

Governor Phil Murphy

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Governor Murphy Holds COVID-19 Briefing



Governor Phil Murphy: Thanks, Michelle. Good afternoon, everybody. I'm joined by the woman who needs no introduction, the Commissioner of the Department of Health, Judy Persichilli, another guy who needs no introduction, the Superintendent of the State Police, Colonel Pat Callahan, another familiar face, the state's epidemiologist, Dr. Christina Tan, great to have you all there; Chief Counsel, Parimal Garg, and many others with us. Let's jump right in. Thank you all for your patience to do this particular session virtually. There is the potential for some heavy storms across central and North Jersey later today and into tonight.

Pat will get into this a little bit more detail. These storms could bring some high winds and some heavy downpours. While at this time, we'll obviously update you if this changes. At this time, there are no flood watches set. We know things to change quickly. And localized flooding is always possible. Please, please, please take every precaution this evening, that looks like another opportunity to stay in and stay safe. I'm not sure where you were folks, but on Monday night at home, it sounded like a freight train coming at our house and out of nowhere, the winds spiked dramatically. And it lasted for a very short amount of time, but knocked out a lot of power, particularly the JCP&L area of service. And Pat will give a little bit of color on that.

Moving on, I will start by saying that we do not have any updates for you on booster shots, as the federal government has yet to give us any clear guidance. I would just reiterate, however, that between Judy's team at the Department of Health and Pat's team at the Office of Emergency Management, we continue to pound away at planning for whatever the FDA and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices sends out, but we do have final guidance, we will get that to you with all the vital information that you need.

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At this time, though, we are waiting word just as many of you are. I was on a White House yesterday, and they are still in the process of making that determination. Now, regardless of the timeframe that the federal government puts forward for boosters, whether it'd be six months after receiving the second dose, or eight months, or some other parameter, if you have yet to receive your first dose, now's the time to do it. Once the booster plan is released by the federal government, we do anticipate the demand for shots to increase greatly. And I would expect, particularly if they go for the more aggressive six months after your last vaccination plan, we will have a supply/demand challenge at least for some number of weeks. So, folks, if you've not gotten your first one, do not put off getting that first shot if you've been waiting together.

Speaking of which, as of this morning, this is the total number of folks who live, work, or study in New Jersey who have now completed their vaccination courses. There are another, by the way, 758,000 individuals who have received the first dose and are on schedule for their second. As of today, roughly 82% of all eligible New Jerseyans ages 12 years and older have received at least their first dose. This is among the highest rates in the nation. And among that top tier, we are the largest state. We should all take great pride of being a leader and model state across the entire country.

Certainly, the number of those who haven't yet gotten a first dose continues to decrease. But we don't want anyone to be lost once that window for boosters is open. So, again, if you've not yet gotten your first dose, go do it today so you can be in the queue for the second dose before what we will expect to be, as I've mentioned, a significant increase in demand. Now, let's move on to the rest of the day's numbers. Here are today's new case numbers. Now, even though the rate of transmission has lowered, and is now hovering just around 180, by the way, let's review that.

That each new case is leading to about one other new case, look at the overall number of positive new cases today. Even at an Rt of just a hair about one, that means 2,000 plus new cases a day. We have to keep working to push this down. Vaccination, masking, distancing, all of those remain incredibly crucial. Here are yesterday's hospital numbers and again, we have begun to see some plateauing of these numbers after a swift run off, but still more than 1,100. As you can see, 1,155 New Jerseyans are in the hospital, another reason to keep hammering away at this virus.

And here are the newly confirmed deaths being reported today. Bless each and every one of them. I want to ask you to bear with us as we take a few moments to memorialize several more of those that we have lost to the pandemic. We'll start with this guy, Manalapan's Harold Eisen. That's Harold on the right, he was 83 years old. He was a native of Newark, a graduate of Weequahic High School and Seton Hall University. Military Service took him and his wife Peggy, that's in the left, to Colorado for a time. And his career provided a short detour to Syracuse, New York, but they found their way back to New Jersey in 1974 settling in Manalapan.

Harold spent his entire career in sales with the Reynolds Metals company, but he also loved community theater, and acted in as many roles for which he could audition. He also had success as a commercial actor on television, and doing voiceover radio work. Harold was also the man who got the dog park built in Manalapan's Thompson Grove Park, thanks to an essay contest sponsored by the Bush's Beans company. And here's the story, in 2006, both he and Peggy escaped a house fire. Why? Because their dog, Lulu, woke them up.

His retelling of the story won him and Lulu the contest, and Manalapan got a dog park. Not only are we big dog people, but one of our dogs is also named Lulu. Harold passed due to COVID on November 19, and sadly, Peggy passed away this April from other causes. They left behind their sons, David, with whom I had the great honor of speaking on Monday, and his fiancé, Susan, their daughter, Melissa and son-in-law, Philip, and their two grandchildren, Samantha, and Alexander, and numerous nieces, and nephews, and dear friends. We thank Harold for his service to our nation, and for always being in New Jerseyan. May God bless him and Peggy.

Next, we'll stay down by the shore to remember Monica Boright from Manchester Township. Monica was a native of Wernigerate, Germany, who came to the United States with a nursing degree working as a nanny, a nurse's aide, an elder care specialist, and a reflexologist. Always kind, and caring and upbeat, Monica made sure she always made those in her care feel welcomed and comfortable. She was also a tremendous artist. She painted. She created stained glass pieces, rehab furniture, bulletin, made custom reading cards for family and friends. I think it's fair to say that Monica was a renaissance woman.

Monica was pre-deceased by her three husbands. Jacques, with whom she had her daughter, Corrine. Christopher, to whom she was married for 48 years, and Lew, who passed away in January of 2020. We lost Monica, by the way, just one month prior to her 80th birthday. She left behind Corrine and I have the great honor of speaking with Corrine on Monday, lives in San Diego. And she left behind her grandson Mathias, and her stepdaughter, Lisa, and step grandchildren, Evan and Ellie. We are honored that Monica chose to make New Jersey her home. We are proud to have called her one of our own. May God bless her memory, [inaudible 00:08:35].

And finally, for today, let's honor the life of Toms River, Stuart Stu Christie, this guy. He passed away on February 9th at the age of 67 years. Stu was a land surveyor and planner, a longtime member of the New Jersey Society of Land Surveyors and Planners, who had a notable career with several of the leading land use firms in our state, even had his own practice for a time, a member of the first graduating class of Toms River North High School in 1971. He had his high school sweetheart, Kitt, eventually married, tallying a half century together.

Left Kitt behind and I have the great honor of speaking with her on Monday as well, alongside their two sons Ryan and Sean and their families, daughter-in-law Megan and Amanda, regardless of law I should say, respectively and his beloved grandsons, Parker and Logan, and his newly born granddaughter, [Sophia Grace], who was born just last week at September 7th, God bless her. He's further survived by his sisters Peggy, Barbara, and Kathy, and brothers Mike, John, Jim and Bob, among numerous nieces and nephews, cousins and of course, dear friends. May God bless Stu and his family. May he be remembered fondly for his quiet, contemplative nature, and his professional integrity.

Kitt asked me a favor, and I will take her up on that. Stu died waiting for his vaccine appointment. He stood in line, and made his appointment just as we asked millions of folks to do. And he passed while waiting for that. Kitt wanted me to say as emphatically as I could, there's no excuse. That was Stu died, by the way, we had a huge supply/demand imbalance, you had to wait. Today, you can walk into almost 1,500 locations anywhere in our state, you get vaccinated.

So, Kitt, who has suffered this awful loss, and her family asked me to say emphatically, if you're not yet vaccinated, do it as an honor to a guy like Stu, who died waiting for his appointment. Go out there and get vaccinated right now. And my dad and Kitt works side by side with a good friend, the Mayor of Toms River, and a terrific leader Mullica Hill. So, God bless them all and please get vaccinated. We remember fondly every member of our New Jersey family we've lost, and we keep their surviving families in our thoughts and in our prayers.

Let's switch gears for a minute and turn to recognize another of the small businesses who have worked in partnership with the New Jersey Economic Development Authority to remain open to serve their communities. Pawsome University is a four-year-old Monmouth County based business run by these two, Jaime on the left, John to the right, Caponetta, both veteran animal rescue and behavioral specialists, their specialty, by the way, positive reinforcement with pets.

From Pawsome University, Jaime and John provide a one-on-one training for both four-legged and two-legged students. And away from Pawsome University, both Jaime and John are associated with other animal-focused nonprofits, helping shelter animals, and providing animal health care services. A lot of families have taken on a new pet during the pandemic. And Pawsome University has been there to help those lucky canines, especially adapt to their new homes, and new humans, and vice versa. I had the opportunity to speak with Jaime and John on Monday, they're doing a great job. And I thank them for all that they're doing. Check them out, pawsomeuniversity.com, pawsomeuniversity.com.

Finally, before I turn things over to Judy, I know we've all been through a lot together, whether it is the challenges that the pandemic has thrown our way over the past 18 or 19 months, the challenges that storms like Henri and Ida have thrown our way in the past month, or any other numerous challenges or issues in our lives. We've all been asked to deal with a lot. And then, times we have all felt overwhelmed. So, there are two things I think we believe you should do. First, importantly, it's okay to not be okay. And second, help is available to anyone who wants it.

Whenever you're going through feeling or thinking, we have trained confidential counselors available to listen and to support you. Any new jersey resident can call that number right there, 866-202-HELP, or 866-202-4357, or text NJHOPE to 51684 for free, confidential support from NJ Mental Health Cares in partnership between the Department of Human Services and the Mental Health Association in New Jersey. This toll-free number is open from 8:00 to 8:00 every single day, and staffed by live trained specialists. Again, the number is 866-202-HELP, or 4357, or NJHOPE 20 51684.

And for the deaf and hard of hearing, mental health assistance in American sign language is also available through a partnership with ACCESS at St. Joseph's Health in Paterson. You can reach them via video phone. That number is at the bottom of the screen, 973-870-0677. Again, 973-870-0677. And that, as you can see is from Monday through Friday, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. And again, support is free. It's confidential, and it's provided by live trained specialists.

Additionally, September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, and our suicide prevention helpline NJ Hopeline can be reached 24/7 at 1-855-654-6735. Again, that's 1-855-654-6735. The Hopeline can connect you to anonymous, confidential support if you or someone you care about has said or done something that suggests that they're contemplating suicide. These resources are available to you. So, please reach out to the hotline. We've gotten through so much by leaning on each other. We've got little ways yet to go, but we will get there. And we'll get there as one New Jersey family.

And to everyone in our extraordinary Jewish community, preparing for Yom Kippur, I wish you an easy and meaningful fast, G'mar chatima tova, G'mar chatima tova. That said, 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 good afternoon. As COVID-19 continues to circulate in our state, individuals are unfortunately getting ill and off to seek hospital care. If you have symptoms of covid 19, please get tested as soon as possible. If you test positive, talk to your healthcare provider or your local hospital, about whether you are a candidate for monoclonal antibodies. Antibodies are proteins that individuals' bodies make to fight viruses, such as the virus that causes COVID-19.

Antibodies made in a laboratory act a lot like natural antibodies to limit the amount of virus in your body. They are called monoclonal antibodies. The goal of this therapy is to help prevent hospitalizations, reduce viral loads, and lessen symptom severity. Antibody treatment can be used by people with mild to moderate COVID-19, who test positive for SARS-CoV-2, are within 10 days of the start of their symptoms, are age 12 or older and weigh at least 88 pounds, and are at high risk of getting very sick from COVID-19, or of needing to be admitted to a hospital because of COVID-19.

COVID-19 is a serious illness. It is vital that residents who have symptoms get tested and talk to your health care provider about whether antibody therapy is right for them. This is especially important if you have not been vaccinated because we know severe disease and hospitalization is much greater in the unvaccinated. We continue to encourage all those eligible for COVID-19 vaccines to get vaccinated not only to reduce your risk of severe disease, but also to protect those with whom they come in contact with.

It is also vital to keep up with routine immunizations to protect our health and the health of our communities. As we enter the fall season, now is time to get your annual flu shot. Annual flu vaccination is recommended for everyone six months and older. Influenza viruses and Corona viruses are different. Getting a flu vaccine will not protect you against COVID-19. However, the vaccine can reduce flu illness, hospitalizations, and can help to conserve potentially scarce healthcare resources during the pandemic.

It's likely the flu viruses and the virus that causes COVID-19 will both be spreading this fall and winter, making it more important than ever to get the flu vaccine as well. It is the best way to protect yourself and others, especially those who are particularly vulnerable to both COVID-19 and influenza such as older adults, and those with chronic health conditions. Flu vaccines and COVID-19 vaccines can be given at the same time. Since May, many people have been getting other vaccines at the same time that they receive their COVID-19 vaccine.

September and October are good times to be vaccinated against flu. Flu vaccines are safe, and effective, and are offered in many locations including doctor's offices, clinics, health departments, urgent care centers and your local pharmacy. Low or no cost flu vaccines will be available through your local health department, the

federally qualified health centers, and some nonprofit organizations.

So, moving on to my daily report, as the governor shared, our hospitals reported 1,155 hospitalizations of COVID-19 positive patients and persons under investigation. Fortunately, there are no new reports of multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children. We currently have 133 cumulative cases in our state. None of those children are hospitalized.

At the state veteran's homes, there has been no new positive cases among residents and at the state psychiatric hospitals. There's one new case among a patient at Ancora. The percent positivity as of September 11th for New Jersey is 7.45%, the northern part of the state 6.42%, the central part of the state 8.11%, and the southern part of the state 9.31%. So, that concludes my daily report. Please continue to stay safe and get vaccinated to protect ourselves, our family, our friends, most importantly, our children. Thank you.

Governor Phil Murphy: Judy, well said as always, and thanks for the reminder of the update on monoclonal antibodies, something we were talking about almost in every press conference a year ago. It's a good reminder, what they do when you are prone or when you should pursue them, et cetera. So, thank you for all of that. Pat, as I said, we had some sort of spike, nasty weather on Monday night, it was all in JCP&L back and forth, getting a sense of the magnitude of the outages, there were many thousands as you know. And I mentioned earlier in my remarks, we've got some potentially bad thunderstorms later today. And we'd love to get an update on where things are with FEMA at any other matters. Welcome.

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: Thank you, Governor. Good afternoon. Yeah, with regard to the Monday night storms, we did see upwards of 60,000 outages from those. They came through fast, but they were powerful. JCP&L did I think a great job. I think as of this morning, we were under 1,000 outages. And I've been in touch with President [inaudible 00:21:46] as well. And keeping an eye on tonight, I think we are expecting severe thunderstorms this afternoon, probably between 5:00 until about midnight.

We are looking at damaging winds, hail, and I think the greatest impacted area is going to be north of Interstate 78 including Sussex, Warren, Morris, and western Passaic counties. And we do think that rain tapers off tomorrow. But again, as we've been saying, highlighted by either that paying attention to TV alerts, as well as phone alerts is important to keeping our citizens safe.

With regards to FEMA and that process, our disaster recovery centers have seen several 100 residents come through for assistance, which is good. And as we open them up, that's going to trend in a great direction. I know they've registered over 37,000 citizens already, 27,000 homeowners and about 10,000 renters. And as of this morning, have doled out almost \$9 million in individual assistance, which is I think a pretty phenomenal number with the averages being around \$4,200 per household. So, FEMA, again, phenomenal partner, constant communication.

And we just continue to move forward in that partnership to make sure we get back on our feet as soon as possible. I would like to just make one clarification, there seem to be some confusion when I talked about line of duty deaths from COVID on Monday. That was a national number when I said 22 of 23. There were some outlets that thought that was 22 law enforcement officers in New Jersey alone. That was not the case. That was a national statistic that I was giving out, and I just wanted to clarify that today, Governor. That's all I have.

Governor Phil Murphy: Pat, Thank you. May God rest their souls. I read that as national when you said that, but it's good to clarify to make sure folks understand that that's a national reality. And I believe you said 22 of the 23 fatalities were related to COVID.

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

Governor Phil Murphy: Yeah, which is heartbreaking. Pat, the website, we don't have it up on the screen, unless Dan can find through it, it's disasterassistance.gov, am I correct?

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: I think that is correct, Gov. I shouldn't have that in my head, but disasterassistance.gov will get them to register on that FEMA website.

Governor Phil Murphy: That's the place to go, and it's encouraging. We've got [inaudible 00:24:29] 27,000 homeowners, and 10,000 renters have already signed up. So, we encourage folks to get in there. The faster you get your claim, and the faster you'll get addressed by FEMA. Thank you for that. Again, thanks to Judy. So, Michelle, why don't we stay for a few questions if that's okay, and Michelle can be our emcee, if that's okay with you.

Michelle: We're good. We're going to start with [Joey Fox].

Governor Phil Murphy: Okay, Joey.

Joey Fox, New Jersey Globe: Can you hear me okay?

Governor Phil Murphy: Yeah.

Joey Fox, New Jersey Globe: Great. Okay. I got a little trio here. So, first, have you ruled out calling the legislature back into session for any reason before the upcoming election, including not limited to, obviously, but including for the Reproductive Freedom Act? When you had a meal with new incoming, or now, Governor Hochul of New York, did you discuss congestion pricing at all? Was that an issue that came up? And then, finally, I know that Morris County was the most recent county to have a major disaster declaration issued. But Monmouth, Burlington, and Warren counties were also assessed for the potential of disaster declaration, does the fact that they haven't had one declared yet, and it's been a few days, meaning that they likely won't be getting one? Thank you.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you, good to hear your voice. I have not thought about the question on the legislature coming back in or not. You'd have to leave all options on the table, given the world we're in right now, with the pandemic, with mother nature, with your name it. We discussed a number of topics at lunch. It was a very good lunch, outdoors in New York City after the 9/11 Memorial in the morning. We just looked at as a general matter, a lot of topics that came up included other than getting to know each other, obviously, with our spouses, things that pertain to our by state relationship, as you can imagine, federal funding for infrastructure, like gateway, port authority matters that generally were on the list. It's a good question on the other county's panel. Are they still assessing or they concluded their assessment on those counties?

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: They are still assessing, Governor, and that the fact that they have not been declared yet does not mean that they're not. It's just sometimes in order to do the comprehensive assessments to ensure that they hit those thresholds. So, at this point, too early to tell, but those damn good assessments are ongoing for those counties.

Governor Phil Murphy: The 11 counties that have been named, this is for the major disaster declaration. And the important point about that is individuals, as Pat pointed out a few minutes ago, not just governmental entities, but individuals are eligible for money. That is an unprecedented amount of counties in our state. So, we will keep folks posted if there's any development beyond that. Thank you for that. Michelle.

Michelle: Right, we'll go to Matt Arco.

Governor Phil Murphy: Hey, Matt.

Matt Arco. NJ.COM: Good afternoon, Governor. Governor, do you have any information yet on how many schools if any had to shut down and switch to remote learning due to COVID cases since the start of the school year? And real quick off topic, New Jersey Home Improvement contractors don't have to prove they have experience, talent, or physically sound to get an HIC registration. Other states, meanwhile, have licenses with more stringent requirements. Would you support a license for this profession, especially given the damage we saw with Ida and the fact that so many people in the state will have to hire contractors to rebuild?

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you, Matt. I've never been asked that question before. So, I'm going to defer as a general matter, New Jersey has a high bar, it's rare that we've got a lower bar in terms of qualifications required to get a license in our state. We're typically either the leader of the pack or among the leaders of the pack. So, if this is the case, and I assume it is based on your question, that would be an exception, but let us get back to you on that, and if Dan and Parimal could help me follow up with that. And we do have information on schools that are out alternate to Judy. And remember, schools, in most cases, have been in session, back in session for a limited amount of time. I think Tina would support me on this so that we don't

know the full story yet of how school reopening is going. We will obviously give you that data as we get it. I think Judy, you're going to start posting this afternoon on your website, the status of any outbreaks in schools. But with that, let me turn it over to you.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Thank you, Governor. We will be posting later on where we're finding the data at this point in time. It looks like we have six outbreaks in schools. Two in Atlanta County, one in Cumberland, one in Monmouth, one in Morris and one in Union. It's a combination of both some staff cases and student cases. And I have to remind you that to qualify as an outbreak in school, it is two cases that are epidemiologically or two or three cases. I know Dr. Tan will correct me, three cases that are epidemiologically connected, and are not from the same household or have otherwise another connection. So, that information will be refined. I believe Dr. Tan is planning on posting that sometime later on today. I'm pretty sure that's where we are with that. But we do have six outbreaks.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thanks, Judy. Tina, do you want to add to that?

State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan: Other than that, we are very grateful for local health departments in supporting on school districts in terms of investigating the outbreaks. Really, the key to containment is on early identification, and I just want to take the opportunity to remind parents that if your kids are sick, send them to school. And it's really important that they stop at the door of the schools to try to minimize spread in the community.

Governor Phil Murphy: That's always good advice, pandemic or otherwise. Dan Bryan confirms and that is in fact disasterassistance.gov. That's the website folks should go to, to file their individual claims. Michelle, back to you.

Michelle: Right. Next up is David Matthau.

Governor Phil Murphy: Hello, Dave. Dave, are you there? Dave, you're on mute, it looks to me. There you go.

David Matthau, NJ 101.5: Hi, can you hear me now?

Governor Phil Murphy: Yeah.

David Matthau, NJ 101.5: Oh, great. So, governor, just curious about why we're plugging mental health now, obviously, it's always a good idea, especially in an ongoing, stressful situation like the pandemic. But I was also wondering, how you're doing with your mental health? What you do to try to stay positive, and maybe what you'd suggest to New Jersey residents who may feel a little funny, maybe they're a little embarrassed about asking for assistance, or talking to somebody, what would you recommend that they keep in mind? And for Commissioner Persichilli, with regard to monoclonal antibody therapy, what do we know about this therapy and the Delta variant? Early on, I know that there was some question about it. Do we think that monoclonal antibody therapy is a good step for people to take, again, in the early stages of illness, even if it's with the Delta variant? And can you remind us, how early are we talking about? Thank you.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thanks, Dave. I'm holding up just fine. I mean, it's obviously, for all of us, it's been a crazy 19 months, and I've said this many times, every time you think you've got this thing figured out, it takes a turn. And eight out of 10 of those turns are for the negative. So, I'm doing fine. I try to exercise, eat right, read a little bit every day of a book, watch a ballgame when I can, do stuff that I enjoy doing. I think more broadly, I think folks should take those numbers to heart that we put up earlier. And I'll review them again before as Judy addresses the monoclonal antibodies, no particular reason now. But when more time is on the clock, you think you've got this thing beaten, and it's, "Oh my God, here we go again." I got to put the mask back on or whatever it might be. It gets people. Who could who could blame them? And particularly, for folks who may be vulnerable to begin with. It has an outsized impact on them. So, there's no particular timing on why this particular day of September 15th is the day we raise it, but it's something we want to raise regularly. Judy, can you hit Dave's good question about monoclonal antibodies, in particular, on how they work up against the variant? And I think the answer is they work, but over to you.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Yeah. The recent experiences in Florida have proven that they are effective against the Delta variant. As you know, Florida had upwards to 15,000 to 20,000 cases in the hospital. And their use of monoclonal antibodies increased exponentially. So much to the point that there is a demand for monoclonal antibodies, the supply is getting limited. So, previously, as the supply was managed

through the local departments of health, the local State Departments of Health, and then it went direct to the providers. It is going to revert back to the Department of Health so that equitable distribution of monoclonal antibodies can be managed going forward. So, effective and very important that we make sure that it's equitably distributed in the state.

Governor Phil Murphy: I'll never figure out why certain things have become politicized and other things haven't been. But for all the noise around vaccines and masking, monoclonal antibodies have been universally embraced by leadership around the country. And that's a silver lining to all the challenges, I think, that we've seen. The number, Dave, you gave me reason to repeat it for everybody; 862-202-HELP, 862-202-HELP, or text NJHOPE to 51684, NJHOPE to 51684. Thank you for that. Michelle, back to you.

Michelle: Okay. And we will go to Daniel Munoz.

Governor Phil Murphy: Hello, Daniel.

Daniel Munoz, NJ BIZ: Hi, Governor, can you hear me?

Governor Phil Murphy: I can hear you.

Daniel Munoz, NJ BIZ: Hi, how are you doing?

Governor Phil Murphy: Good. How are you?

Daniel Munoz, NJ BIZ: I'm doing good, Governor. So, you've asked this Monday, but I'm still curious on your answer. Is it safe to attend crowded concerts and sporting events like at MetLife or Rutgers Football, maskless, even if they're outdoors, and even if you're vaccinated? With the EDA, the economic development authorities either relief is the 10 million going to be enough? Are there going to have to be further rounds like there were with the four rounds of COVID relief? And if so, would that be paid for by the state or that the federal government have to kick in at this point? I think it was you who had mentioned disaster assistance for homeowners and renters. Do you have the numbers on how much in FEMA or SBAA has gone for either two New Jersey businesses? With the lapse in federal unemployment benefits, are you expecting economic activity have been spending and sales tax to taper off? Or do you think it's going to, "Get people back to work?" And lastly, going back to Ida. Looking back, what would you have done differently about the storm and your response to it? Thanks.

Governor Phil Murphy: Listen, Judy and Tina will correct me if I'm wrong. If you're packed in, even if you're outside, and you're watching a ballgame or a concert, you're probably taking on some additional risks, as opposed to if you were sitting on your couch watching the thing on television. There's no other way to get around that. If you're inside, especially if you're near other people whose vaccination status you don't know, while you're walking to your seat, put your mask on. We do know the virus is a lot less lethal outside. We also know the mental, speaking of mental health, the joy to see a packed life at the Giants game on Sunday, we have to factor that in, as well. But we think what we have in place are the right protocols. And obviously, these are things that we continue to look at constantly. Is it possible the EDA would put more money on the street for small businesses that were impacted by Ida or Henri? I don't want to speak for [Tim Solomon] and his team. But the answer has got to be probably yes. However, the major disaster declaration unleashes not only individual assistance, but small business administration and other buckets of money. So, I would bet, and I give Tim and his team an enormous amount of credit here for putting that money on the table before we do about the major disaster declaration is a sort of bridge. And so, that's an important point I want to make. I think you asked, do we know the amount of money? Similar question to individuals, 27,000 homeowners, 10,000 renters, do we know either the amount of money or amount of businesses that are being addressed by either the EDA or the SBA? I don't have that number off the top of my head. Pat, maybe, if we don't, Daniel will follow up with you. Pat, do you happen to know that?

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: And that SBA process is just a little – it's not as immediate. So, I can, we did get briefed by the lead from the SBA on the delegation call the other day. So, that's an ongoing process. But as I get that, I could certainly push that through your office, Gov, to Daniel.

Governor Phil Murphy: Yeah. And on unemployment benefits, which ended the supplemental \$300, which ended on September 4th, so that's 11 days ago. What do we expect to see out of that? Listen, I hope it helps address the labor market challenges that we've had. I personally think it will have perhaps a modest impact

on that. I don't think it was a big driver to begin with. I think it probably was a factor. We will see. We'll know in time. I think more likely, it was cash in people's pocket that they now no longer have that they desperately need. So, my guess is just we may see an impact at economic activity. Our economy is still growing in a very high rate, the country's economy is still growing at a very high rate. I spoke with the CEO of a big financial services firm today. When you hear that research economists have lowered their outlook to a GDP growth of 5.5% annually, you take 5.5% anytime you could get it. It just happens to be lower than 7% or 7.5%. So, I think that'll be one of the factors. So, unless people – sorry, just to prove that we save every penny we can in New Jersey, I'm in a room. But if I don't get up to walk around, the lights go out. Forgive me for a second. There we go. I'm now back. That's yet another proof of point that we're not profitably spending money on things. Listen, for our response, Daniel, I've been asked this a number of times, and I'll give you a plus or minus what you've heard me say before. Just a review, in terms of Ida, we've organized the call for all of our county OEM folks with the National Weather Service. I think at 10:00 o'clock that morning, we activated the State Emergency Operations Center. I think a couple of hours later, as I recall, at noon, we communicated with the public throughout the day, including at our press conference, in other words, during the briefing that we had for having today, then in the afternoon into the evening. And obviously, as a general matter, not specific to Ida, after every one of these storms, we look for ways to improve and strengthen our capabilities. And we'll do it this case as we do in every case. So, that's what I would say to that. Thank you for the questions. And Michelle, back to you. Let's do a couple more if we could. Michelle, are you there?

Michelle: Yes. Ken Burns.

Governor Phil Murphy: Ken.

Ken Burns, WHYY: Good afternoon, Governor.

Governor Phil Murphy: Hey, Ken, how are you man?

Ken Burns, WHYY: I'm well. And it looks like for once, I'll be much later than our colleague, Mr. Matthau. Serious question about monoclonal antibodies, and you had mentioned that you had talked about it early on in the pandemic. I know the commissioner has mentioned Florida as where the other variant, the treatment was successful. But practically, what does that look like in New Jersey? Where can people get this treatment? And does the state have – I know Florida had clinics-based setup on their own to have the monoclonal antibody clinics. Is the state looking to do similar at some point?

Governor Phil Murphy: Is that it?

Ken Burns, WHYY: That's it.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thanks, Ken. Judy, do you mind tackling that, and Tina could fill in any color?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Yeah. At this point, we expect that the monoclonal antibodies will be administered at our hospitals. We are not planning on putting up any clinics for monoclonal antibodies.

Governor Phil Murphy: And again, Judy, the place to go is your medical – whoever is covering as your medical professional or a hospital?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Yeah. Well, go to your health care provider. In most cases, your health care provider will connect you with the hospital for your monoclonal antibodies.

Governor Phil Murphy: Got it. Pat tells me that you've had 161 Small Business Association, SBA applications have been received so far, no loans approved as of today, and may be overtime, not necessarily at every one of our gatherings. But maybe Pat, we could update folks on some cadence on both individual assistance and in businesses. Thank you for that. Thank you for Ken. Let's do a couple more if we could. Back to you, Michelle.

Michelle: Sure. Next, we'll go to Nikita.

Governor Phil Murphy: Nikita, I miss you. How are you?

Nikita Biryukov, New Jersey Monitor: I'm doing well, governor, yourself up?

Governor Phil Murphy: I'm well. I should say I miss you. So, that is until I hear what your question is and then I'll reassess that judgment depending on what it is.

Nikita Biryukov, New Jersey Globe: Sure. So, I've got three for you today. How does the state plan to repay the \$185 million federal unemployment compensation loan at Suffolk where all that money come from, and what is the expected cost of the loan in the long run? Next, new vaccinations in the first two weeks of September are about 40 points lower than they were in the same period in August. Are you ascribing that drop to Ida and Labor Day? And how big of a concern is that decrease? And lastly, in your view, does the State need additional incentive programs to bolster the ranks of teachers in high-demand subject areas like Math, Science and ESL?

Governor Phil Murphy: Good questions. Parimal, I don't have a crisp answer for the \$185 million. If you do not, we'll get back to you Nikita. But Parimal, do you want to add?

Parimal Garg: Yeah. We'll circle back with Nikita.

Governor Phil Murphy: Okay, thank you for that. I think among other things, and Judy and Tina could correct me, we had some data issues on the vaccination numbers. I was looking at day to day last week, even earlier to this week, 3,000 to 4,000, and all of a sudden, a big jump. So, I think part of this may be data, but I'll defer to Judy. I do think it's a combination of storm, back to school, holiday weekend. But we're grinding away, we're still knocking on doors, and we're still doing everything we can to get it. And I'd say lastly, open minded, you have to be. We are the state of innovation. That is our forte. That's not to say that we're not good. When I say STEM, the humanitarian, the scholars out there, and the artists will want me to say steam, and we do have an extraordinary social science, Humanities, Arts and Letters reputation as well. But in the cold-blooded economic development sense, it's the innovation space of science, tech, engineering, math. And if we need to be creative to funnel a stronger pipeline into those fields, or other fields, color be or absolutely openminded to work on that. That would obviously be my guess, is with the big teachers' unions and institutions of higher education. Judy or Tina, anything you want to add on the flagging vaccination numbers that we've seen in early September?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Yeah. I think that it's a combination of all of the factors that you enumerated, Governor. Some data lags, which by the way, we catch up every day, when you think of over 1,500 outlets in New Jersey to provide vaccinations, managing all of the inputs from that sometimes there's some lag. But we had holiday, we had bad weather, all of that affects, and vacations, all of that affects vaccination uptake.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you for that. Thanks for, Nikita. Michelle, let's do one more if that's all right.

Michelle: Yes. Last one will be Alex Zdan.

Governor Phil Murphy: Alex, good afternoon.

Alex Zdan, News 12 NJ: Good afternoon, Governor. Can you hear me?

Governor Phil Murphy: Yeah.

Alex Zdan, News 12 NJ: I wanted to ask you first. Forgive me if Daniel already asked this because I didn't hear his questions. Are you going to allow the DEP to conduct an emergency bear hunt? The reason for this apparently is because the bear population in New Jersey has doubled in the past three years. Doesn't that once and for all show that we do need a bear hunt in this state? For the commissioner, I just want to make sure that we're on the same page. Is it two or three students that are not from the same home with COVID that constitute an in-school outbreak? And is it currently –

Governor Phil Murphy: It's three, Alex.

Alex Zdan, News 12 NJ: It's three?

Governor Phil Murphy: Yep.

Alex Zdan: Is that a change from last year? I believe it was two last year. Correct me if I'm wrong, are you changing the standards in how you're counting these? And are there any reports of in-school transmission of COVID right now? For the colonel, I noticed you were talking about national numbers yesterday. Do you have

state numbers on how many members of law enforcement in New Jersey have died due to COVID-19? And finally, for the governor, just in general on the campaign, how do you assess where you are six, seven weeks out? How much time do you anticipate spending campaigning down the stretch? And do you believe the Club for Growth poll that shows you and Jack Ciattarelli neck and neck, or the polls from earlier this summer that showed you with a double-digit lead? Are you really going to campaign like you're 10 points behind because it looks like either way, you're not?

Governor Phil Murphy: Several things, there will be no bear hunt this year, period. I can say that definitively. And we will, and I know Shawn LaTourette and his team are committed to this. We put money in the budget. In fact, to support this, we are committed to non-lethal humane, but smart and safe needs to control the population, the bear population. I will let Tina and Judy answer the question on the number of kids or persons I should say, because it's also educators and staff that constitute an outbreak this year versus last. And I think you may have missed that earlier on Alex, there are six outbreaks in the state impacting 20 persons, mix of students and

staff. And again, under the category, I'd rather stay away from politics on this. Obviously, I'm in the middle of running for reelection. I don't spend a whole lot of time that never have looking at polls, and the overwhelming amount of my time. Although, I do spend time campaigning, the overwhelming amount of my time, which I think folks would want me to be doing is focused on governing the state. When you've got the challenges that we have, particularly, the pandemic or the recovery from it, and mother nature, and other issues thrown in our way, my overwhelming focus is on governing the state and it will continue to be. Pat, I know what memorialized members of law enforcement, any idea the numbers we've lost to COVID?

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: I can get that to you, Alex. We were keeping a running tally on not only obviously, positive tests, but as well as law enforcement. So, I could probably have that to you by this afternoon.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you, Pat. And Judy and Tina, any comment on the three-person parameter for an outbreak in one of our schools?

State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan: Yeah. This percentage changed from last year's definition of this in-person in-school outbreak. We that that, we increased to three cases, because we wanted to align with CDC's changes in their definitions of the in-school outbreak. And the numbers that the commissioner had mentioned earlier, the six outbreaks, these did represent in-school transmission outbreaks.

Governor Phil Murphy: Good clarification. So, thank you for that. That's all for today, again, to our Jewish brothers and sisters. G'mar chatima tova. We wish you a an easy and meaningful fast for Yom Kippur. On behalf of Judy, and Tina, and Pat, and the rest of our team, we thank you for joining us virtually. We will be together unless you hear otherwise. A couple of times again next week, and I think we'll stick, at least until we get a little bit more through this Delta surge, and a little bit better handle on what back to school is looking like. We'll probably stay with the two a week cadence for at least the next few weeks. So, assume that will be Monday and Wednesday at 1:00, and that will include unless again, you hear otherwise in-person in both cases. Thank you all. God bless, stay safe.

Governor Phil Murphy

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