keep it that way.

This data, which we receive and report every day, is the measuring stick of our progress against COVID 19 with the slight footnote that I've already mentioned, and that is the weekend numbers, coming into early week, get a little bit choppy. And to be clear, our progress to date has been driven by both the hard work of literally tens of thousands of dedicated healthcare professionals and first responders, and it has been aided and amplified by the millions of you who have kept the need for social distancing and personal responsibility close to your hearts.

And this progress has been carried on in the memory of those we have lost and in the solidarity with the family and friends left behind. I won't be speaking today to specific life stories, we'll pick that up again tomorrow, out of respect for the fact that we have a very full agenda for us today. We also have a White House call at two o'clock, so we may have to shut things a little bit short, and forgive us for that.

Because of the work of our New Jersey family, we can announce today a vision to put our state and our people on the road to recovery. However, there is still much more work to do. If we let up even one bit with our aggressive social distancing measures too soon, even one day too soon, we can easily see ourselves skidding off this road. As I've said several times before, I and everyone up here in our respective teams will be guided by one overarching principle, and one principle only, as we plan our state's reopening. It is this: public health creates economic health. I repeat: public health creates economic health. That is what will guide us. That's the order in which we must proceed.

It means that before we reopen non-essential stores and businesses, before we can reopen our parks, or before we allow in-person dining in our restaurants, among any host of other activities, people need to know first and foremost that their health, that your health, will be safeguarded from COVID-19. With that principle as our starting point, again, public health creates economic health, we can put ourselves on the road back with a clear vision for moving forward and guided by objective metrics and mile posts we must meet in order to move forward.

The road back is driven by data, science, health progress and common sense. We will use rigorous standards that are equally smart and thoughtful, and everything we do will be filtered through our New Jersey values. This roadmap is designed with one goal only: to restore the health, strength and well-being of New Jersey for the long term. But let me repeat a basic truth. Until we give the public, until we give you all confidence that you should not be fearful, we cannot take further steps. A plan that is needlessly rushed is a plan that will needlessly fail.

As we travel this road, we will ensure that not just most of us come along for the ride, but that every community is along with us. By example, I had a good conversation Saturday with Linda Goler Blount, president and CEO of the Black Women's Health Imperative. We know from the data that COVID-19 has had an outsized impact on our communities of color, something that Judy and I have spoken about here, and that Sheila and Judy and I have spoken often about. We must not only ensure that these communities can thrive again, but our system must ensure equity as we get to that point.

COVID-19 did not create the inequities in our society, but it laid them bare, so this is also our opportunity to help close those gaps and we are committed to doing just that. We will also ensure that our road back merges with those being traveled by our regional partners through the Multi-State Council. This isn't just

about New Jersey, although it is first and foremost about New Jersey, for us to rush ahead, for example of either Pennsylvania or New York or any of our other four state partners, or vice versa, would risk returning our entire region back into lockdown mode.

Now, to be clear, this doesn't mean that we will or even can take every step at the exact same time or in the exact same way as our neighbors. That did not happen as we closed our states and it won't happen as we reopen them, but we will do it in a harmonized way. We will share information and make decisions based on the guidance of our public health and security experts and with an eye on our North Star, which is to protect lives across not just our state, but across our seven states, and indeed across the nation. I think I speak for all seven governors in our council when I say we only want to have to do this once.

So with that in mind, here are the six principles that will keep New Jersey on the road back, using renewed public health to create renewed economic health. Adhering to the first four principles will secure our public health.

1. Following trends of sustained reductions in New COVID-19 cases and other key metrics, reflecting a decreasing burden of disease.
2. Expanding testing capacity and speeding up the return of results.
3. Robust contact tracing.
4. Ensuring safe places where those positively diagnosed in the future can isolate.

When we have accomplished these four steps, we can move to Principle 5.

5. Responsibly restarting our economy, to restore our economic health.

And finally, to secure our future we moved to Principle 6.

6. Ensuring our resiliency.

If we follow this road, we give ourselves the best possible chance to succeed in the months ahead. Our first order of business is to secure the public's health. And as I noted, this will require us to meet our first four principles. The stay-at-home order, which has been in effect since March 21, will remain in effect in its entirety until further notice. For us to move out from underneath this order, we need to see, at the least, a sustained return reduction in the number of new positive COVID-19 test results, new COVID-19 related hospitalizations, and other metrics.

And, we will also need to see our hospitals step down from functioning under a crisis standard of care. We will be looking for trend lines that show 14-day decreases. We cannot look at just one day or one snapshot in time and say we've succeeded or failed. We will need to look across the length of time and to not be distracted by any statistical noise. We need to ensure that we have a robust and fully functioning healthcare system ready to meet the challenges ahead. And it's not just our hospitals, but also ambulatory facilities, long-term care facilities, provider practices everywhere healthcare is delivered. When we see fewer cases and fewer hospitalizations, we know our system will be prepared for these challenges.

Second, we must have a significantly ramped up diagnostic testing plan in place. We need to, at the least, double our current testing capacity. I'm proud to announce that we are actively working toward doubling our diagnostic testing capacity by the end of May and having everything in place from the kits themselves to the lab capacity necessary to ensure quick turnaround of results. As we've said many times, it isn't just the number of tests, it's how fast you get it back. We will have a flexible testing plan that is accessible to all residents who need it, whether it be through walk-up and drive-through sites, tests at local pharmacies, or even at-home testing capabilities. We will prioritize testing for healthcare workers, other essential workers and vulnerable populations. And, we will ensure those who test positive will be linked to a healthcare provider.

Our system will also be prepared to engage in targeted surveillance testing within communities, to further protect against the resurgence of COVID-19 and to build data sets that can help us better understand its spread. To achieve these aims, we will need significant support from our federal partners, and we will continue to expand our partnerships with private sector labs and with institutions like Rutgers University, which have created innovative new testing platforms. We are working closely with the White House, which has agreed to be a partner in helping us meet this important threshold.

With this expanding testing in place, we can move forward to our third marker, robust contact tracing. Whenever a new positive COVID-19 test is returned, we must be able to leverage not just that individual's recollections, but also employee new technologies to help identify those with whom that individual may have come into contact. We will need to recruit and deploy an army of contact tracers whose sole purpose will be to identify these individuals so we can follow up and ensure they do not contribute to further spread of COVID-19.

At the heart of much of this effort will be our local health officials, who have done amazing work throughout this emergency and backstopping all of this will be our Department of Health and its experienced and dedicated professionals. According to national guidance, and Judy has reported on this earlier, a proper program will require anywhere from 15 to 81 persons engaged in contact tracing for every 100,000 residents. For New Jersey, this can mean anywhere between roughly 1,300 all the way up to over 7,000 people to take on this work. But – and here's a big but – we are also actively engaging a number of technology companies in a search for innovative solutions that can assist in this massive undertaking, and not only make the work of human contact tracers more efficient, but perhaps mean that we need fewer of them.

And this now moves us to our fourth step in securing public health. To the greatest extent possible, we will need to provide those who do test positive in the future with a safe and free place to isolate themselves and protect others from COVID-19. We must also be prepared to support these people with wraparound services as needed. We are fully prepared that when we restart our economy, we will see COVID-19 cases. Even if we bat 1,000, even if we get everything right, we will see cases. That's not just the nature of the virus, as Ed and Judy and Christina and others have reminded us, but it is the nature of the reality when you combine it with a reopening, even a responsible, well-timed, well-structured reopening. That much we are sure about, we will see this virus again. Our goal will be to prevent these new cases from multiplying.

So stop for a second. Meeting these four benchmarks – a sustained drop of the curve, expanded testing, contact tracing, and safe places for people to isolate – is critical to giving our residents confidence that we are not only in front of the crisis, but that when we do restart our economy, they should not fear going out and being a part of it. And restarting our economy and returning people to work will be done methodically, strategically and responsibly, and that is our fifth principle.

To guide this process, tomorrow I will be announcing the formation and the members of the Governor's Restart and Recovery Commission, a group as diverse as it is talented. Economists, academics, business leaders, labor leaders, healthcare experts among them with local, national and global experience and knowledge. It will be their task to balance multiple competing needs to ensure we arrive at equitable decisions that work for every community in our state. I will ask them to help us and our businesses leverage any and all available federal funds and programs to support our recovery. I will give Tom Malinowski a well-deserved and robust introduction, but I don't know where we'd be without our federal partners down there fighting for us every day.

I will ask the Commission to give the highest priority for reopening using a clear standard of essential and safe, beginning with businesses, industries and activities, which are not only essential to our economy, but which provide the lowest risk of disease transmission. I suspect, Mahen, we're going to want to call that chart back up, this graph up later on when we engage in some of the questions. Then we can move up the matrix, bringing more businesses and activities online, until we achieve a fully functioning and open economy.

As we begin this restart, however, again expect to see the continuation of social distancing measures, including potentially requirements for face coverings in certain locations. I, by the way, have become a disciple of face coverings, period. I'm not suggesting that's what the guidance will be, but at least face coverings in certain locations, and for work-from-home directives for employees who do not need to report to a physical location, to pick two examples of what I think we will be living with for the foreseeable future.

I want, by the way, nothing more than to see every Main Street up and down the state filled with shoppers and diners once again. I want our construction sites roaring with activities once again. I want to see the shore humming throughout the summer. We will move as quickly as we can, but as safely as we must. We have to be thoughtful in how we unfold our economy. This virus is now among us and our task will be to contain it as best we can. But with our public health protocols firmly in place and with our healthcare system prepared, you should not fear heading back to work or elsewhere, and that is our objective.

And finally, we cannot think of COVID-19 as a one and done. Whether we are hit with a rebound of COVID-19 or a different strain, or an altogether new virus outbreak, we have learned valuable lessons that we would be foolish to ignore. Ensuring New Jersey's resiliency for the next outbreak, and that no one will be left unprotected because racial or socioeconomic status must be a part of our response to this outbreak. COVID-19 showed no favorites in ravaging our state, and neither will we in preparing for the next wave.

We must use this window of opportunity to fill gaps and fortify our healthcare system. I will be looking to see that our hospitals and healthcare systems and anywhere else, by the way, where healthcare is delivered, have the bed capacity, personal protective equipment, ventilator supplies and staff they will need to provide the highest quality of services.

At the state level, we will ensure that we too have the supplies to backstop our healthcare facilities and our first responders and essential workers. That means building our own state stockpile of PPE, from masks to gloves and everything in between, so we can properly outfit not just our frontline health and public safety responders, but also our essential workforce. And it also means we must have ventilators on hand that we can push out to hospitals before – and I say before 00 they hit crisis mode. Throughout this process, we have purchased hundreds of ventilators. Don't think for a moment that we're going to be sending any of the back once the current emergency ends. We cannot find ourselves in another situation where we must rely on the federal government or our corporate and philanthropic partners, by the way, around the world, I might add, to source what we need. We must build our resiliency now.

And governmentally, we now have a playbook that we put together and can refer to, or hand off, by the way, to future administrations complete with the framework for the dozens of Executive Orders and other processes necessary for facing a global pandemic head on, and emerging stronger from it.

In the course of two months, our entire world and our entire worldview has changed. Pandemics aren't something in a far-off place that we just read about in the news anymore. We are living it right here in one of the most advanced states in the most advanced nation in the world. And even as we work to put New Jersey back on the road of progress and prosperity, we know that this war is still far from over. We need to continue focusing on our social distancing, and taking the steps necessary to push the curves of new cases, new hospitalizations, and COVID-19 related deaths down so we can move, in turn, down this road. I don't know when we'll be able to formally and finally start this journey. Hopefully, if we all keep at it, it will be soon. But just as we began planning our response to COVID-19 six weeks before our first positive test results even came back from the lab, we will be ready to put the car in gear as soon as we see a green light. This is a plan for how we move forward, not if we move forward. So let's do it together.

Let's start by lowering the curve. We can do this if we all keep our focus over the coming weeks. And when we do this, it will be that much sooner that we are able to reach our destination, a New Jersey that is restored to economic health, because we took the steps to restore and secure our collective health. That said, as I've said many times, it takes a village. We need our legislators, we need our whole team. We need each and every one of you doing the extraordinary hard work, including staying home and staying away from each other, even as the weather I'm told will someday improve. Thank you for that. You're the single most important member of our family, of our village, because you have kept this curve flat enough to allow our hospital systems to sustain the extraordinary influx of patients. Please stay at it, we need you.

And I can't think of a more important member or members of our community than our federal delegation in both the Senate and in the House, across the aisle. We have as good as it gets anywhere in America, and a great example of that delegation is with us today. Please help me welcome Congressman from the Seventh District, Congressman Tom Malinowski.

Congressman Tom Malinowski: Thank you, Governor. Thank you, everybody. And thank you, above all for the partnership that we have been able to build, especially over these last few difficult weeks, whether the issue is testing, personal protective equipment, aid for our businesses, aid for our state, relief for our people, our staffs, or you and I personally, we speak every single day and we get the job done and we are absolutely in lockstep on what needs to happen going forward.

Look, we are in the second month of what I think is the most extraordinary collective effort that Americans have undertaken against a common enemy, certainly in in my lifetime. Despite all of the things that we may still be arguing about, the overwhelming majority of Americans and the overwhelming majority of New

Jerseyans believe that we are doing the right thing. The overwhelming majority have been willing to make great personal sacrifices over the last few weeks to make sure that their families, their neighbors and their communities are healthy.

When I hear from folks in my district, of course they want to see the economy reopened, but they are not looking for a date. They are looking for a plan, a plan like the one that you just laid out here today, Governor. They understand that the reopening is not something that a Governor can make happen by waving a magic wand. It can only happen when all of us have the confidence to step out and go out to a restaurant, to go back to work, to go back to a mall. It's not one person making a decision. It has to be based on a plan that's based on science and on sound public health advice, and that's what we are working on here together, today.

Our job, your federal partners, our job is to make sure that as we make these sacrifices as a state, and as individual New Jerseyans, there are resources that make it economically possible for us to do this. That's what we've been working on through the CARES 1 Act, which we passed several weeks ago, and then several days ago with what we called an interim package. Interim because we know we need to do much more.

Now here's the good news. The good news is that today, the Paycheck Protection Program, this vital lifeline for our small business owners in New Jersey and around the country, is back in business. So for all of those small business owners who have been trying to hold on, who were frustrated in the first couple of weeks of this program, because the banks were not returning your calls, because the loans were not coming through, that program is back in business today. So all of those who had applications in and who were waiting, I hope that over the next few days, you will hear good news. And if you don't, and you still have frustrations, and you live in my district, please call my office. We will call the banks for you. We will try to see what's going on. And I'm sure every member of our federal delegation, Congressional delegation, will do the same.

Now there's a lot more we need to do to fix that program. One thing that we did in the bill that we just passed was to set aside a large share of the money for our smaller community-based banks and credit unions, banks that make a habit of dealing with the smallest businesses in our community. We've all seen the frustrating, infuriating stories about larger, publicly traded companies that did not need this money, that got in the front of the line and unfortunately, the banks favored their existing loan customers. That is not what we intended. That is not what the bill said. But that is unfortunately what happened. So we are setting aside more of the money for small businesses. Unfortunately, we still have a frustrating refusal on the part of the administration and the Senate to fix the eligibility criteria for that program and we're going to have to deal with that in the next bill that we pass.

The other issue that we have been working on, and this has also been intensely frustrating over the last couple of weeks, is the need to get relief for our state governments, including our state government in New Jersey and for our local and county governments. In the first CARES bill, we approved a fund of \$150 billion for our state and local governments, and we did this because we understood not only that states would be taking on new expenses to fight this disease, but that they would be seeing a dramatic loss in revenue,, for obvious reasons, because the economy is virtually shut down. We absolutely intended this money to be helpful to the states that are dealing with this loss of revenue. We felt that we had an explicit commitment from the Trump administration that that would be the case.

Unfortunately, it has not been the case because the State of New Jersey and all other states have received guidance telling them, for some reason, that they cannot use this money to compensate for lost revenues due to the COVID-19 epidemic. I was on the phone last night with Speaker Pelosi talking about this very issue. She felt as if we had had a commitment that was betrayed and we are going to go back as often as it takes to the Trump administration to make sure that that first \$150 billion is freed up. Right now, as I think we've heard from the Governor, a lot of that money is not usable by the states and other local entities that qualified for it.

The second thing we need to do is to enhance that fund and make sure it's available for governments, whether they are large states or small towns. You've heard how this has gotten partisan in Washington over the last several days. This will be the main issue we are debating in the next CARES bill that we will be introducing in the House of Representatives shortly. We believe this is necessary. We've heard some very divisive rhetoric from Leader McConnell in the United States Senate regarding, well, his attitude about what he called a quote, "blue state bailout". It is irresponsible, and in my view, also unsustainable. Irresponsible,

because after all, it is states like New Jersey that create the economic wealth of the United States, including by paying for most of the things that states like Kentucky and Tennessee and Alabama and Indiana do to take care of their people in education and in health.

We get, in New Jersey, 90 cents back from the federal government for every dollar that we pay in taxes. The average resident of Kentucky gets \$2.41 back. It is outrageous to suggest that somehow we are asking for a bailout. It's irresponsible because if we end up, and if states and local governments end up having to layoff teachers and firefighters and police officers and other state and local employees, guess what happens? They collect unemployment. Guess who pays? The federal government.

For businesses, we have set up a plan deliberately to encourage continued employment. We don't want people to go on unemployment. Why should it not be the same for state and local government employees?

And finally, it is unsustainable, because we are not just talking about employees of states. We're talking about state and local government down to the township level in the United States of America. I represent a district, the Seventh District in New Jersey, that has not one single town with more than 50,000 people in it. Every single one of my towns is hurting right now. Every single one is seeing tax revenue dry up. Every single one is debating how long they can continue to pay those schoolteachers, those cops and those firefighters. This is about the survival of Small Town America. And at the end of the day, I'm not sure if Mitch McConnell wants to be the person who is responsible for telling Small Town America to go to hell. That's what he's doing right now.

Well, in my district today, we are going to be releasing a letter that's going to be signed, right now we have 45 or 50 mayors and freeholders, about half of them are Republicans, to our Congressional leadership, saying, "Please approve this relief money." It is not a bailout. It is to enable state and local government in the United States of America to exist through this crisis. I think that is a bipartisan call that you are going to see coming from state governments, county governments, local governments, from across this country. I know a number of my colleagues in the House are generating similar letters. It's gotten partisan in Washington. It is completely nonpartisan in state capitals and in Small Town America and we are going to make that argument and I believe we are going to win that argument in the next bill that passes, certainly the House of Representatives, but I believe the next bill that will go to the President for his signature.

We owe this to everybody who is making a sacrifice right now, to everybody who has been lost, to everybody who's putting their own self-interest to one side until our community and our state and our country is healthy again. Thank you very much.

Governor Phil Murphy: Tom, thank you for your leadership. To take the cents and dollars and turn it into the total numbers consistent with what you've just said, we send over \$70 billion more to Washington, the federal government, than we receive. Kentucky gets back almost \$150 billion more than they put in. Talk about reading from your own book, right?

Congressman Tom Malinowski: Yeah, if every state generated as much, gave as much as New Jersey, there would be a massive surplus in the federal budget, not a deficit.

Governor Phil Murphy: I just want to reiterate, thank you, Tom, for everything you're doing. And you made a point about the mayors and freeholders This is not a partisan point right now. This is overwhelmingly doing what's right for our state, for our people, for our country. And I said what I said last week, I would have said it if Mitch McConnell were a Democrat. It's just completely irresponsible. And just to use this as, we had a very good call this morning, I thought, with the Congressional delegation, both Senators as well as the full delegation in the House. I repeat now what I've said several times in this room, but also on the call. Senator Bob Menendez in the Senate has got a \$500 billion bill, co-sponsored by Senator Cassidy, a Republican from Louisiana, which does exactly what Tom is referring to. There's a chance, it sounds like that the House may have a bill that is similar, if not even larger, and that's what the doctor ordered right now. Right?

Congressman Tom Malinowski: Yes, that's actually my bill.

Governor Phil Murphy: That's your bill.

Congressman Tom Malinowski: And also bipartisan. So again, the key is we have about 140 co-sponsors, a number of Republicans in that list. I think every member is hearing this from their hometowns, from their state governments. This is not partisan back home. It has been made partisan for reasons that are mysterious to me by a few people in Washington, DC. That is what we will have to overcome over the coming days.

Governor Phil Murphy: Amen. Thank you again for that and for everything, Tom. It is a real treat to have my partner in government back with us today. She has been extraordinary, as always, particularly in this crisis, not just as Lieutenant Governor but also in running the Department of Community Affairs, which speaking of small towns, touches every single one of them in every corner of the state and I would love to ask her to say a few words. Please help me welcome the Lieutenant Governor of the great state of New Jersey, the one, the only, the singular Sheila Oliver.

Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver: Thank you very much, Governor. You know, I think that you and Congressman Malinowski hit the nail on the head. We have to prioritize health, public health. And I think, Governor, the road back is reflective of the sentiment of the people of New Jersey. In a very short period of time, our people in New Jersey have had to learn, with intensity, about a disease no one ever knew existed. And in a short period of time, as we have seen what has happened in our part of the Northeast Corridor, New Jersey being number two behind the State of New York in the number of people who have become infected and the number of people who have been hospitalized, and the number of people that we have lost. I think that New Jerseyans understand we cannot just tomorrow flip a switch and go back to life as normal. Life is not going to be normal, pre-COVID-19. And I think that if you travel around the state, if you go into the various counties, if you visit some of the cities, you will see that people already are beginning to reorient themselves and focus on health.

You know, for those of you that have elder grandmothers or you remember some of your elder uncles and aunts, they always told you when you were young, if you don't have health, you don't have anything. I think the road back is very measured. I think it is tempering and it is combining the needs of getting our economy back on track, but at the same time, prioritizing health, wellness and sustaining life in this state.

You know, it's very interesting, at the Department of Community Affairs, we deal with all 565 municipalities. We have been on the phones constantly in the past month-and-a-half with mayors, with city council people, with freeholders, with people who chair various boards and authorities across the state. I think that what has been shown through the leadership of the Governor, it has created a real unity between and amongst people from one end of the state to the other.

Congressman Malinowski pointed out the divisiveness that you see on Capitol Hill in Washington. We are not seeing that in the State of New Jersey. I think that this shared experience, COVID knows no neighborhood, it knows no zip code, it knows no socioeconomic status. I think it has snapped us back into reality, in this state, about the role of government, what government can do in the lives of people. Governor, I just want to tell you that our mayors and our local elected officials are pleased with the leadership you have brought to this experience that we are having, and could not be more pleased that you are taking the deliberate steps that you are taking. I want to thank you for that.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you, Sheila, and thank you for everything you're doing. And you look at what we've got in terms of rental relief, and folks dealing with mortgages and evictions and whatnot, so much of that runs through the Department of Community Affairs. I can't thank you enough. You've been working morning, noon, and night and you've been an extraordinary partner in peacetime and now in war, so bless you and thank you.

You make a fair point. I was actually, I didn't agree with everything he stood for, by a longshot, but I always admired Ronald Reagan as a guy who could seize the moment. But I got to call him out on this. When he said government is not the answer, government is the problem, that is not the case today, with all due respect to the President. We need government now more than ever before, and we're reminded in this awful tragedy of the role that's indispensable that government can play. Our job is to deliver as much of that as consistently and as comprehensively as possible. And back to Tom's point, we can't do that without the back and fill of a lot of federal money to allow us to continue to deliver for our residents. Sheila, thank you for everything.

I'm not used to having Judy Persichilli so far for me. After two months, I feel like we're always cheek to jowl, as they say, but please help me welcome the woman who needs no introduction, the Commissioner of the Department of Health, Judy Persichilli.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Thank you, Governor and Lieutenant Governor, Congressman Malinowski. As the Governor shared, our hospitals reported 6,407 hospitalizations, of which 1,801 individuals are in critical care, and 72% of those individuals are on ventilators. We're actually seeing slight decline in our hospitalizations in the Northern part of the state, and a flattening in the Central part of the state, and a slight uptick in the Southern part of the state. Last evening, there were five hospitals that were on divert for portions of the evening and night. Three of them were from Central New Jersey, two of them from North Jersey, none from the south.

Today, we're reporting 2,146 new cases from 10:00 p.m. last evening. I just want to remind you that means it's not comparable to what we've been reporting in the past, as we try to collect this data in the morning but the hospital data is from 10:00 p.m. the night before so combining that seems to make a little bit more sense at this point.

Along with the Governor, we at the Department of Health are sad to report 106 new deaths for a total of 6,044 fatalities in our state. The breakdown of deaths by race and ethnicity is as follows: White, 53.2%; black, 20.3%; Hispanic, 16.3%; Asian, 5.1%; and other, 5%.

We have also looked at hospital discharge destination. That's been a question at some of our prior conferences. A sample of 773 cases reveals that 24.7% of those cases were discharged to a skilled nursing facility, 3% to a rehab facility, 1.8% to hospice, 10.8% are among individuals who have expired, 0.9% left against medical advice, 2.98% were discharged to another facility type, and 50.32% were discharged home.

There are 476 long-term care facilities in the state now reporting cases of COVID-19 for a total of over 16,277 cases in our long-term facilities. The state veterans homes are now reporting 263 residents positive and sadly, 97 residents have expired from their total census of 714. Our state psychiatric hospitals are reporting 152 patients have tested positive, and they have reported nine deaths and that has stayed steady for the last number of days. Our field medical stations have treated a total of 346 individuals and have discharged 270 of them.

According to lab data from this morning, of the lab sending us their COVID-19 results, 204,651 individuals have been tested with 88,064 testing positive for a positivity rate of 43%. That ends my report. Stay connected, stay safe, and stay healthy. Thank you.

Governor Phil Murphy: Judy, thank you. The positivity rate, just for folks watching at home who may be watching maybe just today or others who have been watching every day, that has slowly begun to drift down over the past week. Either you or Ed, any color on that particular trend? Which I assume is a positive one. Ed, do you have a mic on you or no? You do. Here we go.

DOH Communicable Disease Service Medical Director Dr. Ed Lifshitz: Yes, thank you. Yes, it's definitely a positive trend. As you've mentioned, we're seeing these positivity rates gradually decline. What you've been talking about here is our cumulative positivity rate, which means you're having hundreds of thousands of tests. It takes a long time to move that gradually down. We also look at the positivity rates on any given day, meaning daily over time. That moves faster. As well as, we do some additional looking at the different areas in New Jersey to see what's happening. For example, at its peak in Bergen County, about 60% of all their tests were coming up positive. At this point, they're down to about 30% or so of the test becoming positive, so that's a huge difference as far as that goes. As the Commissioner mentioned, we are seeing some increases in the South but overall, the state is definitely trending in the right way when it comes to those positivity numbers.

Governor Phil Murphy: Sorry to make you get unmasked there. So that's an important point for folks who may have missed that. It's not just that the number cumulatively is trending down, but the snapshots of recent moments is meaningfully down from peaks. That's on the list of trends that we're going to be watching very carefully to get back to where that road to recovery goes.

Counties, Judy, staying the same in terms of the positive test results. These six counties still overwhelmingly have the highest concentration. There's positive test results and sadly fatalities in all 21 counties. But in order: Bergen, Hudson, Essex, Union, Passaic and Middlesex continue to have the big bulk of them. The racial data is consistent and troubling, as it has been since we've been reporting it. I for one was encouraged that 50-plus percent of people are walking out of the hospital and going home, which is another data point that I think we can take some comfort in. The folks who are beating this, at least in 50% of the cases are beating it so much so that they can go home. And in some cases, I'm sure with a visiting physical therapist or a visiting nurse, but the fact of the matter is, they're going home. Thank you, to each of you, for that.

Pat, I said I wouldn't necessarily call on you just because our program was so thick and we've got a lot of reporters here. And by the way, folks, we're going to start over here but I'm going to ask you to limit your questions to one or two at most, just because we've got a big crowd and we have to go to the White House virtually. Talk, if you could Pat, off subject, but importantly one of your guys was shot last night. Just give us a quick sense of how he's doing?

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: He's doing well, Governor. I had the ability to talk to him this morning. He'll probably be in there for a week or so. Very lucky. The investigation is ongoing and the Attorney General and I plan to stream live tomorrow morning from The Rock the details of what we've found so far. To everybody who's reached out to both him and his family, greatly appreciated, and he's doing well..

Governor Phil Murphy: Pat let us know late, or I guess early Saturday morning that this had transpired. I had the honor on Sunday morning, so yesterday, to speak not just with Pat but with his mom, not your mom but the trooper's mom. I don't want to get him engaged inadvertently – was it his girlfriend or fiancé?

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: It was his girlfriend.

Governor Phil Murphy: His girlfriend, so I don't want to jump the gun there. But in any event, as you can imagine, it was pretty traumatic and it sounds like he's a lucky guy and a great guy. I'm going to speak to him later on this afternoon, and I'm really looking forward to it. So, thanks to everybody who is up here with me. We're going to start over here. And again, I'd ask you to keep, as a favor today, to keep it fairly short, Nikita.

Q&A Session

Nikita Biryukov, New Jersey Globe: I might not be able to grant you that favor. We reported this weekend that some mail-in ballots delivered to apartment buildings are simply being left in lobbies and not actually delivered to mailboxes or voters' doors. Do you have any plans to address these issues with the Postal Service? Do you have any concerns that for tenants living, the majority of whom live in apartment buildings as opposed to single family homes, are being treated differently in this regard? Do you have any concerns about the all VBM elections in May being compromised by this sort of activity? Do you have any concerns about voter fraud, given that large numbers of ballots are being left in public places?

Governor Phil Murphy: One more, please.

Nikita Biryukov, New Jersey Globe: Sure. And then I have one more for me and then --

Governor Phil Murphy: One more, please.

Nikita Biryukov, New Jersey Globe: Any timeline on July 7 and all VBM? Is that still on the table?

Governor Phil Murphy: I don't have. Given the gravity of what we're talking about, I don't have crisp answers for you. Mahen, let's get the team to follow up with you on the mail-in ballots being left in lobbies. I actually didn't see that story. That's obviously not what we want. While we're fighting this war, democracy and other things have to go on so we take that very seriously. I'll have to come back to you. There's no update on July 7, and we will give you an update, I promise you, as soon as we get it. Thank you though. Please.

Reporter: Hi, I was curious, the long-term care facility numbers, I know there had been a reconciliation going on with those. Do those that we see on the dashboard now include only residents or still residents and staff?

Governor, all of the benchmarks and goals and ideas that you mentioned today, can you give us any insight into your priorities on what industries or business might come back online first? Any best guess on timeframe for this?

I know there's a priority on testing vulnerable populations. What's the plan for prisons? As far as I know, there's no testing being done in the facilities now. I wonder if we'll see any of that before people are released back to their homes.

Governor Phil Murphy: Judy, I'll start and maybe ask you to come in behind that. I think, could you pull up, Mahen, the low-risk chart? I think you should probably assume that this is not up here just for our health, but this is something that will guide us. I think it's a mistake that we would -- and I want to caution folks, for you accountants out there, don't expect a LIFO strategy here. In other words, last in, first out. In other words, a reversal of what we did. That's not necessarily going to be. It might be, but it won't necessarily be consistent with what we would do.

But it's going to be the workplaces and other venues where we have a high degree of confidence that social distancing and other related norms can be effectively executed. And by the way, I love music. I love going to concerts. Concerts are not going to be anytime soon, as an example, where there's a high amount of density meaning the risk is high, you're in that lower right-hand corner. You're in the lower right-hand corner where it's high risk -- and I love music, so don't take this the wrong way -- but it's not essential. The stuff we want to have is the essential stuff coming back online, food chain, other essential elements, where we can properly and folks can properly adjudicate and also defend and exhibit that they're actually social distancing. Mask policies, again, I've become a big mask person.

I've gotten pinged even just sitting here. Respectfully, I might add, I love the level of respect, but I hope sooner than later, assuming folks can do it right, we can get to things like parks, which some would say is not essential, I would say for mental health and other reasons, there's another set of arguments that we're hearing all the time that they are essential. We respect that, but it's got to be done the right way.

With that, I believe we are testing in prisons, by the way. I don't think the premise of that last question is accurate. Is that right?

DOH Communicable Disease Service Medical Director Dr. Ed Lifshitz: We're implementing a plan to test everyone who is being furloughed pursuant to your Executive Order and with the Commissioner, we're working on a broader plan for the prison population and staff.

Governor Phil Murphy: I think that's going to be on the list. I'm confusing the folks who may be considered for furlough with the overall population. I mentioned vulnerable communities and that certainly is going to be on the list of priorities. Judy, anything on that, as well as on reconciling long-term care numbers?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: The long-term care numbers are still being reconciled. We hope to finish that by the end of the week, so some of it is clean, some of it still has employees and residents. In vulnerable populations, we do determine that corrections is on that list. We have a Testing Strategy Task Force, and we're looking at refining the definition of vulnerable populations and also priority populations.

Governor Phil Murphy: You guys? Either of you gentlemen? No. Ma'am.

Reporter: Hi. On the reopening plan, as you make decisions about what's going to reopen, when, will that apply to the state across the board? Or will it be a decision made county by county or region by region? Since as several people mentioned, there are different situations in North, Central and South for various measures.

And also, yesterday there was an outage in the unemployment site, online applications were down. From what I understand it is back up, but can you address what the problem was and if anything's been done to prevent that outage from happening again?

Governor Phil Murphy: I realized I didn't -- you asked me about when. I don't know when, I think it's measured in weeks, but that assumes that everybody is doing their job. And so everybody, folks, if you want to get back to some semblance of normal, the most important thing you could do right now is to keep doing what you're doing. Stay at home, stay away from each other. That is job number one and the extent to which that continues to succeed, it allows us to start going down that road.

Too early to tell on regional versus statewide. I've used this example before, but it must be referred to again, because it's a good example. Some counties have said, "Hey, wait a minute. We're less dense, we have fewer people, fewer visitors normally to our parks." Here's the problem. Unintended consequences here are very

much on our mind, that that may be true, but the minute you open up two or three parks, either a county park or a state park in those counties, you get the rest of the counties, if not the rest of the region, showing up on a good weather weekend day, in particular, in those parks. That scared the heck out of us.

I mentioned this a few weeks ago. I think it was on April 4 and 5, if my memory serves me, that it was the first warm weather weekend. We surveyed with Pat his folks and the Park Police surveyed the parks, and they had congregations and a lot of out-of-state plates. Now having said that, I mentioned this within the past couple of days, we have had successful regional steps taken, the most important of which is Judy's regionalizing the healthcare realities into the North, Central and South. That's been hugely effective as we built out capacity, as we realized we needed to move assets around, whether they be ventilators or beds or even hospitals on divert and they had to move patients, that worked really well. So I would never say never, but my bias will be leaning toward making state decisions, statewide decisions. unless we see a real unique reason to do otherwise, or unless we see a really bifurcated reality in terms of the virus and its impact on the state.

Did I answer your questions, I think?

Reporter: Unemployment website.

Governor Phil Murphy: Unemployment, it crashed. I don't know why it crashed but it did crash and it was back up, I was told, at 6:00 p.m. last night. And so they're still chopping through and I know folks out there are frustrated. I don't blame you. We had this conversation on the call with Tom and his colleagues this morning. This will not make anyone feel any better, but we are leagues ahead of virtually every other state, but there's still a backlog. I know folks are still frustrated. You won't lose one penny, I promise you, including of your federal plus-up. Thank you for that. We'll come down to Matt in the front here. Matt.

Matt Arco, Star-Ledger: Thank you, Governor. I understand your apprehension about wanting to give a date but it appears in some of the stuff that you laid out, you talked about testing doubling maybe by the end of May. It looks like some of those other measures that you implemented could take a couple of weeks or additional months. I'm just curious how you square that then maybe with things like opening up schools, possibly in the middle of May? And maybe just some sort of clarity, if there's any light at the end of the tunnel for New Jerseyans.

On unemployment, Governor, I'm curious, when will the unemployment system be able to handle gig workers and self-employers? And also, if you can give an update on the number of backlog at the Department of Labor for unemployment claims?

And just lastly, you know, why can't more businesses – this is another question from readers. Why can't more businesses that are considered non-essential open for curbside and delivery and things like that? Is that something that you would reconsider expanding the sort of businesses that can be opened or closed at this time?

Governor Phil Murphy: Do you have an example?

Matt Arco, Star-Ledger: I don't off the top of my head. But I mean just, you know, like basically, I guess, you know, if it's a store that might sell like farm equipment or something like that.

Governor Phil Murphy: Some of this I don't have and will get you what the backlog looks like. But I was told the backlog this morning, I think, is back to what they have normally been dealing with pre-crisis. Did you hear the same thing, Matt? Yeah. But we'll get you more information on the backlog. Mahen, help me out here. Backlog, where it stands today on unemployment as well as specifics on gig workers and self-employed and those are the independent contractors, you rightfully raise, was a particular challenge, so we'll come back to you.

Yeah, I think this is weeks. I'm not sure it's months, Matt, and I don't want to be accused of not giving light at the end of the tunnel. I think we've been very clear on both sides and I think we have to continue to be clear on both sides. You have to continue to stay home until we say otherwise. I know it's frustrating. I know the weather someday will get better, it's going to really get to folks and I get that completely. But it's working and this is the number one weapon we have in this fight. But it is working. So you could say both of those things. You can see the hospitalization numbers. They are coming down. We have to continue to see them coming down.

I'd love to say that it's tomorrow, but it isn't. But I also don't want folks to lose their hope because we're winning this and we will get through this. Sadly, not without casualty but we will get through this. But I think it's a number of weeks. I mean that. I've sort of led the witness, I mentioned that we believe we'll be able to at least double our testing by the end of May so that's basically five weeks from now, to put that on it. I would not say it's a number of months, but I also would remind folks that these viruses come back, even if we do it exactly right, Judy and Ed will tell us, they come back, no matter how good we might be.

Nothing new one schools. We promised an answer by May 15 and we will abide by that. That's where I'd be on all of that. Thank you for that. We'll come back to you on the unemployment insurance as well as the gig and the self-employed. Real quick.

Matt Arco, Star-Ledger: The other day we heard that the Rutgers spit testing, we were talking about 10,000 maybe in a week or two. How did this change to double the testing capacity now to the end of May? It seemed like that was more --

Governor Phil Murphy: Yeah, because there's different parts of the food chain. There's the actual testing materials you need, depending on which test you're doing. If it's a viral test, you still need the healthcare worker and the PPE. How quick is the turnaround? The reagents? So the answer is, I'm also not going to over promise and under deliver. How's that? Maybe that helps square it. Thank you. Sir.

Reporter: Two for you, Governor. People want to know why there is no response from your phone number. They're saying it's either busy or the voicemail is full. Also, you stated that testing will be doubled by the end of May, but current tests are hitting a rough ceiling of 3,000 to 4,000 over the last two weeks. Are you concerned that current testing presents an incomplete picture of the outbreak in New Jersey and how do you know that anything other than extensive asymptomatic testing will give you the data that you need?

Governor Phil Murphy: I have no idea what the answer to your question about my phone is, ringing busy. This phone, by the way is, literally as I sit here, exploding. I don't know, I can't give you a good answer on that. But I feel like certain days every 9 million folks in New Jersey have my number, so I've got a little bit of an opposite feel and I welcome that, by the way. I'll let Ed and Judy answer the latter, but I don't think 3,000 or 4,000 is the number that we're looking at. I think Ed, you had said, we were 7,000 and 9,000 and that was two weeks ago, and we're up from there. There may be a question of how long it's taking to process them. Remember, we've said two things about testing. We need a lot more of it and we need a rapid response because otherwise, what good is it? If we think we've eliminated community spread, I come in from out of state, I test positive but I don't know that for a week. What good is it at that point? The horse is out of the barn. But the question, Ed, in particular, how do you address the question of how comfortable, how confident can we be in the absence of complete asymptomatic testing of asymptomatic folks around the state?

DOH Communicable Disease Service Medical Director Dr. Ed Lifshitz: Yes, again, in a perfect world, we'd essentially test everybody to know exactly what was happening. We all know that that isn't possible. Yes, our tests are increasing, not decreasing. We talked a couple weeks ago at about 7,000 to 9,000 tests and now I'd say we're probably about 2,000 tests or so more over that every day, on average. We're probably in the 9,000 to 11,000 but don't quote me on an exact number. It does vary from day to day.

Part of what happens when you're talking about trying to get a sense of what's happening in a broader population, in an asymptomatic population, or to know what's happened in the past, then you're talking not only about the test to detect the virus, which is the nasal swab or the spit test or so forth, then you begin talking about doing the blood tests to look for the antibodies to get a sense of what's happening in the population, in a broader sense. We are moving forward together with Rutgers to do some of that testing, to get a sense about what's been happening in broader swaths of New Jersey as well.

While our picture will never be completely complete, we'll never have as much information as we absolutely want, we're definitely working more and more towards that picture every day.

Governor Phil Murphy: I'm going to say as a non-medical professional, and then do you have a question in the back, sir? We'll go to the back there. As a non-medical professional, I would say, I'm going to predict the following. Never mind the end of May, in which we'll put a marker out in terms of when we believe we will at least be able to double. Based on all the conversations that I'm a part of and our teams are part of, I think we

will be in a dramatically different place as a state and perhaps as a country on testing three months from now. I'm just going to pick that number. There's just so much happening right now and a lot of it, I'm happy to say, is happening right here in New Jersey.

You mentioned Rutgers. That's the best example, but it's not the only example. The fact that we're a big healthcare, bio, pharmaceutical state with great institutions of higher education, boy, is that coming home to roost for us right now and that's a good thing. Sir.

Phil Andrews, NJ News Network: Good afternoon, Governor. Phil Andrews, New Jersey News Network. Really quick, as of today, how would you envision Memorial Day moving forward? And your thoughts on out-of-state residents taking advantage of Jersey Shore rentals and going back and forth in this climate?

Governor Phil Murphy: Yeah, I'm not sure I've got a crisp answer for you on Memorial Day. I know what it normally is, and I love it and I hope it can be some form of that. Memorial Day is, what, five weeks, four weeks from today. I can't give you a full answer. I hope, as I've said many times, that we have some semblance of norm on the shore this summer, but it will be some semblance. I just don't envision being in tight spaces without real restrictions on capacity and social distancing. Frankly, even on the beach, I just don't see it.

Whether or not we're at a better place four weeks from today, I sure as heck hope we are. I think there's a shot. I think we've got a shot again, if everybody keeps doing what they're doing. If we let our guard down, all bets are off. That heat map, which we didn't show you today, just because we had a lot of slides, Mahen, let's get that back up tomorrow. That map has shown largely really good progress, but it's slipped the past couple of days. There was a Washington Post heat map over the weekend that showed that we had slipped a hair. A hair. We cannot let that happen and the extent to which folks keep doing what they're doing to put it in the positive, we increase our chances meaningfully of getting that semblance of norm on the shore sooner than later. I will be the happiest guy in Jersey, if not America, if that semblance of norm comes in by Memorial Day.

I worry about out-of-state stuff and I want us to be open for business. The good news is folks who travel to New Jersey, on the shore, and rent or even own a second home are overwhelmingly either New Jerseyans or from the region. There were some folks who come from outside the region, for sure and in a normal time, I want more of them. But this time, for this purpose, at least, they tend to be in the region.

My word, at this moment, sitting here on April, whatever it is, is however we want folks to be in their primary residence. The Shore community, particularly in the offseason, does not have the healthcare infrastructure to support the challenges that this virus has put upon us. I would hope that folks continue to adhere to that. Whether or not four weeks from now we're in some kind of a more normal reality where folks can continue to do again, particularly if they may be coming from the region that is consistent with the Seven State Council that we've established, where while we're not doing things exactly alike, we're doing things broadly in a similar fashion. That would give some comfort. But for the time being, at least, we need folks to stay in their primary homes. Thank you. I promise you, we'll update as we have something, Sir. I didn't recognize you there. I think you got a different --

Reporter: Hairdo inspired by you.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you. I hope you were inspired by someone else's cut other than mine, but thank you.

Reporter: Governor, any reaction to Mayor Fulop opening up some of Jersey City's parks? Can you give us an update on New Jersey's furloughing of prisoners? How many are planned to be released? When do we have a timeline for their release? And why furlough and not commute sentences, as other states have done in the region? Can you clarify what's included in the total number of cases, Judy? That's done by county, but do we know if that's more in healthcare or in the general public?

Governor Phil Murphy: Total number of positive cases? So the 111,180? Okay, Judy, you can come back to that. Matt's going to come on center stage here and join me, but we had an exchange earlier today. We gave mayors the ability to manage their own parks, openings and closings. That was the case from the outset. I just needed to confirm with Matt that in fact was the case, that it wasn't a county park or a state park. I would say this, we're okay with that. Assuming, and this is a big assumption, that social distancing, masks, all of that's being enforced. I can't say for sure, because I haven't seen it with my own eyes or photographs, but

that's something that I'm sure the mayor is paying attention to. He's a terrific mayor. We just need him to do that and need to enforce that. Matt, on both furloughing prisoners, where do we stand and why furlough versus commutation? Do you might hitting both of those?

Chief Counsel Matt Platkin: Sure. The Commissioner has approved, I don't have the exact number, but it's more than 50 furloughs through the weekend. He's approving them on a rolling basis each day. These started with the list of prisoners who are both over 60 and have underlying medical conditions. He's now working through a list of people who are either over 60 or have an underlying medical condition, as well as the list of parolees who are approved for parole but haven't hit their parole date yet.

With respect to why furlough and commutation, the furlough is a process that is in statute for the Commissioner. It is a medical furlough process. We felt it was a better way to go in part because it kept them under DOC custody, given that if the pandemic abates, these are folks who will be coming back in, as opposed to a commutation. Given the time period and the number of people we had to review the number of files we would have to do for a commutation, it just wasn't practical.

Governor Phil Murphy: Judy, do mind addressing the question of what do the total cases include?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: The total cases are those that are reported directly into the Communicable Disease Service System, either directly from the labs or also from the local health departments.

Reporter: So there's not an easy way for us to tell whether it's the general populace seeing less cases, or its healthcare workers being more likely to be infected? Anything we can delve from the data or no?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: I don't think so. Ed, do you?

Governor Phil Murphy: While Ed's getting his mask off, I think the least reliable trend line, even though we like it when it flattens, is this one, the positive test results, because of the fact, we've said this now for weeks, it does not reflect the denominator. We just know that. We don't know what the denominator is. I don't think anyone does, anyone in the country or probably in the world. But we know that number does not reflect it. It is a proxy and that's why we pay attention to it. But beyond that, Ed, anything else you want to add?

DOH Communicable Disease Service Medical Director Dr. Ed Lifshitz: Well, we certainly know that far too many healthcare workers are becoming infected and that is certainly a great concern for a lot of different reasons. There's no easy way for us to tease out the information since this is largely self-reported until an investigation happens. And with so many cases, investigations take a long time. So I cannot reliably tell you how many, what percentage of those reports coming in are from healthcare workers or not.

Governor Phil Murphy: May I say one other thing? The number associated with that, which we hit earlier, that I think does matter and again, I'm practicing without a license, is the positivity rate. Not just the cumulative positivity rate, but Ed's point earlier, that I think you said in Bergen County, the most recent data is 30% positive, that's down half from what it was. That does matter. Remember, this is not entirely a symptomatic universe, but it's overwhelmingly a symptomatic universe which means by definition, it's sicker than the average person in the population.

There's kind of a murderer's row here, so we'll start down front here with Dave and if you guys could go quickly through it would be great.

Dave Schatz, New Brunswick Today: Sure, Governor, hi. As the weather starts to get better, you've mentioned this and we had one nice weekend day, are you concerned that it's going to get harder and harder to continue to really encourage people to stay away from each other and stay home? I noticed myself that the social distancing fatigue seems to be now kicking in. I saw somebody in a supermarket. They had a mask on, but it was under their chin. I mentioned something and I was told, well, we're all going to die at some point. There seems to be a little bit of fatigue, generally, in the population that is starting. Are you concerned about that?

And my second and last question is with regards to the road back, you have the Principle 1 here, demonstrates sustained reductions in new COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations. Obviously the hospitalizations is important. But as Ed has just mentioned, and others as well, we keep increasing the

number of tests we're doing and they're only for positive people with symptoms. Obviously, it would seem, that number is going to continue to rise. How can we really use that as a metric to try to measure this?

Governor Phil Murphy: Yeah, we expected that question. It's a good one, and we discussed it earlier, and Judy can tackle it and Ed can come in behind. Again, I'm going to hang my hat on the positivity rates associated with those positive tests.

I am worried about fatigue, 100%, particularly with better weather, which looks like this week we won't have a whole lot of. At one level. Sheila and I and the rest of us completely appreciate it and understand it. There's no other way to put it. I mean, folks have been incredibly compliant. They've stayed inside, they've stayed at home. They've either worked from home or they've schooled from home. You look at the polling results, you've got an overwhelming amount of people who actually believe in what they're doing, by definition, many of whom have lost their job, which makes it even more remarkable. And so, it's been an extraordinary show of force and teamwork by the overwhelming 9 million of us, but fatigue does concern us.

Having said that, on the other side of the coin, we know what human nature, how it impacts the modeling. We know exactly what will happen if folks let their guard down as it relates to infections, hospitalizations, ICU beds, ventilator use, and sadly, fatalities. While it stinks, and I'll use a PG word to describe it, the alternative is worse. I think folks who don't see it that way could run the risk, not just for the rest of us but for themselves, we'll begin with them, of inadvertently, based on some theory, some myth, inadvertently let their own guard down and therefore let the guard down of the rest of us. We just can't allow that to happen.

And so, folks, we get it. We're in a war. There's no other way to put it. We didn't say it would end overnight and it isn't going to end overnight. I do repeat, we've discussed, however, today, a road back to some sort of normalcy. It's not a question of if that will happen, that will happen. I just can't hang my hat on when.

I would just say, at the risk of time and not repeating myself, the positive test case curve is the one that has to yours truly the least usefulness because it's not hard numbers, who's hospitalized, who's in an ICU? Who's on a ventilator? And sadly, who has passed? But the positivity of that curve, which is starting to drift down to me, and Ed's point, that if you do more snapshots, that's a cumulative number, that that is of value. Judy, anything you want to add to that?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Yeah, we have a 43% positivity rate for the over 100,000 individuals that have been tested, but remember, they were all symptomatic. As we start to increase asymptomatic testing, hopefully, what we're expecting, is that that rate will come down. you definitely want it to come down, as the World Health Organization says, to about 10%.

Governor Phil Murphy: Of positivity, yep. So watch that space. Again, largely symptomatic folks so far. That will, if I'm right, and we're right, as we expand over the next number of weeks testing capabilities meaningfully, you're going to begin to bring in, whether it's through testing of a particular community, we discussed prison population or long-term care or healthcare workers, or in sort of blind, statistically significant testing, we will increasingly have asymptomatic people in that process. That will begin to hopefully change that number dramatically. Thank you. Daniel, welcome back. Nice to see you.

Daniel Munoz, NJBIZ: Hi, Governor. Nice to see you. What in this plan do you expect to differ from the neighboring states, Pennsylvania, New York? What do you expect from this plan will be in common with those neighboring states? On quarantine and self-isolation, how is the state going to be enforcing that? Is it going to be mandatory, at one central location? Or is it going to be being urged to self-isolate at one's residence, as is what's being done now?

Lastly, is there going to be restrictions still coming in on people coming in from elsewhere in the country? States that perhaps rolled back the restrictions too quickly, or didn't have as expansive in the first place and there's a second outbreak?

Governor Phil Murphy: Okay. Just real quick relative to our neighboring states, I would say we want to be largely in harmony but we will never necessarily take every step exactly the same way at the same time. Some of these states, if I'm not mistaken, have already made decisions on the balance of the school year, which we have not yet made. That's one area which may be different. I'll be very surprised if a restaurant in

Jersey City has a different protocol than one in the lower west side of Manhattan. We cannot have unintended consequences, where you swing things dramatically one way or the other. That's an example of something I would suspect would be in harmony.

I think it's too early on the self-isolation piece, but I think you should assume it will not be necessarily centrally located. Think overwhelmingly hotels would be, at least in my mind, again, we're establishing a commission whose members will be made public tomorrow. They're going to be an extraordinary group of folks. You know, these are decisions that we have to still, working with our team, come to conclusion on, but that would be my guess. Thank you. Up back.

Reporter: Thanks, Governor. The principles you rolled out today rely on the acquisition of healthcare resources like testing materials and medical personnel for contact tracing that have been hard to come by the last few weeks. In line with Dan's question, how do you maintain harmony in the timing of a regional reopening when the inputs dictating that reopening are variable and being pursued by separate state governments on separate tracks?

And then a second question for the Commissioner. Principle 6 is resiliency. I'm just curious what resiliency looks like in the context of long-term care facilities and the department's ability to regulate and oversee those facilities? What does that look like compared to DOH's current resources for looking after those facilities?

Governor Phil Murphy: May I jump in first Judy, and then go to you? Raw materials, you are absolutely right. You know, we've got, particularly with Rutgers and other private sector players, we have increasingly the capacity. What's been missing is the supply chain, the actual testing material itself, the reagents, the PPE if it's a viral test for healthcare workers or others who are taking the test. I wouldn't have said what we've said today unless we had the confidence. We have the confidence right now that we're going to be able to get that solved, both in New Jersey and working with our regional partners, and importantly, you've probably heard me say this, with the White House. The White House is deeply involved in our conviction to be able to say by the end of May and that includes all elements of what we need to get the testing done.

Secondly, Judy will address long-term care but let there be no doubt. I think we'll probably do this long before the Commission has done its good work and I could not be more excited about this group. But we are not waiting for that. We've already begun processes. And in fact, I think sooner than later, maybe even some day this week, we may be sitting here talking to you about how we're going to see adding new rigorous standards, policies and protocols to the long-term care industry as a general matter. Judy, anything you want to add?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: No, I think that, I mean, the bottom line is that situations like this shows the vulnerabilities in systems. What we've identified is that there is very little resiliency in long-term care and we need to look at that. Because the fall will be here before we know it and we will not only be dealing with the flu season, we may also be dealing with a resurgence of COVID-19. So way before that time comes, we need to shore up long-term care.

Governor Phil Murphy: We are, again, Judy's taken a whole range of steps already. I don't know if it'll be this week but just as today we've devoted the large part of our comments, other than the overnight numbers and blessed lives lost to the road to recovery, I think you should assume sooner than later we're going to have a long-term care facility heavy day with you in one of these sessions. Do you have something very quick?

Reporter: I don't want to monopolize. When you said you're confident with May because you've been talking to your regional partners here, does that include consortium buying of those materials? That came up a couple weeks ago.

Governor Phil Murphy: Yeah, to the best of my knowledge, right now it does not. But I wouldn't be saying what I'm saying today if we didn't have the confidence. I meant to say this earlier, to all our environmental friends who reached out to us over the past few weeks, and rightfully complained about plastic water bottles, we agree with you. I think landing man on the moon was easier than getting these boxed waters, but I want the record to show that we got them. Elise, good afternoon.

Elise Young, Bloomberg: Good afternoon. What tech companies have come forward and what are they offering in terms of contact tracing or other expertise? For the Congressman, you indicated that the CARES money can be used for budget purposes. Can you elaborate on that?

Governor Phil Murphy: Tom, I'll jump in on the first and you hit the second, is that right? Elise, we're talking to a handful. Google's on that list, Salesforce.com, Bloomberg Philanthropies, to pick three and there's more than those three. I mentioned the ultimate architecture of what contact tracing in New Jersey looks like is going to be some combination, and Judy will correct the record if I get this wrong, some combination of boots on the ground and technology. I think we could say pretty safely if there's a really good technological match, and by the way, we're the densest state in America, and that's a good thing in this case. It's a bad thing for the virus, it's a good thing as it relates to technology. We'll be more toward that 15 person per hundred thousand. If there's not a technology that we think can aid and abet our efforts, it will be up closer to that 81 per hundred thousand. Is that fair to say? Tom.

Congressman Tom Malinowski: Thanks. CARES 1, the bill that we already passed, provide or intended to provide, \$150 billion for states and other governments, counties, cities with a population of over 500,000. And it was certainly our intention that this money be available to compensate for revenues lost due to the coronavirus crisis. But the administration has issued guidance completely contrary to that, contrary to what we thought was a commitment that the money would be allowed for that purpose.

And so what we've heard from the Governor and I think other states around the country is that the money as currently offered is largely unusable. It can only be used to cover if the state buys PPE, the federal government acknowledges that's coronavirus related so they allow us to use that money for that purpose, but not to make up for the massive shortfall in revenue that all of these state and local entities are going to be experiencing.

So what we want to do in the next bill, is number one, if we haven't resolved it through guidance, through hammering at the administration to keep their commitment, we want to free up that first \$150 billion. That's number one. And number two, we want to provide additional funding not limited, obviously to states, but not limited to the states and the very large cities, but also available for our smaller counties and municipalities which are hurting in exactly the same way.

Governor Phil Murphy: Tom, if I may add two points to that. I mentioned I had a good conversation with Secretary Mnuchin on Thursday, which is true. We're still working this, right? What is important, several things that the Congressman just said were important. Number one, no matter what, lost revenues do not factor into this, no matter how much progress we've made, no matter how hard we try, in the original CARES Act, that's just not on the table. Tom knows this better than anybody, that the next big bucket has got to include provisions for that.

We are making some progress on definition of expenditures. Again, not in the end zone yet and we'll let folks know when we get there. Tom mentioned also buying PPE. Now, the good news is that's identifiable, as you rightfully point out. Right now we've got a cost share arrangement with the federal government where they pay 75% of stuff like that, we pay 25%. I want to give Tom a shout out here. We've been pounding the table, I think we were the first date. I'm looking at Matt, I believe we were the first date to ask that that go to 100-zero for the duration of this quote-unquote incident. We're not there yet. But I want to thank Tom and his colleagues because they're pounding away on that as well. So when you get to that direct expense, we had to buy ventilators. We had to buy testing kits for a virus that we didn't know existed until six months ago. That's something, again, I want to thank you for your help with getting that needle shifted from 75-25. We're not there yet. We need to keep pounding away and I thank your leadership for that. Elise, thank you. Last one, please.

Andy Milone, Pine Barrens Tribune: Thank you, Governor. Is there anything that you've picked up from other states? Anything you've been looking to copy or maybe avoid in developing this road back plan? And then second, more specifically, in regards to the New Lisbon Developmental Center, it discontinued its ambulance service in 2016 and the Mayor of Woodland is reporting that their volunteer EMS is strained, given the outbreak at the facility. Is there any consideration at all for DHS in bringing back their EMS transportation service for this facility?

Governor Phil Murphy: I have got no color on the second question. We can follow up with you, if you can bear with us on that. On the first, listen, there are a lot of great role models out there. I can't say that we necessarily pick one from column A, one from column B. But, you know, we've tried to come up with something which, again, every step of the way is based on science and data and facts. That's got to be the

way we handle both how we shut it down and how we, God willing, recover sooner than later. And so we're moneyball on that front and we'll continue to be. I'm not sure what other states are necessarily moneyball, Mahen has literally reviewed every single one of them. He may be able to give you a little bit more color. I like the broad outlines that Gavin Newsom in California had laid out. Somebody said to me, there was a green, yellow, red color scheme from other states.

So, listen, we're shameless. If we see a good idea being used somewhere else, we'll take it for here, but it's also got to be, again, fact based, but it's got to work for here. So it's got to be something that is not just at a conceptual level is a smart element, but it's got to work for us. And so, again, we're the densest state in the nation. Huge reliance on biopharmaceutical industry, a very high end innovation economy, 21 counties, each one of them with positive cases, and sadly with fatalities, but very different dimensions. If you compare Essex County, Sheila, to a Salem County, you get a very different dimension and so you've got to have a plan that can encompass that. We'll come back to you on the Woodland question privately because I literally don't know. I have nothing to add there.

As I remask, I want to thank everybody, beginning with my partner in government, the Lieutenant Governor of the Great State of New Jersey, Sheila Oliver, an extraordinary representative of our state in Washington for the Seventh District, the guy to my left, Congressman Tom Malinowski. The woman to the far right, who needs no introduction, either coming into this room or leaving it, the Commissioner of the Department of Health, Judy Persichilli. And I want to thank Dr. Ed Lifshitz for being with us as well. Superintendent Colonel Patrick Callahan, thank you and God bless your trooper. Jared, Ed, Matt, thank you.

So a couple of housekeeping. We'll be here tomorrow, almost certainly at 1:00 p.m. and I'll be shocked if that is shifted otherwise, so we'll see you back here. We will be announcing formally the members of the commission that I alluded to today at tomorrow's event. It's an extraordinary group. I would just ask folks, as I do every day, on behalf of Sheila and myself and the rest of our teams, please keep doing what you're doing because it's working. And if folks are looking for hope and light at the end of the tunnel, it's in your hands. So far, New Jersey has performed not just better than average, we were talking about average a month ago, better than any American state, better than any American state. The extent to which that continues, that will begin to answer the very good questions of what's Memorial Day look like? What's the end of the school year look like? When can you open parks? When can you allow any amount of other decisions to be reassessed?

Folks, thank you. Keep up the great work. God bless you all. We'll see you tomorrow.

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