

Governor Phil Murphy

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Governor Phil Murphy: Good afternoon, everyone. I am joined by the woman who needs no introduction to my right, the Commissioner the Department of Health, Judy Persichilli. To her right, another guy who is familiar to so many of you, from the Department of Health's Communicable Disease Service, it's Medical Director Dr. Ed Lifshitz. Judy and Ed, as always. To my far left, State Police Superintendent, Colonel Pat Callahan. A Murphy should be able to pronounce Callahan. Again, needs no introduction. And a real treat, joining us today to my immediate left is our Senior United States Senator Bob Menendez. Senator, honored to have you here. Director of the Department of Homeland Security and Preparedness, Jared Maples is also with us. And Matt Platkin, our General Counsel, will join us shortly.

Senator Menendez is here to give an update on the standing of current efforts in Washington to further relief to the American people and additionally and specifically to states. It is the second aspect, direct aid to states, that is the most pressing of issues, and it is increasingly one that knows no political party. In fact, it is an issue that is uniting both Democrats and Republicans. Senator Menendez, it must be noted, in addition to many other things we could say about him, is the sponsor, as you can see, with His Republican colleague, Senator Bill Cassidy of Louisiana, of legislation that would deliver \$500 billion to state and local governments across the nation. States and communities, I might add, red and blue alike to ensure the delivery and maintenance of essential services that our people rely upon.



We're talking about police, fire and EMS services. We're talking about frontline public health workers. We're talking about educators. We're talking about local public works and sanitation, about the men and women of the Department of Labor who are working through hundreds of thousands of unemployment applications to deliver every penny to the residents who need it most, and that's just a few examples.

On the other side of the Capitol, in the House of Representatives, we're seeing similar bipartisan efforts. I had a conference call last week with a group of House members from New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, led by our very own Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill and New York Republican, another friend, Peter King, who have formed a regional COVID-19 task force to work together to deliver more assistance for our states. And I continue my efforts along with my Republican colleagues, including and especially Governor Larry Hogan of Maryland, who serves as the Chairman of the National Governors Association, to press the case for state assistance even further. In fact, I just got off a video call with the White House, Vice President Mike Pence and his team, along with Governor Hogan and we each made this plea explicitly on that call.

I'm proud to have been among the first Governors to sound the alarm for the need for direct federal assistance. I led the first letter to our national leaders with three of my colleagues when no one else saw this coming storm. I coauthored an op-ed for the New York Times with my Republican colleague and high school classmate, Charlie Baker of Massachusetts, back on March 27. And 11 days ago, I had the opportunity to directly press our case to President Trump when I had the honor of joining him and his team at the White House. I spoke to the Vice President on Saturday, privately, about a number of things, including money. I spoke with Speaker Pelosi as well on Saturday at length about the House efforts in this respect. And all throughout, the guy to my left, we have had Senator Menendez in the ring with us. He was one of the first to climb in and he's been with us for every step of this fight, unlike anyone else I know.

Unfortunately, there are those in Washington, like Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, to pick a name, who don't seem to get it. These are leadership states that are all too happy to spend the tax dollars of New Jerseyans on pork projects back home, but seemingly have no interest in helping states like New Jersey, at this moment, to avert a national economic catastrophe. We've said it before but bears repeating, Kentucky gets back \$2.41 for every dollar it gets from taxpayers, including ours. Senator McConnell, good luck tapping New Jersey for your next project in Kentucky if New Jersey has nothing to give, because you refuse to help us restart and recover.

These are the minds that Senator Menendez has been working hard to change. Others in a different yet similar vein suggest it's the fault of the states that COVID-19 has ravaged us. Forget the fact that we have lost now more than 9,300 of our blessed New Jerseyans to this illness. Forget the fact that we have had to shutter our economy to try to save lives. No, forget that. To them, all they see is what past administrations had piled up. Some have even suggested that our states should just go bankrupt. It's an echo of that classic newspaper headline from the 1970s except the message today is, "Washington to States: drop dead."

No one has asked for a bailout and no one will. What we are asking for is the ability to prevent the public health emergency we are trying desperately to climb out from into a second Great Depression. We're asking for help to keep first responders, frontline workers, and educators from having to fear for their jobs. Nor, might I proudly add, is this state the state that it once was not that long ago. We've run up back-to-back record surpluses. We've made historically unprecedented pension payments, while also having consecutive years of lower expenses for public employee health benefits. We've made the first payment into the state's rainy day fund in a decade. If there's an administration tackling New Jersey's legacy fiscal issues, it's this one, and yet all some in Washington can hear is the noises from our past. To put it in Sunday School terms, they're all the happier to lay the sins of those who created this mess at the feet of those trying to fix it.

And a fiscal disaster is not months away. Hard and unpalatable decisions are being made in the here and now. They'll be on our doorstep in just a few weeks. Several cities are currently, as we speak, currently preparing for layoffs. And it's not just here in New Jersey. I promise you, these discussions are happening in red states and blue states across the nation. Senator Menendez knows, just as some of his Republican colleagues know, we need significant federal investments in our states to allow for our recovery. Without it, there will likely be no recovery.

And time is of the essence, and Congress needs to act, and act now. I thank Senator Menendez for his tenacity in making our case and bringing along his reasonable Republican colleagues. This fight is not over, and I know I will do everything I can to see that it is won. I know that Senator Menendez will do everything he can to see that it is won. Just because the Senator has a hard out and has to get down to Washington, back to the business of moving this ball along toward the end zone, I'm going to stop in my remarks, take a break, and if I could ask Senator Menendez to speak with us.

Again, there is no better fighter. Forget just the folks who fight for New Jersey. There's no better fighter right now for the working class folks and families out there in this country than Senator Bob Menendez. Senator.

Senator Bob Menendez: Well, thank you, Governor. Good afternoon, everyone. I'm glad to be here today and join the Governor and Commissioner Persichilli and Superintendent Callahan. I want to thank Governor Murphy for his leadership. He has had to make some incredibly difficult choices. But the decisions that he has made have saved lives, and that's what's most important, the health and safety of every New Jerseyan. In fact, Governor Murphy was ahead of the curve and I applaud him and his team for taking early action to slow the spread of the virus. And by the way and lest we forget, doing all of this while recovering from his own health challenges, and it's good to see that you're looking well, Governor.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you.

Senator Bob Menendez: That leadership has never mattered more. Now, as the Governor said, unfortunately, I may have to leave early to head back down to Washington for votes this afternoon. I wish I could say it is to move legislation to address this public health and economic crisis, but it is not. The vote is to approve another Trump nominee, not to deal with America's most pressing needs, which is COVID-19. That said, I've already begun in earnest working with my colleagues in Washington on a COVID-4 stimulus package that includes robust, flexible funding for states and communities on the front lines because despite all the great work that the Governor is doing to combat COVID-19, New Jersey can't do it alone.

A national emergency requires a national response. We New Jerseyans did not choose for nearly 140,000 of our friends, family members and neighbors to contract the virus. We did not choose to lose more than 9,000 of our loved ones to COVID-19. We did not choose to have our economy decimated in our state and local governments besieged by the soaring costs of responding to the virus, at a time when tax revenues have all dried up.

Doctors, nurses and other frontline medical professionals are working to the bone at great risk to their own personal health and safety, to keep people alive and to contain the virus. I'm proud to see, Governor, after a lot of lobbying based upon what I saw was the first round as unfair to our state, last week our hospitals received \$1.7 billion that I think was critical to their existence. Our unsung heroes, grocery clerks, warehouse staff, transit workers and others are keeping our food and supply chains going and making sure that all essential employees can get to work. Our economy has been shaken, businesses are struggling. Millions have been furloughed or laid off. People are suffering and the state and nation is hurting.

Now, I've been through a lot of difficult life-changing events in my time in Congress. September 11th, the 2008 financial collapse, Superstorm Sandy, but nothing, nothing like this. And while this is different, we New Jerseyans are tough and resilient. We don't back down from any fight, and whatever knocks us down only makes us stronger.

So look, I yearn as much as the next guy for the day when all this has passed us and we can finally return things to normal, or a new normal. I'd like to get a haircut and my fiancé would love to go to the hairdresser. But the fastest way to jumpstart our economy and get back to normal is through testing. That's why we need a national strategy for widespread testing so that everyone who needs a test can get a test, something promised by the national administration but not yet delivered. That we can do the comprehensive contact tracing that's required, isolate the sick and protect the most vulnerable among us.

Months into this pandemic and our national testing capacity remains woefully short. No matter how quickly we want to rejoin society, open our economy and return to normal, the reality is that folks won't have the consumer confidence which is the essence of our economy. They will not return until a New Jerseyan knows that their risk of contracting COVID-19 has been dramatically mitigated when they go to a store, a mall, a

restaurant, or the public square. That is the only way, no matter how much help from Washington, that is the only way we're ultimately going to succeed. I know the Governor has a very aggressive plan for that, at least in our state.

That's why I successfully fought for an additional \$25 billion set aside for testing in the last stimulus known as COVID 3.5. The money that New Jersey will get from that should bolster the state's efforts. On Friday, the FDA approved Rutgers University at-home saliva test, which is an enormous breakthrough, developed right here in New Jersey. We were able to secure another \$11 million in federal funding to expand testing at our 24 federally qualified health centers.

But the federal government needs to do more, a lot more, if we are going to successfully defeat COVID-19 and move our economy forward. Senator Bill Cassidy, my Republican colleague from Louisiana, and I recently unveiled the bipartisan State and Municipal Aid For Recovery and Transition Fund. We call it the SMART Fund because well, it's common sense. And I'm pleased to partner with my friend, Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill, who'll be leading the bipartisan effort to get this passed in the House. The SMART Fund provides states with \$500 billion in flexible funding, with priority given to the areas of our country with the greatest need, based on COVID-19 infection rates and lost revenues due to the economic fallout. That's what Governor Murphy and his leadership and the bipartisan members of the National Governors Association have been calling for, and what the SMART Fund delivers.

Not only that, we fixed the problem with the \$150 billion in state stabilization funds that Congress authorized in the CARES Act. The SMART Fund will retroactively overturn the US Treasury's erroneously restrictive guidance, giving states like New Jersey maximum flexibility to respond to its most urgent needs. Although I'm pleased that after a lot of tough conversations with Treasury, we should be able to use the first tranche of money, hopefully pretty successful, but this will guarantee it.

New Jersey is unfortunately second only to New York in the number of cases and our economy has been hit harder and longer than most. The SMART Fund ensures New Jersey gets its fair share of federal funding period, full stop. These flexible federal dollars can help our state dramatically expand its testing capacity and continue to treat COVID-19 patients. It will help stave off massive layoffs and deep, painful cuts to the essential services that make our state the great place to live, work, visit and shop. If we ever want to get back to normal to see businesses thrive, we also need to ensure that our police officers, firefighters, paramedics have the resources they need. We need to keep our streets safe, our kids in school, the buses and trains running on time, and the essential public workers we need to get through this on the job.

There's an ideological fight right now in the Congress about whether or not to help our frontline states and communities. But I'm optimistic. Democrats understand what's at stake, and more Republicans are starting to see the situation in their own states grow more dire, both from the number of COVID cases and the economic impact. This isn't a blue state or red state issue. This is an American issue. When I voted for funding for flooding in the Mississippi, wildfires in the West, Hurricane Katrina, I never asked whether it was a red or blue state. That's why we call the country the United States of America.

And so as I continue to speak to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, I feel confident more and more will see the SMART Fund as the reasonable, sensible approach it is. We are on the verge of announcing several new Republican Senate colleagues who will join us in this effort, hopefully by the end of this week, and governors, mayors and county leaders from across New Jersey and coast to coast have expressed support. The New Jersey Policemen's Benevolent Association, the Amalgamated Transit Union, and others have endorsed the SMART Fund because they understand what's at stake for their members, and I'll continue to press upon my colleagues that the only way to defeat COVID-19 and send our economy on a glide path to recovery is by sending federal reinforcements to the frontlines, to the state and local communities waging war with an invisible enemy. The federal government cannot sit on its hands and watch our states go bankrupt and our people suffer. The time to act is now and I won't give up on this fight.

Governor, I'll just close where I began. After September 11th, we built a national intelligence system and homeland security system that has averted another strike on the homeland. After the 2008 financial collapse, we created new safeguards against systemic risks, and gave consumers a champion in the Consumer

Financial Protection Bureau. After Superstorm Sandy, we built New Jersey back, made our beaches more resilient and our community stronger than the storm. And after COVID-19, we will be better prepared, more resilient in our public health infrastructure.

I see a rising sun on New Jersey and the nation, not a setting sun. And together, Governor, we're going to make it shine brighter than the brightest sun we've ever seen. Thank you for your leadership, and thank you for your invitation to be here with you today.

Governor Phil Murphy: Senator, thank you for your leadership and partnership and friendship. I literally don't know where I'd be without you. I think of all the important things you just said, the fact that you're going to be able to get some other Republican Senators on as sponsors is a big deal, and it sends a real message. We're doing everything we can in that regard, but also augmenting the ranks of the Republican Governors to join us in the fight. I mentioned Governor Hogan is the head of the NGA, and his persistence here, as an example, matters. I can't thank you enough, again, for being here.

I know you can stay for a little bit longer, but not a whole lot longer. We're going to do something further that is out of norm and ask, without sweeping across but very quickly, if anyone has any questions for Senator Menendez, specific to him. Then I'll go back and do the usual with Judy and Pat and Ed later. Elise and then Nikita and then Dave. Elise, hold on one second. Marthelle, hello. Marthelle's got the mic.

Elise Young, Bloomberg: Hi. Senator, can you give us an indication of how many of your Republican colleagues are willing to support this and how many names do you intend to announce by week's end?

Senator Bob Menendez: We hope to announce by the end of the week. I'm not going to announce for them, but I'll say that we have, in addition to Senator Cassidy, two to three more senators that have just about committed. They express they will be representative of a significant cross-section of the country. One may not be so surprising, but the other one will be. I think what happens, my experience in the Senate and in Congress is, once you begin to create a movement where others feel comfortable in joining, the numbers grow.

You also saw independently, you saw Senator Collins, Senator Mitt Romney, Senator Kennedy from Louisiana, all last week on the Senate floor and in various comments say that the states need help. I take that to heart. That is a totally different tune than the Majority Leader has expressed and when that many members of his own caucus begin to speak up, it makes a big difference. That, added with Governor Murphy's efforts with his Republican Governors, to speak up both at the White House and to the Congress is, I think, incredibly important. And the last point I'll make, I think we're going to see a lot of momentum come out of the House of Representatives, where Speaker Pelosi is firmly committed to a very significant package for the states.

Governor Phil Murphy: I would just make one other comment. Before we go, we'll go to Nikita and then Dave. We just, as I mentioned, got off a video call. Judy, Pat and I were part of the group that we do at least once a week, and one of the flare ups, correct me if you heard this differently, that they are monitoring most carefully right now is in Texas. That's a good example. You've got a Republican Governor and two Republican Senators. This virus does not know political boundaries, it doesn't know boundaries at all, but it certainly doesn't know political boundaries, as an example. Please, Nikita.

Nikita Biryukov, New Jersey Globe: Thank you, Governor. Senator, I have a quick question not directly related to what you said, but I know that 18 Republican State Attorney Generals have called for an investigation into China over what they allege is a cover up of the spread of coronavirus in that country. As Ranking Member of the Foreign Relations Committee, do you have a view on that?

Senator Bob Menendez: Well, look, there's no question that this virus began in China, although all the latest evidence suggests that its transmission here in the United States came from European visitors, who ultimately probably caught it by virtue of visits to their countries, from those from China. For me, the problem with China is that they were not forthcoming at the very beginning. In the potential of a pandemic, you need whatever country is facing that reality to quickly sound the alarms and to fully and openly and transparently give all the information that exists so people can prepare, governments can prepare. I think China failed miserably in that regard.

Beyond that, the questions of whether or not there's allegations that this began in a lab versus in an open wet market, I have to be honest with you, from what I've seen and even now the Secretary of State is backpedaling from those comments. I'm not sure that is as important as dealing with what we're talking about here. How do we deal with this challenge now? How do we get almost universal testing? You know, I haven't been tested and I'm asymptomatic. At some point I'd like to get tested because I'd like to go hug my grandchildren, including the new one that was just born that I have not even met except through pictures. And that's true, I think it's true for a lot of people. So at the end of the day, you can only do that through some form of universal testing and you need the resources to do that and then the contact tracing that goes along with that. I think that the sooner we get to that, the more important it is for us opening our economy and getting our lives back.

Governor Phil Murphy: Amen. We'll do one more from Dave and then if it's okay with you, Senator, we'll go back.

Senator Bob Menendez: Absolutely.

Governor Phil Murphy: Dave's over here, Marthelle. That's John, by the way. John, introduce yourself, please.

David Levinsky, Burlington County Times: Hi, thanks. Senator, Governor Murphy has made it a point of creating a relationship with President Trump, it seems, and really try to let him know in any way that he could where he supports him. Do you feel this is an important component of trying to move your efforts forward? Have you reached out to the President? What would your message to the President be? Is there space for you to do something with him in a common effort kind of a situation?

Senator Bob Menendez: Well, listen, I applaud the Governor for putting New Jersey's interests first. He doesn't see this as a partisan issue. It should not be. I appreciate the efforts he's made with the White House and with the President to attract resources for New Jersey, and he's done that successfully. And that's the way it should be. That's why I'm not making this a partisan piece of legislation. I've particularly withheld its introduction in order to get several other Republicans lined up. I think that bipartisan approach, which we will see in the Senate and which we will see in the House sends a strong message to the President in the administration that this is not a partisan view. This is not about bailing out the blue states. This is not red or blue, this is red, white and blue.

I think that our arguments will be made stronger by Republican Governors and Senators who are going to be seeing these realities. That's what I said to them last week when we returned to the Senate and got to engage some of them. I said, look, what you saw happening to us is coming your way. You have the opportunity of time and the benefit of what we've done to advantage yourself and your citizens. But we're all in this together.

And then the last point I'd make as it relates to the President, I think the President, who is obviously very focused on the question of the economy, we generate 20% of GDP for the entire nation. You want to see the economy thrive? You've got to make sure this region thrives, and you want to make sure that states in general thrive in order to create the employment, the tax revenues, and the consumer confidence that's necessary. I think we have common ground in that regard with the President to seek the type of solutions we want.

Governor Phil Murphy: Amen, amen. This is not politics, but this would go for anybody on either side of the aisle. I don't know how, if you're on the ballot this November, you want to see police, fire, educators, EMS, healthcare workers without a job, doubling the unemployment rate. I don't get that. I literally don't get that. Senator, it's an honor to have you here. You're welcome, I know you've got to go at some point, but you're welcome, you and your fiancé, it's a blessing to have you both with us. We're going to get back to some other stuff and come and go as you please, and give them hell in Washington.

Senator Bob Menendez: If I leave in the midst of it, it's not because I didn't like something you said.

Governor Phil Murphy: Okay, that's a deal. That's a deal. So thank you again for everything. Let's turn, if we could, our attention to the overnight numbers. Yesterday we received an additional 1,453 positive test results, for a current statewide total of 139,945. The number of new cases has showed continual moderation, as you can see, and we're seeing real progress in declining positivity rates, as we see in this graph, the daily positivity or the spot positivity rate of samples the day they're collected. Today, that rate, I need to get my eyesight

better. I believe these were collected on May 7th, this is the most recent data, the positivity rate statewide is 26%. And as we've noted, Judy, and Ed and Christina and I have noted this number is a bit more insightful than the daily number of cases we announced, as it looks at a date certain, instead of reporting results batched from several days of samples.

Here are the daily positivity rates across each region of the state, and it's obviously converging. The map that we've been regularly turning to keeps showing slower rates of spread across the state, please God that continues. In our hospitals, the number of patients currently being treated for COVID-19 dropped by roughly 430 from where it was on Saturday, when we last met, and now stands at 4,195. As we see, the number of hospitalizations across our healthcare systems regionally continues to also trend down, and the per capita rate of hospitalizations regionally continues on downward trajectories, as well. That was something that we were very focused on, particularly when we saw new hospitalizations spiking in the south with a smaller population. Our field medical stations reported 30 patients.

Looking at our long-term care facilities, the numbers of positive cases, as you can see there, 26,397. And the fatalities, which is 4,890 connected to these facilities continues to grow. We continue to work hard to mitigate these numbers and we had good reports from this past weekend when the first group of New Jersey National Guard members join the on-ground staffs in several facilities. This is an all hands on deck moment, and it has been.

The number of patients reported in either critical or intensive care fell again yesterday to 1,255. Ventilator use continues its downward trend, with 970 currently in use, and that's the second straight day of the ventilator count being under 1,000. There were 179 new COVID-19 hospitalizations yesterday and 389 across the weekend, but there were 227 live patients discharged yesterday, and 666 across both Saturday and Sunday. Here are the numbers from yesterday. Again, this is the only yesterday, broken down by region. Again, new hospitalizations on the left, new discharges of live patients on the right.

Over the past week, I've been adamant about two things: public health creates economic health and data determines dates. Tomorrow we will discuss, as the Senator mentioned, two key metrics to our reopening strategy: the continued ramping up of our testing capacity, and secondly implementing a robust statewide program of contact tracing. Implementing this plan will be very costly. Throughout this past weekend, we furthered conversations with our federal partners, including with the highest levels of the administration and White House staff. I'm hopeful that our continued efforts and the relationships we have fostered will deliver a significant sum for the state.

We are in this position because of the work you are all doing to protect yourselves, your families and your communities. By maintaining the practices of social distancing that are now part of our routine, we are getting data that is making us more comfortable and confident that we will soon have some hard dates as to when we can truly begin our road back through restart and recovering. But as I am able to give some hard dates, remember that you all did this out there through your hard work over the past nearly two months. Please keep it up folks. It is clearly working. And as it relates to some hard dates, I hope we'll have some news to report at some point later this week.

However, as we are on that road back, sadly we know that there are those who will not join us for that road back and today we report another 59 blessed souls who we've lost from COVID-19 complications, and our statewide total now stands at 9,310. Before we go on, Judy would want me to say and I will say it and I suspect she may amplify it, that the Monday data has historically been light. You can literally look at that chart, the bar chart and go back each Monday, our reporting is a little bit lagged with the reality. I'd love to think that that was money good. Sadly, those folks are gone. We know that, but my gut tells me, I suspect Judy would agree that we have to, as we do early week, average a few of the early days of the week together to get a real accurate number.

Let's remember several of those blessed souls that we have lost. We begin with Mary Jean McLaughlin of Short Hills. Mary Jean was 89 years old. She was born in Newark and raised in Orange and West Orange, before moving with her husband John to Short Hills to raise her family. She graduated from the College of St. Elizabeth and got her teaching certificate in 1956 from Newark State Teachers College, what is today Kean University, and began her career at the Lincoln Avenue School in Orange. She put teaching on hold to raise her

children, but returned to the classroom in 1979 and began nearly a 30-year stint. She became a legend, literally, at the Pingree School where she would eventually lead the Language Arts Department and was an active supporter on the campus-wide Veterans Day and Earth Day programs.

Although Mary Jean retired in 2007, she could not find it in her to actually leave the classroom and continue to substitute teach for several more years. Bless her, she passed, I guess it's somewhat fitting if she had to go, bless her heart, she passed on National Teacher Day. Mary Jean leaves her children John, Michael, Mark and Ede. I had the great honor of speaking separately yesterday with both John and Ede, and they told stories about their mom, and she was an institution including in their own household. She's now reunited with her husband John. May God bless her soul and may God bless her family.

Next up this is Felicísimo Omana Luna Jr. He lived in Woodbridge, Bergen County, and was known to many as Tom, which was a relief to me because I'm not sure how many times in a row I could have pulled off Felicísimo. Born and raised in the Philippines, he came to the United States in 1986 and worked hard to become a licensed medical technologist for the Hebrew Home For The Aged in the Riverside neighborhood of the Bronx. It was there that he met a nurse, Enricata, known as Kitty, and they would marry, move to Bellville, and raise three daughters, Gabrielle, Gracielle, and Giselle. But with a family to help support, Tom kept studying and earned an Associate's Degree in Nursing from Bergen Community College and received his RN license. In 2016. He earned his bachelor's degree in nursing from the College of St. Elizabeth.

Tom was one of our frontline heroes, a nurse in the emergency department at Trinitas Regional Medical Center in Elizabeth, where he kept up helping those who needed him until he fell ill. And when he did, one of the nurses who attended to him was His daughter Gabrielle, who followed her parents into the profession. Tom was just 62 years old. Tom, we take our hat off to you for your years of service to the people in your care. May your memory bring peace to Kitty and your daughters. God bless you, pal.

And finally, today, we remember Marvin Demby of Pennsauken. Look at Marvin's smile man, talk about a million-dollar smile. His was the face that you would see at the store and keep our nursing homes clean and safe. He was an incredibly hard worker. Marvin was only 52 years old. He was a proud member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 360, a clerk with the PriceRite grocery store in Camden, as well as a member of the maintenance staff with AvistaCare Nursing Home in Cherry Hill.

He is survived by a daughter Shenetta, with whom I had the honor of speaking yesterday, and a son Marvin, and his sisters. Shenetta and Marvin are in Ohio, so they're not in New Jersey and they desperately, as you can imagine, want to come back. I know they're far away but they're close in our hearts and in our prayers. We send our deepest condolences. God bless Marvin's memory and to his family.

Three more cherished members of our New Jersey family taken by COVID-19. We remember them as we remember all we have lost, and we also keep their families and friends in our thoughts and prayers. Again, these are the reasons why we must be careful and responsible in our restart and recovering. If we start on the road back too quickly, we know we'll have to remember many more than we need to, and we've already lost 9,310 precious lives. So keep at it, folks, you've been extraordinary. No state has done better than New Jersey in flattening this curve, in lowering the amount of hospitalizations and thank God, even though we've lost so many, fatalities, the data is promising. As I said earlier, I'm hopeful to put some dates on the schedule very soon, but we need to keep it up. Together we can make all of this work.

Switching gears, a couple of quick items. I think I may have said this on Saturday, Judy and I and our colleagues had a good call with Legislators on Saturday morning. I thought that was a good back and forth. Likewise, Senator Menendez was on. We had a good call with our Federal Congressional delegation, Pat was on both of those calls with us. I spoke to leaders of four big food-related entities over the weekend just to get a sense of food security, food supply, etc. So leadership at Mondelez, ACME, Wakefern, Stop & Shop, those were good conversations, sort of walking through both the history, recent history in terms of the surges and the panics, as well as where we have some food challenges.

I also this morning, unrelated to all the above, had an incredible honor and took a phone call from the President of the State of Israel Reuven Rivlin, and the President restated the strong relationship between the State of Israel and New Jersey, that they're there for us in our hour of need. We both agreed when the dust settles on this awful crisis that a meeting in Jerusalem was something that we each wanted.

A quick announcement. The federal government has extended what is known as Title 32, which means that our National Guardsmen and our National Guardswomen will continue to receive pay through the federal government through late June. Senator Menendez, thank you for your leadership on that, as well as so much else. Our guardsmen and guardswomen have been an integral part of our response team and as I mentioned earlier, some are currently helping in our long-term care facilities, providing much needed backup for the hard-working staff members who have been doing all they can to protect their residents and themselves. Other members of the National Guard have been providing assistance at our two federally partnered testing sites, at Bergen Community College and the PNC Bank Art Center, helping with traffic flow and directing the residents who arrived to receive a test. So to every member of the New Jersey National Guard who has been part of our team, thank you.

And I thank the federal administration for allowing us to keep you on and keep you paid. I mentioned I spoke with the Vice President privately on Saturday, we spoke about money, but we also spoke about Title 32. I also had a good confirming conversation with the Administrator of FEMA, a guy we all now know very well, Pete Gaynor.

And finally, I want to give a quick shout out to the folks at St. Vincent de Paul's Food Pantry in Long Branch. They're pictured here. I want to thank my friend Mike Beeston for raising this with me. Ever since this emergency began, they've been working overtime to help feed more than 200 families on a regular basis. This is the spirit that we see all throughout our communities of faith. And to everyone pictured here and the many more who are volunteering and donating, New Jersey thanks you. Keep those coming in, those stories have been really uplifting for all of us, including yours truly. Again, hashtag #NJThanksYou.

With that, I know you've got to go in a minute, Senator, God bless you. Safe travels to Washington. Good luck down there. Honored to have you both with us. I also want to give a shout out again, Chief Counsel Matt Platkin is with us and the Head of Intergovernmental Affairs, Mike DeLamater is hiding in the corner. I wanted to give him a shout out. With that, I want to turn things over to the woman who needs no introduction, please help me welcome the Commissioner of the Department of Health, Judy Persichilli.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Thank you, Governor and good afternoon. Well, this is National Hospital Week, a time to recognize the lifesaving work of New Jersey's hospitals, health systems, and the healthcare workers who've done an extraordinary job during this unprecedented COVID-19 epidemic. I know many of you have been thanking them every day, you just didn't wait for this week.

Our hospitals employ 154,000 staff, both on the front lines and behind the scenes, with key support services such as meal service, security, housekeeping, and other services. They are our neighbors, our friends, and our family members. Throughout this crisis, they have demonstrated, at great personal risk, unwavering dedication and resiliency. They have and continue to work alongside the Department of Health to expand hospital capacity by doing things like renovating their cafeterias to put in hospital beds, and converting their unused space, and even their parking lots, to increase the number of beds for critically ill patients. They've shown great compassion and empathy by bridging the gap between patients and their loved ones who have been unable to visit them.

At the same time, they have continued essential services like welcoming new babies into the world, caring for trauma patients and keeping their emergency departments open. We recognize that COVID-19 has placed extreme financial pressures on our hospitals and health systems, and we are working with the hospitals to develop practices to open their doors even wider. During this pandemic, the hospitals have continued to treat all of the patients that have come to them for care. In fact, during the past two months, the hospitals have taken care of 346,756 patients who are not diagnosed with COVID-19.

This week's celebration of National Hospital Week is taking the form of a week of thanks. So, let's continue to shower thanks to all the frontline medical and hospital workers, by supporting them in any way you can. Whether it's donating toward a local restaurant, providing meals, or sending homemade masks, or participating in drive-by thank yous.

As for my daily report, as the Governor has shared, our hospitals reported 4,195 hospitalizations of COVID-19 patients and persons under investigation. There are approximately 1,255 individuals in critical care, and 77% of them on ventilators. The Governor reviewed the new cases and deaths. In terms of deaths, the breakdown

of deaths by race and ethnicity are basically unchanged: White 52.8%, Black 19.1%, Hispanic 17.5%, Asian 5.3% and other 5.3%. There are 515 long-term care facilities in the state right now with COVID-19 cases. There are over 26,000 COVID-19 cases in these facilities.

At the state veterans homes, among a census of 672 residents, there have been 362 residents that have tested positive and a total of 129 deaths. At our state psychiatric hospitals with a census of 1,240, 190 patients have tested positive and a total of 12 deaths have been reported. The daily percent positivity rate in New Jersey as of May 7, as the Governor shared, is 26%. That concludes my daily report. Stay connected, stay safe and stay healthy. Thank you.

Governor Phil Murphy: Judy, thank you and amen on the hospitals and the amount of volume that they see that we don't even talk about, hardly at all. Again, I want to make sure I said this right. The May 7 data on positivity is very simply, that's the last date that we have where specimens were collected, and we've got complete information on that. That's why it may sound a little bit incongruent given today is May 11. That's a much faster turnaround than we were looking at a month or two ago. Thank you, Judy, for everything.

With that, Pat Callahan, please take us through any compliance. We had another weekend. I would love to get your sense of how things looked in the parks, any PPE, infrastructure, or other updates.

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: Thank you, Governor. Good afternoon, everyone. With regard to the weekend compliance, Newark Police Department issued 32 EO violations, and they also issued 155 warnings. I'd also be remiss if I didn't note that I spoke to Director Ambrose yesterday afternoon. They lost the 27-year veteran, Sergeant Michael Clegg, a fixture in the Newark Police Department, so our condolences go out to Newark Police Department, the City of Newark and certainly Michael Clegg's family.

Burlington City Police responded to a fight in progress and ended up citing four subjects for violation of the EO. In Englewood, police responded to the violation of a temporary restraining order and subsequently charged that subject. That subject had also been charged twice previously for threatening to spit on officers, also in response to violations of that temporary restraining order. Patterson Police issued an EO violation for a jewelry store being open and it's non-essential. Andover Borough arrested an intoxicated driver for DWI and that subject resisted arrest and threw a facial covering containing blood at the police officers.

With regards to the parks, Governor, although I think the weather Saturday helped tamp some things down, I'm sorry to report that the parks being open, our State Park Police reported an inordinate amount of urine and feces being left behind in the parks in water bottles. There is a zero tolerance policy for that. The whole idea behind the parks is to give our citizens the ability to go out there and enjoy fresh air and have time outside. That report from the Park Police was certainly disheartening, to say the least, and I just – our Park Police, our counties, our State Police, we will be on watching for that. We understand that the restrooms and public restrooms are closed, but people should plan accordingly and should not be urinating in bottles and leaving them behind, because I think that may lead us to take a different approach moving forward, if I could speak for the Governor in that regard. I really asked that that type of behavior not go on.

I'm not sure if you're going to have questions with regards to the letter that I put out Saturday, but I'll wait with regards to graduations and wave parades. With that, Governor, I'll turn it back over to you.

Governor Phil Murphy: This last point, two comments about parks. This last point, I like your phrase zero tolerance. You're not going to get a warning if we catch you leaving something like that behind. Folks, please don't do that.

Secondly, I had a very good conversation with Catherine McCabe, our Commissioner for the Department of Environmental Protection. She, I think also spoke with Judy and the team, Pat as well. We'd love to see a lot more masking and face covering. I think what we're going to do, we talked earlier today in the margins, DOH has got some really good signage about masking. I think you'll probably see, I can't tell you when, but Pat's going to make sure he coordinates it with Catherine and you're going to see a lot more visible imploring of folks to wear face coverings.

And Catherine makes the point that you've got a lot of parks where the trails are very narrow. You can't social distance, you just physically can't without going off the edge or going into the thicket of the woods. It just is impossible, and so the more face coverings we can get, the better. I think that's a general matter, folks. The

more we can cover our faces, the better off we'll be. I think increasingly by the day, if not by the minute, there's less stigma associated with it. It's just what we're doing these days. It is what it is. My guess is you'll see more of that imploring in places.

We'll start over here with Elise. Marthelle, before we jump in though, and again, great to have you with us, as you are every day. Tomorrow, Dan, will be at one o'clock and tomorrow we have already said this, but tomorrow will be a heavy dose of both what testing is going to look like in the state and contact tracing. We'll leave that till tomorrow if we can. A lot of really good work has been put into that and I personally, and I think I'm joined by my colleagues, are quite proud of where we're coming out on that. And again, remember, folks, we want to give you the confidence that it's okay, once we say you can do X, that you feel confident about doing X with your family. A big part of that is that the curves have got to keep coming down, they are. Let's keep it that way. That we've got to have that testing and tracing protocol infrastructure in place that you all can look at and say, you know what? I believe that. I got it. There's an architecture in place that gives me confidence.

I mentioned I'm not going to marry myself to a day but I would hope by the end of the week we could give, assuming the curves keep going in the right direction, that's a big assumption, that we could give a little bit more guidance as to some other things that we're looking at, again, on that road back to recovery. But don't hold us to a day on that.

But tomorrow, please do unless there's an emergency, please God, one o'clock tomorrow, testing and contact tracing will be the big topics of the day. With that, Elise, good afternoon. Can we keep these relatively moving along, folks, if we could?

Q&A Session

Elise Young, Bloomberg: Good afternoon. Can you give us any details of the White House call today? Particularly, did the White House promise broadened testing for New Jersey and New York or elsewhere?

And my second question is, have any of the summonsed businesses or individuals started to work their way through the courts yet? Or will that happen when the state reopens? Thank you.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you for both, Elise. On the first one, I'll tell you what struck me the most on the White House end, and I think this is a good thing. There was a lot of social distancing and masks, including they had a double-barrel camera and you had Vice President Pence in one room and Dr. Birx in another room. And you may have read that a lot of their senior medical experts are self-quarantining. There was really, I didn't see, other than staff, I didn't see anyone else on that call, unless you all did, other than the Vice President and Dr. Birx.

I'll defer the testing until tomorrow, but they have been intimately involved and very helpful. If you could bear with us on that, we'll give you the full soup to nuts tomorrow. Matt, can you answer the question, any folks who've been summonsed, have any of them made their way through the courts?

Chief Counsel Matt Platkin: Pat might have a better idea, or we can get Public Safety to weigh in.

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: I couldn't hear you, Matt.

Chief Counsel Matt Platkin: I said I'm not sure if the Colonel has a better idea. I don't know offhand, but we can ask the Attorney General's Office to weigh in.

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: I wasn't sure which courts were open or closed. That was the one point.

Governor Phil Murphy: Dan, where are you? Can we come back to Elise with an answer on that? Thank you very much. Sir, good afternoon.

Reporter: Thank you, Governor. Why are schools not allowed to hold those so-called wave parades? Colonel, are you really going to go after principals who don't cancel these parades and what punishment could they face? Governor, how can you justify allowing people to play golf when seniors are banned from these drive-by graduations when both are outdoors?

Governor Phil Murphy: With seniors? You mean high school seniors or senior citizens?

Reporter: High school seniors.

Governor Phil Murphy: I'll let the Colonel, he alluded to this letter. I'll let him take that one. Thank you.

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: I had a feeling it was coming. We were receiving several questions with regards to graduations and different proposals being put out there. First off, we would never and we could not prevent vehicles driving by, let's say it's a senior and him or her are on their front porch with their parents. Those vehicles can go by. What we are discouraging and the intent of my letter to Department of Education in public and non-public schools was directing students to gather on the front lawn of the school, at a football stadium, at a town hall, because what you're doing is inviting them to gather, which is in violation of the EO.

I think there was confusion that people who are out of their cars, that was the issue. The wave parades, and we've seen it with fire departments and police, I think the Governor commented on it two weeks ago. It's a great gesture to give that sense of solidarity, but when there's 50 people standing on top of each other on the curb of a hospital or in front of a high school, that's where the problem comes in. If people wanted to get in cars and drive to every graduate at a high school across town and that graduate and mom and dad were on the front porch or front lawn, that is certainly okay. But it's the summoning of people to gather together for a graduation or that wave parade that I hope I was clear in the letter. I received a lot of feedback on it, so I hope what I just gave clarifies what our intent is there.

Governor Phil Murphy: If you look at, by the way, the parameters we've put around golf, it's the furthest thing from what you're hearing about, congregating at a football stadium. Literally, you've got to golf, basically, I think you've got to drive your own cart and you can at most have a twosome unless you're a blood relative family that congregates together. Okay, real quick, please.

Reporter: Colonel, the letter I saw said that wave parades should be canceled. Are you saying that they don't have to be canceled if people are not gathering at a school or a central location?

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: I think I'm clarifying it here now. A wave parade that does not summon students or individuals to one location, so if that's seven cars want to drive by a senior's house and that family is on the front porch or in the yard, that is certainly not in violation of the EO. But what I was hearing was that they were all going to be assembled at a school, at a town hall, at a football field, which would be in violation.

Governor Phil Murphy: And not in their cars, you're saying that they'd be getting out of their cars.

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: Right, they'd be getting out of their cars.

Governor Phil Murphy: That can't happen.

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: To wave at people and that's where we've seen no mask and people within, closer than six feet of each other.

Governor Phil Murphy: Where hearts are breaking here, most importantly, for the fatalities. But on that list of broken hearts are seniors and their families. It stinks. There's no other way to put it and we feel awful, but we also got to make sure we don't, by celebrating this year, that we lose somebody and we can't do that, particularly in the intergenerational spread of this virus. Matt, good afternoon.

Matt Arco, Star-Ledger: Good afternoon, Governor. The target date to begin testing for all inmates and prison staff was last week. I'm curious if you could give an update on how many tests have been done and what the anticipated timeline is for testing everyone in the state's prison system?

And real quick, Governor, just curious if you could explain why you pulled both NJ Transit board nominees late last week. Curious of how that sort of hampers some of your things that you wanted to get done with NJ Transit, how that might slow things down?

Governor Phil Murphy: I don't have an answer on how much have been tested. Do you happen to know, Judy? But we can get back to you on that and you're going to hear vulnerable populations, I don't want to preview too much for tomorrow, but vulnerable populations are at the top of the list in terms of priorities on testing. Matt, would you want to add something?

Chief Counsel Matt Platkin: Just one clarification, I don't think we said everyone would be tested by last week. They were beginning to phase in using the Rutgers universal testing starting last week. Is that correct, Commissioner?

Governor Phil Murphy: Yeah. Can we get back to with any color on that? You're going to hear the broader answer to your question tomorrow in terms of how we anticipate going about the broad community. Can we get back to Matt on how much has already been done, if that's all right?

No insights on NJ Transit. I mean, this stuff happens all the time. We put people up, we pull back. No juicy backstory and I don't anticipate. Listen, we want a full board. We want everybody in the seat. We want it properly representative for the particular categories in particular that are, whether they're advocates or bus riders or train riders, that's all very important, but we're not going to hold up progress of NJ Transit as a result. I would hope we can get back and get some folks nominated sooner than later. Are you good, sir? Okay. You're good. Coming at you here, hold on, Ian.

Ian Elliott, NJTV News: Thank you, Governor. What do you think of the cooperative plasma donation agreement between University Hospital and the Red Cross? Can you update us on the number of children hospitalized by COVID-related symptoms in the state? How many pediatric deaths and what can you tell us about the four-year-old who died? You said it wasn't related to Kawasaki-related illness? Was it heart failure related to COVID? As we know, many of these children have experienced.

Is the decrease in cases due to social distancing or is there any evidence that this could be the virus waning due to the warmer weather, as some had predicted? What proportion of new cases are coming from the general public versus from institutional settings? Do we know that percentage?

Governor Phil Murphy: One more sir.

Ian Elliott, NJTV News: When can we expect an update on the work being done in Salem County for the testing of migrant workers?

Governor Phil Murphy: Testing of what, sorry?

Ian Elliott, NJTV News: Migrant workers on the farms.

Governor Phil Murphy: Okay, so Judy, I'm going to take shots at these and then you come in behind, okay? Some good? We'll partner. University Hospital Red Cross, we were here Saturday and we love it. It holds a lot of promise. Matt was singled out as someone who's gone through it and donated, having been a positive. It holds enormous promise. How much promise, to be determined. But we were thrilled to have Rosie and Shereef both with us on Saturday. I think it looks great.

Judy will come back to you. I don't know that we know how many kids are in hospitals, but I'll let her come back to you. Nothing more on the four-year-old other than if we felt it edged anywhere close to a public health concern, I promise you, we would be more forthcoming. It does not and out of respect for privacy for the blessed little soul and families, we're going to keep it that way. Numbers are coming down, Ed should chime in here. I don't think there's any, and I'll say a couple more things and then turn it to Judy and Ed.

I don't think people know right now whether warmer, there's a huge raging debate around the world whether warmer weather will or will not impact this. H1N1 it did, but there's evidence that suggests the other side of it. I'll let Ed jump in. There's no question social distancing, though. The fact of the matter is, the weather hasn't been that warm. It's warmer than it was a month or two ago, but it really isn't that warm. You know, not 90 degrees, full bore Jersey summer, high humidity weather. I don't think that's personally, Ed's the boss here, I don't think that's a contributing factor right now. I think it's the fact that people are staying away from each other. Marthelle, come back, because I missed your institutional settings. What was the question?

Ian Elliott, NJTV News: Knowing the proportion of new cases from the general public and institutional settings, and if that most cases are in an institutional setting and not the public, could that help inform our decision on opening up the state?

Governor Phil Murphy: Sorry, I got it. We know cumulatively, I'm not sure we know the spot number. We show the chart, if someone could pull up how many are in long-term care facilities. That doesn't include, obviously, necessarily prison community, etc. But it is around I think, historically, it's been around 15% to 20%

of the total number of positive cases. It's sadly a much higher number of fatalities, as you've seen, that's the total. This is long-term care only. That's a proxy for the broader institutional community. I assume you include prisons, etc. in that. Our total positives are 140,000 basically now. And so you'd add somewhat to that. I just don't know that we've got the spot rate.

On migrant workers, that's part of, Judy's going to speak to that explicitly tomorrow. That is in a high priority setting in terms of the testing protocol that we'll be talking about tomorrow. Judy, you or Ed adding anything to any of that?

DOH Communicable Disease Service Medical Director Dr. Ed Lifshitz: The Governor, as usual, has done an excellent job as far as going through those things. No, we don't know whether the hot weather is going to make a difference or not, certainly we can hope it does. Unfortunately, when we look at some of the other countries around the world which have been in summer while we've been in winter, we haven't seen that happen. As to whether weather is playing any impact here in New Jersey, guess is probably not. Without a doubt, I will say that the social distancing measures have made a difference. They have saved lives. That much is clear. I have no doubt in my mind that our numbers would be worse and our deaths would be higher if these measures hadn't been undertaken. That's as far as that goes.

As far as kids in hospitals and things, I don't have a spot number, meaning I can't tell you exactly how many children are in right now. I can tell you that overall, kids under the age of 18 are about 2% of the total hospitalizations that we've had. Or in other words, out of the 50,360 hospitalizations that we know about, there were 884 who are children.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you. I'm going to do that at the end, Pat, if that's all right with you. That's a good one. We'll come down to Dave, if we could. Thank you. Thank you, Ed.

Dave Schatz, New Brunswick Today: Hi, Governor. The last several days when you announced that school was going to be canceled for the rest of the year, you and the Education Commissioner talked a lot about looking at creative alternatives about graduation. As the Colonel referenced, there was one letter from him, another email from somebody in the Education Department, talking about that now we're only going to have the virtual graduations. Some educators and parents we have heard are upset by what they say is an apparent change in the message here. Has it changed, do you think? Why only virtual and nothing else? You know, six feet apart on a football field with everybody wearing masks, they're outside. Is there a concern that in setting that up, there may be more contact with people next to each other? Are you afraid that other situations like weddings, they might try to make the same argument? What's the thinking about this? Because as you've referenced so many times, you know, this is such a milestone in the history of high school graduation, not only for the kids, but the parents as well. Thank you.

Governor Phil Murphy: I'll give you my thoughts and Pat, you may want to come in. We haven't changed our tune. This came up on the call with the Congressional delegation this morning. One of the things we have alluded to and I would repeat today, if graduation was supposed to be on June 1, as we look at June 1 right now, one guy's opinion, we will be more open than we are today and I think there'll be a couple of steps, as I said, that I hope that we can touch later this week and give some specificity. But I don't know that we'll be quote-unquote completely out of the woods that we could do what you're suggesting.

Could we do it on August 1? I'd put more money on that. I wouldn't make it still non-refundable but, so, we never married ourselves to timing. We always thought there was going to be some virtualness around this and if it's in the here and now and again, if Judy sees this differently, we're going to take some steps, but I just don't think we're there yet. And could we get there? Yes. I think we could get there. But I can't promise that.

And again, this is all dependent on a series of very specific health steps and markers that we've laid out that are crystal clear, that these curves have to keep coming down, that we get the testing and contact tracing that Judy and others are going to speak about tomorrow. And again, we're making progress. Again, if your graduation is June 1, I can't honestly tell you that you're going to get there by then. But could we get there down the road? The answer is yes.

As I said, there's nothing like losing somebody. So let's just put fatalities, serious illness to a respectful aside for a moment because that's the loss that you can never get back. This is among the most heartbreaking ones that we hear about, parents are not bashful, I've heard from seniors themselves. You heard Lamont

Repollet sitting here as the Commissioner of the Department of Education a few days ago with a high school senior, and his daughter is not going to get that. It stinks, there's no other way to put it. But never say never, but for the moment, we can't congregate. We cannot do that.

It is still a stay at home, overwhelmingly stay-at-home state. I hope we're going to be able to, again if the curves keep going, we'll be able to tweak I hope, step by step. We would be the happiest people, other than parents of high school seniors and the high school seniors themselves, I promise you. Thank you, Dave. Nikita, good afternoon.

Nikita Biryukov, New Jersey Globe: Good afternoon, Governor.

Governor Phil Murphy: I still have not spoken with Vice President Biden.

Nikita Biryukov, New Jersey Globe: I was actually going to ask that, it's really helpful. Without kidding, it's helpful that you say that from the outset. But I did want to, I guess sort of refresh some other questions. So is there any chance that we'll hear an update about the July primary sometime this week? And then, have you given any further thought to the possibility of a second budget address?

Governor Phil Murphy: Both good questions. On the latter, I haven't but that's something that we're considering. I give you the assist for raising a level of consciousness associated with it. I think the here and now, and Matt can correct me if I'm wrong here, we want to see how tomorrow goes. We've got a pretty good experiment before us. Clearly, it's not statewide, it's got different dimensions. These are local races, but every race is important. I think we want to see what tomorrow looks like. Does that mean this week or not? I don't know. But I do know that the clock is running and it's going to need to be sooner than later. Let's see how tomorrow goes. Would you agree with that? Yeah, thank you for that. John, you're going to bring us out today.

John McAlpin, Bergen Record: Thank you, Governor. I have two questions on testing, the numbers that we're getting. I'm trying to understand the positivity rate. Forgive me, on April 1, the difference between positive cases from major labs and the positive total reported by the state was about 1,700. That number has grown to last week where there was a difference, an average daily difference of 30,000 between the total number you're reporting and the total number of positives from major labs. Can you explain the difference and why that grew?

And yesterday, there was a report of total tests, again from labs, which was 280,000. But now the dashboard doesn't have these major lab tests and it says the total tests reported was 425,000. Can you explain that huge jump and what does this new number mean?

Also, again, on the pediatric inflammatory syndrome, can we get a total number of cases? Is the state tracking that?

Governor, over the weekend with a lot of people down the shore and on the boardwalk and whatnot, there was at least one Legislator and others trying to promote protests against this. One Republican Legislator was urging people to go outside and quote, take this rebellion a few steps further, get ready. Any reaction to that?

Governor Phil Murphy: Was that Senator O'Scanlon?

John McAlpin, Bergen Record: Yes, it was.

Governor Phil Murphy: Okay. Yeah, I'll close with that. I've got a particular view on that. Do you want to take the testing, you folks, the numbers as well as the pediatric inflammatory? Thank you.

DOH Communicable Disease Service Medical Director Dr. Ed Lifshitz: When it comes to tests, traditionally, we're a whole lot more confident when we get a positive than we either don't hear anything or we get a negative. And the reason for that is because labs are used to reporting to us positive results, that's what's required under our regulations. They're much less used to reporting negatives.

When we began with COVID and we sent out the requests to labs, hey, we want the positives and the negatives, we were more comfortable with what we call the major labs. We worked with them more regularly, we're getting most of the data back and forth. They had a good electronic connection that we knew going back and forth, so that we were comfortable that we were getting all the results, both positive or negative from them. That was about 95% of all the results we were getting at the beginning.

As time went on and you began to get a lot more laboratories that came in and play in this arena, and a lot more began doing the testing and sending us results as well, the percentage that we were getting from the major labs dropped over time from about 95% down to about 80%, which is about where we're at now. They're still doing a lot, but other laboratories have sprung up.

As those labs come in from other laboratories, we begin to see whether you're getting positives and negatives and literally, at this point, we get results from over 100 laboratories, again, from over 100 laboratories when it comes to this. As you can imagine, it's hard to know for sure whether every one of those labs is sending you every result. That's why we have tended to stick with those major labs when it comes to figuring out our positivity numbers. We knew it wasn't the total population out there. But we were most comfortable that we're getting both the positives and the negatives accurately, so that we can make that calculation.

Going forward, again, we're seeing more and more that we are getting negatives from more and more of these labs so we're trying to include that in the totals. We've always included out all the positives from all the different labs. Hopefully that answered that.

And briefly about the question about the pediatric multi-system inflammatory syndrome, or sometimes known as Kawasaki or toxic shock related, we're still very early in this process. We put out what's known as a call for cases out to the community last week and we've begun to hear back about potential cases in New Jersey. We've heard of eight so far, of children. Luckily, no deaths at this time. As I said very early in the investigation, it's not yet clear whether these are all still related or all related to COVID or not, but that's where we're at.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you, Ed. Listen, I consider Senator O'Scanlon a good guy and a good friend, but I have to remind, we both live in Monmouth County. There are just under 7,000 positives as of today in Monmouth County and 445 people have died from our county. I want to open the state up as much as the next guy, trust me. 100-some people went into the hospital yesterday. The house is still on fire. Has it gotten better? Yeah, it's clearly gotten better. But let's be responsible, man. Let's be responsible. Let's do this together.

I've already, you know, opening up county and state parks and golf was a big step. It was a big step in many respects, including for mental health, and it feels like it's paid off. There's been some non-compliant behavior, which we're going to crack down on. But for the most part, people are doing the right things and folks deserved it, because of the amount of progress we've made. We're looking at taking other steps right now, responsibly. We had a really good discussion, the models that Judy and Ed and their team look at. The benefit you get in terms of literally cracking this virus to the ground from another two weeks, at any point in time, of social distancing beyond the point than you otherwise would have stopped social distancing, is enormous. The curves are, your jaw drops and you say, okay, from any point to the two weeks later.

So listen, I think we've all got to be responsible. So far, so good. We've hung in there together, across the aisle, across geographies. We've got to keep that up. But, you know, again, that's the county I know because I live in it. It's the one I know the best, 445. It would have been unfathomable in Monmouth County three months ago to think that 445 people would have died from something like this. I mean, it's just, you know, this is in all of our neighborhoods, all of our counties, up and down the state. Let's do this responsibly. I want to open up as much as anybody, but let's do it together. Let's do it with responsibility. Let's do it based on the data and let's do it together.

With that, I'm going to mask up if that's all right. I've got my American flag on today, and remind everybody, I still fly five American flags at my house. I don't know why Pat didn't say this, but I'm going to say this as an homage to Pat and every other law enforcement officer in the state, including the extraordinary members of the State Police who protect me and my family. National Police Week started today. So not only do we have the National Hospital Week on the one side, we get National Police Week, so to each and every one of the members of law enforcement, we tip our hat to you. We do that in any event, but we really tip our hat to you in the war that we're fighting. It's extraordinary.

In fact, I'm going to be on a virtual town hall with you and the Attorney General, kicking it off at four o'clock today, which I'm really excited about. Thank you for inviting me. Folks, again, keep doing what you're doing. You've done an extraordinary job. Keep it up. I promise you, there'll be a payoff, I promise you. Tomorrow is

going to be a big day of discussion on testing and contact tracing. As I said, if I had my druthers, I hope by the end of this week we'll be able to talk about other dates, certain steps we can make. Election Day in a lot of communities tomorrow so folks, we're going to look at that, as Nikita's question triggered in terms of how the vote by mail reality works in those communities in New Jersey. We'll be together at one o'clock tomorrow, Dan, is that right?

I want to thank again, Judy Persichilli and Ed Lifshitz, to my right, Pat Callahan, Jared Maples to my left. To each and every one of you, keep it up. God bless you all. We'll see you tomorrow.

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