

Governor Phil Murphy

# TRANSCRIPT: May 1st, 2020 Coronavirus Briefing Media

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Holding a COVID-19 briefing. WATCH:



**Governor Phil Murphy:** Good afternoon, everyone. Honored to be joined by the woman on my right, who needs no introduction, the Commissioner of the Department of Health Judy Persichilli. To her right, the State's Epidemiologist, another person who is known to everyone, Dr. Christina Tan. To my left, the Superintendent of the State Police, Colonel Patrick Callahan. Director of the Department of Homeland Security and Preparedness, Jared Maples is in the house. Good afternoon, everybody.

I want to start, if I can, by giving a fuller picture of the efforts at the Department of Labor to get unemployment benefits into the hands of every worker who deserves them. Over the past two weeks, the department has added 193,000 to the rolls of unemployed workers receiving benefits, for a total of 622,000 people now receiving unemployment benefits from our state. Another \$0.5 billion in payments went out the door last week for a total of \$1.4 billion and rising. The unresolved claims are mostly -- and I say mostly, not entirely, but mostly -- from the pool of approximately 200,000 individuals who are self-employed independent contractors or gig workers who filed for benefits under the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Program, or PUA. Those claims are starting to be processed literally today and will be over the weekend, bringing hundreds of millions of additional dollars to New Jerseyans' wallets and significantly reducing the number of claimants who had not yet received benefits.

We will update you when we can on the department's progress, but the department can only release new unemployment numbers on Thursdays and that is according to the US Department of Labor rules. It is also important to remember that even in normal times, it takes three weeks, approximately, to process an unemployment claim after all the required information is received. When claims are coming in in the tens or hundreds of thousands a week, the denominator of those who have not received benefits yet is always going to be a big number. It takes longer when there is missing income information or when there's a separate claim filed in another state.

But I note, as I've said before, a couple of things. Number one, we appreciate your patience, and we appreciate even your frustration as you've been waiting to get through. But also as importantly, that every New Jerseyan eligible for unemployment benefits will receive every dollar, every penny they qualify for.

Let's switch gears and go to today's numbers, and let this never be just about numbers. Today, we're announcing another 2,651 positive test results for a statewide total of 121,190. If you look at the graph, these numbers keep moving over time, and overall in the right direction. As I mentioned on Monday, we can't get distracted by one day spikes or drops, we have to look at the trend lines. Likewise, the map of New Jersey we have turned to daily continues to get lighter as the rate of doubling of new cases continues to slow.

And again, the counties that are the least amount of days to double continue to be in the south. Two things about those counties and Judy would want me to say this, number one, they have meaningful cases but much fewer cases there than they do in those northern counties. And secondly, the virus, as we have always signaled, is migrating, including down to the southern counties. More on that in a second.

And it bears repeating, I can't say this strongly enough, this weekend will be a huge test for all of us as to whether or not we stay on this trajectory. As we reopen our parks and as some of you had back to the golf course, social distancing is going to be the watchword. We will be closely monitoring actions across the entire weekend. I know the overwhelming majority of you will head out, will do the right things and keep our parks therefore open going forward. But if we see what we saw, and this was extremely troubling, over the first weekend in April when we had good weather and we closed the parks after that, we saw a lot of the so-called knucklehead behavior with people ignoring social distancing. If we see that again, we will not hesitate, I don't say this with any joy, to reclose the parks. I sincerely do not want to do that. I recognize we all want to be out in the fresh air and sunshine. That includes me, by the way, but we are not out of the woods yet. We all still have to use common sense. So please, no gatherings. Stay at least six feet apart. Wear, we're not making you but I'm asking you, to wear a face covering. And on the golf side, similar, but there's a lot of other specifics we need you to adhere to like one person per cart, twosomes, etc. You can look that up in our Executive Order. We are trusting in you to keep up with your social distancing, just as you have been trusting in us in this battle against COVID-19. Let's show everybody how New Jersey responds. By the way, and so far, overwhelmingly, so good. So please, let's have a big weekend together.

In our healthcare system, as of last night's reporting, there were 5,972 patients hospitalized for COVID-19. This number happily continues to decrease but let's remember folks, it is still just under 6,000 people in a hospital bed right now with COVID-19. This graph shows by region how many patients our hospital are treating. North Jersey and Central Jersey, as you can see, continue to see a downward trend and South Jersey is up a bit, but it's seen a relative leveling over the past five days. Let's stay on this for a second.

This is what we saw a couple of days ago when we showed you, and note not just the shape of the curves, but also the amount of cases. So you see in the north, you've got 3,000 and something it looks like, hospitalizations. As of the moment you've got high 1,700 or so in the central region. You've got, even though the curve is not going down yet, it's beginning to flatten in the south, it is still below 1,000 in total. Our hope is not only that that curve in the South, that the North and Central continue to flatten, and the South levels and flattens and the numbers overall stay low.

Our field medical stations reported 46 patients and they have treated a total of 380 of our fellow New Jerseyans since opening. There were 1,724 patients reported in either critical or intensive care, and this continues the overall trend from last week. Ventilator use currently stands at 1,286 and this is relatively, Judy, I think unchanged since yesterday. There were 532 new hospitalizations yesterday and on discharges, 571 live patients were released from our hospitals yesterday, another day-over-day increase. Pause there for a second. 532 people between 10:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. entered a hospital in New Jersey. I want to open this

place up as fast as anybody, but we have to keep in mind, there are still a lot of people in hospitals and going into hospitals. The numbers are better, but they're not zero and we need to get them there as fast as possible. Again, the numbers are showing positive trends. And these are the trends that we will need to see carried over in the coming weeks if we are to put ourselves on that road back and begin the restart of our economy.

And again, I understand that people and businesses are anxious for a more specific timetable for when we can restart and begin to move forward. By the way, so am I. It's this simple. In addition to the precious lives, data determines dates. That means when we see our benchmarks on key factors like testing, or hospitalizations, we can begin considering a specific timetable. But again, data determines dates. I cannot stress enough how big a test this weekend will be in terms of keeping these trend lines moving in the right direction.

And if you will, essentially an experiment on how we can together responsibly take that step forward, even though it may be a baby step, it's an important one, to get into our parks, to play golf, to see how we do. And if we do well together, then we can most likely take other steps sooner than later. So let's do this together, folks.

Today, with the heaviest of hearts, as we do every day, we are reporting 311 additional deaths from COVID-19. Our statewide total is now unspeakably 7,538 precious lives lost. As is our practice, let's honor some of those precious souls who we have lost.

First, let's bring up a giant, Dr. Harvey Hirsch, a longtime and beloved pediatrician at the Center for Health Education Medicine and Dentistry in Lakewood. He was also a fixture at Monmouth Medical Center. My wife was formerly on the board there, and while she did not know him personally, she said he was quote-unquote, a legend at Monmouth Medical. He was known for his kindness and compassion and the respect he showed his patients and their families.

He had been a practicing pediatrician for more than 30 years, recognized by New Jersey Monthly Magazine with its Top Doctor award in 2011, and by New Jersey Family Magazine as our state's favorite kids doctor in 2012. Look at the smile, Judy, look at the stethoscope, look at the tie. What a mensch. Despite concerns about his being exposed to COVID-19, he insisted on continuing to care for every patient who came for help, regardless, by the way, of whether or not they were a regular patient. And we lost him to COVID-19 on Tuesday.

To Dr. Hirsch's wife, Mrs. Yehuda Simca Hirsch, with whom I had the great honor of speaking last night, she said a blessing for her was that all of their children were in and around her in Lakewood, and to everyone he cared for, may his memory be a blessing.

Matthew Stehr of Denville. Matthew looks like he's in a Mission Impossible movie there. Look at that. I love that. He spent nearly 18 years working in the Morris County Clerk's Office, most recently as assistant supervisor in the registry department, tracking real estate and historical documents. He is the first Morris County employee to pass from COVID-19. County Clerk Anne Grossi recall Matt as a "exemplary employee with genuine enthusiasm, and as someone who took on any task." In fact, Matt enjoyed undertaking labor-intensive projects like a complete reorganization of the County Clerk's map room, as well as the cataloguing of county real estate and historical records.

I spoke with Matt's mother Marnie yesterday, and that was, as you could imagine, a tough conversation to express our condolences to her and her family and all of Matt's friends. In fact, Matt's brother Michael, his big brother Michael, is also battling COVID-19 and recently was moved out of the ICU, and so please, everybody pray for Michael's continued recovery. His little brother Matt was only 38 years old and his mom described what it was like telling big brother Michael about his little brother's passing, and it doesn't get any more emotional than that. God bless them all.

And this is Cherie La Pelusa. She was the beloved wife of a friend, Bayonne Third Ward Councilman Gary La Pelusa. Cherie was a Bayonne original, born and raised. She was co-owner of her husband's landscaping business and she also ran his civic association, organizing food and toy drives and dinners to celebrate the people making a difference in the community. Gary is a guy that I've walked the streets of Bayonne with together on more than one occasion. Along with her husband, Gary, Cherie leaves behind her daughters, Jennifer, Giana, and two sons, David and Gary Jr. As Gary said to me, we've got four kids, three adults and a 12-year-old, and Giana is the 12-year-old. To each of the four of them and to Gary, our hearts and prayers go

out to you. By the way, Cherie was only 53 years old. It was in the midst of the battle of her life, not just with her own health, but her mom is also battling this awful thing and it was unspeakable. Gary said there she was, trying to save her mom's life and in fact, she lost her own. So to Cherie, to Gary, to Cherie's mom who's in our prayers, to their four wonderful kids and everybody they touched in Bayonne and beyond, God bless you all.

These are three more of the faces COVID-19 has forever taken from us. We remember each and every single one. Again, as I said yesterday more New Jerseyans than we have lost in most of our nation's wars, and other cataclysmic events combined. It's a staggering toll. And I remind you that our flags continue to fly at half-staff for all of them. And today, which is the first time this has ever happened since I've been Governor, I signed an Executive Order that the flags today, in addition to all the victims of COVID-19, would be flying at half-staff in the memory of former First Lady Debbie Kean, who passed last weekend. So to her, as our state's former First Lady and to her husband, the former Governor and their children, including Senator Kean, God bless each and every one of them and God bless the families of those who have been lost, and the memories and the blessings of those who have been lost to COVID-19. May we all together continue our work together to stop this awful scourge and bring this to an end.

Switching gears, today I am signing an Executive Order relaxing the in-person requirements for both the solemnization of marriage licenses for couples and for working papers for minors. On marriages, wedding ceremonies will be allowed to be held using video conferencing technology with certain safeguards. Municipalities are still permitted to allow in-person ceremonies but subject to social distancing, but they will not be required to do so. Even in these times, there are joyous occasions like marriages that we can still celebrate safely and smartly.

And for working papers, the requirement that the school district designated individual give in-person signoff is waived for this emergency. Obviously, the fact that our schools remain closed has made getting required signoffs on these papers challenging for young people who wish to work. And as today is May 1, May Day, I might add, I want to remind all renters that under an Executive Order I signed last week, you're able to have your security deposit used to cover your rent, either in part or in full.

I read an op-ed by a citizen today in the Asbury Park Press that called me a despot. I read the first couple of paragraphs to determine why I would be considered a despot. It was the fact that I allowed folks to get access to their security deposit. Okay.

I also want to reiterate that no renters are to be threatened with eviction throughout this emergency and under no circumstances may any landlord even attempt to evict a tenant. No one should fear losing their home. In fact, we have set up a standalone page for renters and landlords on our information hub, [covid19.nj.gov/renter](https://covid19.nj.gov/renter). I encourage you to make that your first stop.

Before I turn things over to Judy, I want to give a couple of well-deserved thank yous to some of our fellow New Jerseyans who continue to pitch in to help us through this emergency. First, let's meet Brooklyn Sherrill and Sam Halseth of Ocean City. They own a digital marketing firm called Shoreview Creative, but they're taking their creativity in new directions by organizing an eBay auction of one-of-a-kind, custom-painted sneakers. And all proceeds will go to the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund for the World Health Organization. And by the way, this is kind of cool. Neither Brooklyn nor Sam are native New Jerseyans. They moved here two years ago, each of them and their families from Minnesota, but they are now full-fledged members of our New Jersey family. And to each of them, New Jersey thanks you. If you look carefully, I assume that's Sam on the right, I just hope Michelangelo does not sue for copyright infringement. I think that's a version of the Sistine Chapel ceiling, but those are extraordinary. Look at them, just alive with energy. Very cool sneakers, give them your attention and sign up and participate in that auction and raise some money for an incredibly good cause.

And finally, here's one from my neck of the woods, and a place I know well, the Two River Theater in Red Bank. To support healthcare and social workers across Monmouth County, the costume shop staff, led by Leslie Sorenson, has taken to repurposing materials and outfits from past shows into masks. Additionally, the theater has been keeping its art mission alive by producing its own online daily artist features, at-home activities for kids and adults, and live digital classes and workshops. So to everyone at the Two River Theater, and a particular shout out to founder Joan Rechnitz, God bless her late husband Bob Rechnitz who passed

not that long ago, to Artistic Director, another dear friend, John Dias, to everybody there, thank you for all you're doing to keep the arts alive and well, even if we can't visit you in person, which I hope we can do sometime soon.

And that's as good a place as any to get ready to turn the program over. But before I do, again, I want to say again, please, remember this weekend is going to be an important one for us, and an important sign for how we move forward and at what pace we move forward and get ourselves on the road back to restart and recovering. When the parks open tomorrow, please act responsibly and follow the rules and precautions. I want us all to be able to enjoy our parks together, even if we have to remain six feet apart and even if we have to speak through face coverings. What I don't want to do, please God, I don't want to have to close those parks again. So let's do what you've been doing so extraordinarily well for these past so many weeks. Let's make this work together. And with that, 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. Good afternoon. With the opening of parks and golf courses this weekend, I think it's time to remind you all of our basics. Visit parks that are close to your home. Stay at least six feet from others. Bring hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Wash your hands frequently. Face masks, cloth ones, are strongly encouraged. Practice respiratory etiquette. Avoid gathering with others outside of your household. Don't visit crowded parks where you cannot appropriately distance from others. Don't, obviously, visit a park if you're sick or if you have recently been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. Don't use the playground or participate in organized sports or congregate with others. Do not share your golf carts. Social distancing has helped us slow the spread of this virus. I know we're all eager, myself included, to resume normal activities and gather with our friends and families again. But we cannot abandon these vital measures that have helped us protect one another.

Last evening, as reported, our hospitals reported 5,972 hospitalizations of COVID-19. This number has been in a steady decline. It is down 28%. From a high of 8,293 individuals hospitalized on April 14. There are 1,724 individuals in critical care. 75% of those individuals are on ventilators, which is slightly up from yesterday. Today we're reporting 2,651 new cases, for a total of 121,190 cases in the state. And we're reporting 311 additional deaths for a total of 7,538 fatalities.

The breakdown of deaths by race and ethnicity is as follows: White 52.6%, Black 19.6%, Hispanic 17.3%, Asian 5.3%, other 5.2%. There are now 498 long-term care facilities, assisted living facilities, dementia homes in the state that are reporting individuals with COVID-19.

At the state veterans homes, among a census of 696 residents collectively, there have been 327 residents that have tested positive and there have been four additional deaths from yesterday; two from Menlo Park and two from Paramus. At our state psychiatric hospitals, 161 patients have tested positive and there have been nine deaths among patients with a census of 1,257 and that has not changed for the last several days.

According to our lab data, 229,693 individuals have been tested; 94,338 have returned positive for a positivity rate of 41.7%. That concludes my daily report. Again, please continue to follow social distancing guidelines, it's making a difference. Stay connected, stay safe and stay healthy.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Judy, thank you for that and thank you for everything. The top counties, as we normally hit in terms of total positive cases, Bergen followed by Hudson, Essex, Passaic, Union, Middlesex. I had an exchange this morning with Mayor Brian Stack in Union City. We've said this, the curves continue to go in the right direction, but you're piling up every day. And again, we're expanding testing dramatically so that's part of the reason, but we're not out of the woods yet.

The positivity number, just to remind everybody, it's now really going on two weeks that that's begun, drift is the word I would use. It's been drifting from a high of around 45% down to about 41.1% today. And thank you for the reminders on the little stuff that we have to do. The very basic things that we have to make sure we're continuing to do. Let's not lose track of that. Staying away from each other, wearing face coverings, good hygiene, those are all the best weapons we've gotten, so thank you for that.

Another guy who I don't know where we'd be without, Pat Callahan, please update us on compliance, on PPE infrastructure, other matters. I know there's one situation in particular you wanted to give some clarity to that happened in Trenton here last night, so please.

**State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan:** Yes, sir. Thank you, Governor. With regard to overnight compliance, Newark Police Department issued 69 EO violations and closed one non-essential business. In Point Pleasant, one subject was cited for having the gym open, allowing clients to exercise. In New Brunswick, one subject was cited for the EO violation, failing to disperse. In Passaic, a subject also failed to disperse and was cited for an EO violation. In Mansfield Township, Warren County, the owner of a nail salon was cited for operating a non-essential business. In Paterson, the owner was cited for having a non-essential furniture store open. In Paterson, two subjects were cited for also failing to disperse. In Passaic, the owner as well as two customers were cited in violation of the EO for one, the owner having a massage parlor open, and to the two customers inside for being in it when the police arrived.

In Clinton, I'll end with this one because it segues into another issue in Clinton. An elderly subject was contacted, and this is a scam that we've seen a lot, it's not new but I think the social distancing and physical and psychological isolation is letting those prey upon our elderly with regard to what's referred to as a bail scam, saying that her grandson was lodged in bail and needed \$5,000. The subject did actually put \$5,000 in the mail. That was subsequently stopped by the US Postal Service, but I just want to put it out there from a situational awareness no one should be sending via mail or wiring funding. I know the Attorney General, the task force they put together with regard to fraud are looking into this. And again, it's not a particularly new scam, but I think they're preying upon the elderly in a time when that isolation leads to the elderly wanting to take care of their loved one. I just flag that for everybody out there.

And lastly, to the Governor's point with regard to the incident last night at the Anderson Funeral Home, just to clarify a few facts with regards to that. There was a total of 18 decedents, not 19 as previously reported. State Police personnel, in addition to Trenton Police and the Mercer County Prosecutor's Office did respond there. There was not be found anything of any criminal violation. After the assessment done by State Police personnel and the others there, the Anderson Funeral Home transported 11 of those decedents to the central temporary morgue site. I think it should be noted that Anderson had previously used that temporary morgue site as well, so they did know it was there. This was simply a case where they just got overwhelmed. Seven of the decedents were permitted to remain there because their funeral services are being held over the course of the next three days.

And in response to that, we had re-messaged what we had put out over the last few weeks to the Funeral Directors Association, New Jersey Hospital Association, long-term care, as well as our county OEMs. All of the guidance that we put into the efforts, and I know you've heard me speak to it over the past several weeks on mortuary affairs, not a topic we want to discuss. But we have spent a lot of time and resources to help assist all of those that are struggling with the deaths associated with this brutal virus. I just wanted to remind everybody of that and set the record straight with regard to what happened last night at Anderson Funeral Home. Governor.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Pat, thank you and I appreciate your doing that. Two quick comments. We'll start, Brendan, over here with Dustin. Before we do go to questions, two quick points. Number one on schools, I can save you the questions. We'll give you word early week. My hope is on Monday as to what we're going to do about schools. So we've promised, we've said, again, for everybody, to remind them that we have said that we're on remote learning until at least May 15. We'll let folks know at latest on May 15 what the balance of this school year looks like. We would hope to give you our guidance not on May 15, but I would hope Monday or Tuesday. I'm hoping on Monday, May 4.

Secondly, I think Judy and Pat and Christina, it may bear repeating just reading from the Executive Orders as it relates to parks and golf. I just want to make sure folks aren't surprised by things when they show up. So picnic areas, playgrounds, exercise stations and equipment, pavilions, restrooms, other buildings, facilities, visitors centers will remain closed. So when you show up at the park, don't assume that stuff's going to be opened. Parking will be limited to 50% of maximum capacity. No picnicking, social distancing, as Judy said, must be practiced, except only with immediate family members. No organized or contact activities or sports, no gatherings. We're not making you, but we are strongly recommending that you have a face covering. That's sort of the park picture. Please expect that. When you show up, expect that those are going to be the rules of the road.

As it relates to golf, I don't know that we've ever read this so I'm going to just read this out for you. Golfers who are getting ready for tomorrow, golf courses are open so long as they adopt minimum social distancing policies that include, and this is what is included in that: electronic or telephone reservation and payment systems, extended tee times that are 16 minutes apart, limiting the use of golf carts to one person, requiring frequent and after-use sanitization of high-touch areas such as restrooms, range buckets, golf carts and pushcarts, implementing measures restricting the touching of golf holes and flags such as putting pins in the hole, requiring the flag stay in, and provide player education on not touching the flag. Closing golf center buildings, pro shops and other buildings and amenities, removing furniture like benches, water coolers, and ball washers from the course, discontinuing clubs and equipment rentals, limited groups to two players unless the foursome consists of immediate family, etc.

Again, let's start there. Don't be surprised when those are the parameters when you show up tomorrow. And again, like everything else in life, assuming we keep these curves going in the right direction and you all comply by the rules of the road, slowly but surely, we'll be able to continue to expand either some of those rules as specific to parks or golf, and maybe as importantly, if not more so, take other steps based on hopefully a successful weekend. Thank you all for listening, as always. Let's start with Dustin.

#### Q&A Session

**Dustin Racioppi, Bergen Record:** Thanks. Can you detail where the state stands on contact tracing and whether you know what percentage of people have had their contacts traced? On beaches, does the state have any recommendation on when they should open? I know that's a town-by-town decision, but do you have any general recommendations on what restrictions should be in place? Do you have an opinion on towns that have taken action or are considering restricting beach access to residents only?

And then I have two questions from the press of Atlantic City. For the Health Commissioner, Hamilton Center for Rehabilitation has 147 infections, one of the highest in the state. Have you figured out what led to the dramatic increase in the number of cases at that facility in such a short amount of time? Also, is this facility accepting patients that have tested positive for the virus?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I'll give you a couple of thoughts. Again, the general comment on contact tracing is it's a combination of boots on the ground and technology to get it to the place, alongside testing, that we are going to feel confident and be able to have you feel confident that we've got the right healthcare infrastructure in place, including a plan for isolation. Judy can comment about what's been done so far, but those are sort of benchmarks. It's part of our road to recovery. That's one of the important points on there. I don't have a crisp answer in terms of how many boots nor which technology, but that's sort of the general thought.

Beaches are a local decision, with the exception of Island Beach. I believe Matt Platkin is with us, our Chief Counsel, will tell us that a township actually cannot legally restrict folks from outside of their township. That's actually not within their right to do so. But my guess is we'll be giving you pretty good and pretty specific guidance on beaches, even the overwhelming amount of which are not in our purview, but not yet. Would you add anything to that, Matt?

**Chief Counsel Matt Platkin:** That's perfect.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Okay, I'm going to sign up for law school at night here on that basis. Judy, anything on contact tracing and/or, was it a nursing home specifically that you asked about, Dustin? Thank you. Christina.

**State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan:** About the contact tracing, we just want to remind everybody that our local health department, ever since this has been an issue in New Jersey, and a lot of us have been working on this actually since around January, February, just to keep that in mind. We have had contact tracing efforts going on for a very long time. What the state is in the process of doing right now is, in anticipation of potentially identifying more cases because we're ramping up testing, so you can test and you'll invariably find more cases. We're in the process of trying to augment our contact tracing, both in terms of the manpower that would help assist with doing the contact tracing, because no matter what, you cannot replace that human element of doing the contact tracing. This is to help assist the already fantastic efforts that the local health departments have been doing.

I would be remiss by not saying that the local health departments have also been, during this entire time, have been identifying their own resources. They've already been augmenting their staff at the local level as well. What we want to do is we want to help them in the event that they need to meet more surge. We also want to develop technology solutions that will help assist and to standardize and to augment, again, those contact tracing efforts. Because there's going to be a lot of data that has to be managed and that would be the intent of having these additional data technology supports to assist the local efforts.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Judy, on this particular home?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** I can't speak to the particular home, I could probably look it up. But I can speak to the process that we're using for our long-term care. As you all know, and I've reported, we looked at 16 facilities in the south, and we are following up. The process is test and then retest, all the negatives, so that we know exactly the status of the residents and the staff in long-term care facilities. As usual, we've separated out the state into North, Central and South. And we will be rolling out testing, I think in about 30 additional long-term care facilities over the next week. That's in collaboration with some of our health systems, similar to what we did in South Jersey, but it will be a test and a retest, and there is indication that for long-term care, over the long haul, there will be constant testing and retesting and retesting.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** We could get back to you, I assume, on the specifics, Dustin, if Mahen can keep that in mind, it would be great. Sir, do you have anything back there? Do you have something?

**Dave Schatz, New Brunswick Today:** Yes. Hi. Dave Schatz here with New Brunswick today. Thank you. I wanted to really acknowledge you for your extreme energy and leadership. This extreme focus is impressive in my mind, and thanks to the whole team.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Thank you. That usually comes with a "but".

**Dave Schatz, New Brunswick Today:** I was wondering if you can give a little overview on the monetary policy and put it into perspective of helping just the general layperson understand, I guess, the whole easing of credit and the Federal Reserve's actions.

Yesterday, when you spoke with the President, you said it was a partnership and we'd need \$20 billion or \$30 billion. Is that part of what the Federal Reserve is doing? Are we getting money in combination with New York, with the improvement authority? Are we going to come out, you know, just totally in debt or is it aid?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** So may I? Thank you. Thanks for your good words. This is a healthcare crisis unlike anything this state has ever seen, and I think you could say, with the same amount of conviction, that the country has ever seen. And you might be able to say the same comment about the world. Our responsibility is New Jersey and it is a healthcare crisis unlike any, and it has led to an economic crisis, unlike any. That includes both expenses that are going up, up and up because we are at the frontlines, whether you're unemployed or you're a small business, or you're a transit system, or a hospital system, or you're a municipality, county, or in our case, a state. Expenses are going up and revenues have fallen, as you've seen by any metric, either in our state or in the country, off a cliff. So the hole is enormous.

Our best guess is that that hole, between now and the end of next year's fiscal year, so this is between May 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021, somewhere in that range. We can't say pinpoint of a hole of \$20 billion to \$30 billion either created by increased expenses, foregone revenues, or a combination of each. And as I mentioned yesterday, I have to certify a budget including that the revenues that we put in a budget are adequate to meet the expenses. So in a funny way, forgone revenues is in fact a different way to say that is an inability to finance our expenditures and outlays.

The levers that we can pull, other than getting our economy open again and righting the ship, which we will do responsibly, but again, remember public health creates economic health and it's got to be in that order. Some of the levers that we either aren't pulling or need to pull would be, number one, the interpretation of the CARES Act, which was signed I think five weeks ago today, that Matt has been leading with the US Treasury. We've made some good progress. They're coming out with more guidance, I think early week. We just hope that guidance allows us to use all the money that we need to use from that. That's one lever. It's a fraction of what we ultimately need.

Another big lever is another bill to make its way through Congress, both the House and the Senate and to be signed by the President, a bill that we desperately need to include direct cash assistance for states. And again, as I made clear yesterday in the White House, and I would say again today, this isn't about our legacy issues. I got elected to fix the economy and to address the legacy issues that had built up over decades from both sides of the aisle, by the way, and we had made an enormous amount of progress in our two-plus years on record pension payments, managing indebtedness, rainy day funds, etc. We had a long way to go, but we have a plan. We had a plan and we have a plan.

As I mentioned several times now, our friend Mike Tyson says everyone's got a plan until you get punched in the face. What we need help with is recovering from the punch in the face. This is to help us to allow us to continue to have educators, firefighters, police, EMS, frontline responders at the point of attack, to allow us to continue to have them on the payroll. That's where that \$20 billion to \$30 billion number comes from.

The alternative is an awful result, not just for New Jersey but for America. How can we even fathom a state where we don't have enough firefighters, police, educators, EMS folks? And if that weren't enough, that those folks are then all unemployed? That's just an alternative none of us can accept, and so we need, the second lever is we need a very significant amount of money not to deal with our legacy issues. We've got a plan for that. But with the here and now, to deal with our response to this awful virus.

And then the third piece, and I've gone on too long, is the Federal Reserve did in fact, announce four or five weeks ago, for the first time ever, put forward a liquidity program that would allow them and envision them to buy municipal bonds. That is very attractive for us. In fact, we discussed it in the White House with the President and his Economic Advisor Larry Kudlow yesterday and we've got some follow up on the back of that. Having the ability to borrow, even if it's a bridge borrowing, to allow us to borrow that and then the Federal Direct Cash Assistance, God willing, can come in and help us pay that debt down. A recovering economy can help us get back on our feet and help us responsibly pay that debt down.

I don't wake up in the morning wanting to borrow more money. In fact, we've spent over two years reducing our indebtedness, reducing our structural deficits. But this is a crisis unlike any other. We need to have the ability to access that, we need our legislative brothers and sisters to come along with us in that regard. We've made good progress, we need to make more progress. I could go on but those are the three or four big levers. The CARES Act, we need a ton more federal direct cash assistance, we need access to that Federal Reserve borrowing window, and ultimately and probably most importantly, we need an economy that's recovering, getting back on its feet and generating again the sort of revenue that we have been generating to allow us to pay our bills. Thank you for that.

We'll come down to Elise, please.

**Elise Young, Bloomberg:** Good afternoon. The new supplies that were promised yesterday, the test kits and the swabs and the PPE, will that be distributed throughout the state? And is it coming via Operation Airbridge? And my second question, are we seeing an uptick in non-essential businesses staying open? You know, jumping the gun on when they could open legally? And how worrisome is that if that's a trend? Thank you.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I believe this is accurate, and Pat will correct me on the first one. I think we have the supplies, I believe. Either we have them or they're about – I believe they're all there.

**State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan:** If they haven't hit the warehouse, they're en route, but it is not Operation – it's not Airbridge. And that strategy, Elise, is being constructed as to the Governor's always been saying, we're trying to double our testing capacity so that's being worked at right now.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** But I believe we've got them? And we'll come back, Mahen, come back to Elise if you could, if I'm wrong about that. How they'll be distributed is to be determined. I think you may have heard me say yesterday, Elise, that we're working on the testing strategy. That's led by Judy, with a particular emphasis on things like, particularly deeply affected communities, so our corrections system, developmental disabilities homes, psychiatric hospitals, long-term care, a whole family there. Another family of trying to activate sets of mobile units to go in, particularly to our most densely populated urban populations. Then

eventually, we're going to want to get to the point and I don't want to jump the gun because we're not there yet, and I'm practicing without a license. We want to be able to get to the broader asymptomatic population just to get a better epidemiological handle on this virus. But more on that as we develop it.

Matt Platkin, tell me if you disagree, if a non-essential business is operating right now, they are out of compliance and they should not be. So am I worried? I'm not sure I'm worried, I'm mad. We need folks to go on covid19.nj.gov and tell us where those businesses are because we do not want that. Matt, anything you want to add to that?

**Chief Counsel Matt Platkin:** No. If a business is ordered to be closed, they have to follow the order and all businesses that are open have to follow the orders that you've laid out for strict policies regarding social distancing, and other mitigation efforts to ensure that the virus doesn't spread.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I don't want you to rat anybody out, but any follow up we could have, and tell us where that is, we'll be glad to ticket. Thank you. Sir. You're good? Thank you. Ma'am? You're back to your normal spot, Ian.

**Ian Elliott, NJTV News:** Governor, with parks and golf courses being reopened this weekend, how will social distancing be enforced? Our viewers are curious if they'll be seeing police helicopters or drones monitoring parks. Does a good opening weekend for parks pave the way for other institutions to open? Specifically, we're looking at any consideration to reopen casinos.

Commissioner Persichilli, how involved does the state plan to get in antibody testing and what do you hope to learn from it? What part does it play in the state's reopening plans? Thank you.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Thank you. I'll start and, Pat, you may want to come in behind me on compliance. Judy, you will certainly want to come in with Christina on antibody. I'll go to your second question first, if I may. A good weekend will matter a lot. I don't think it leads directly to casinos. I think we have to start, Matt and I were having this conversation earlier. We're sort of developing, we're wargaming what a series of rings of steps looks like. I think it's fair to say things that are outdoors, Madam Commissioner, give us more latitude than things where we're all packed in on the inside. I can't give you any sense on the specifics as it relates to casinos, but I will say this. A good weekend and good compliance is going to matter. It's going to matter in the specifics as it relates to parks staying open, golf staying open. But maybe more importantly, it's going to matter if we get back.

And by the way, folks, you've been great. I just want to say that. Continue to be great. If we keep seeing those curves come down, we get those testing materials that are now here, we get the contact tracing, you then start to see a lot of pieces of that road to recovery plan looking more real, and that's going to give us more latitude. I'm not sure, I don't know of any plans, Pat could discuss this on his drone strategy, but we're going to have a significant presence. State Park Police, State Police, local authorities, and I'll leave it at that. Pat may want to add some more color on that, but we're watching. I just want to make sure folks know, we're watching. We're not trying to be jerks. We're trying to watch and hopefully like what we see.

**State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan:** Thank you, Governor. The only thing I would add is almost daily you've seen in the compliance reports where a store owner or customers have done the policing or tried to on their own, and I would hope that that continues. Not that we're putting a law enforcement component onto the public, but as this whole community approach that we talk about, if somebody's too close to you at a park or not wearing a facial covering which was recommended, we're hoping that us New Jerseyans say, hey, we're trying to keep these parks and golf courses open. Let's all pull our weight and do our share.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Amen, thank you. Judy or Christina, anything on either social distancing, antibody tests or any other topics?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** I'm just going to start a little bit on testing and then I'm going to let Dr. Tan talk about the utility of serology, antibody testing. Right now our expanding testing, we will be doing the diagnostic molecular test, the PCR test, which is either the saliva test or the nasal swab. The serology test, which is a blood test, I guess you do it through a prick of a finger, has some utility for certain things that you're looking for that the epidemiologist can speak better to.

**State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan:** Right, basically the serology tests, the utility for the individual is somewhat limited, because knowing whether or not a person has antibodies, has a positive antibody tests, does not mean that you know whether the person might actually have immunity to the virus. Not all individuals necessarily generate antibodies, so sometimes you might have people who might have been infected who might not generate the antibody response.

In terms of the utility for the individual, as the World Health Organization has put it, the serology tests are not meant to be an immunity passport. We don't know whether this is useful information for whether or not a person can return to work safely without the risk of possible reinfection, for example, or other aspects. Or a negative test doesn't necessarily mean that they might not have been exposed in the past.

We do think that the serology tests do have utility for potentially characterizing population burden. So for example, we know that many different jurisdictions throughout the country, in conjunction with the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and we in New Jersey are looking at zero prevalence surveys. Where basically, what we're doing is we're doing a snapshot of individuals who might have been exposed and might have been infected in the past, to kind of characterize the scope of illnesses that we might not have captured with the acute cases of illnesses that we see, that are captured through the diagnostic tests that the Commissioner had mentioned.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Brent, you get to close us out here. Hold on one sec.

**Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger:** So New York, I know you mentioned schools a little bit, but I just wanted to ask a little more about it. New York is keeping schools closed now. Do you have any idea if you're leaning towards that or anything else you could say? Do we have a clue where these new cases are coming from? Like the few thousand that we're seeing, do we know if they're coming from long-term care facilities or all from the south?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** New positives, you mean?

**Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger:** Yeah, new positives, yeah. We're hearing from hospitals, especially in the Central part of the state that they still don't have enough PPE, especially gowns. I'm wondering if there's any update on that or who they could go to or whether they go to the federal government or you to ask for that?

And then tennis courts, are they also going to be closed at parks? I didn't see anything in the order about that. That was it. Thank you.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Okay, I'll start and I think it sounds like Pat and/or Judy. Nothing on schools. Good try but nothing on schools. You'll hear early week. Thank you for that. New positive cases, I was actually looking at this by county, number one overnight, Judy, is Passaic and Passaic is number four overall. I assume you mean geographically.

**Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger:** Geographically, one, and do we also have any clue like where they're actually coming from? Are these from nursing homes? Are they from people walking out and about? I figured I'd ask.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I'll give you the counties and then Judy can speculate, I'm not sure we do know that. But number one, this is just literally on the overnight of the 2,651 Passaic was number one, Essex number two, and then there's a cluster in and around three, four, five, Bergen, Hudson, and Middlesex and Union. Which by the way, interestingly enough, are the six counties that have continued to be the cumulative most amount of positive tests.

And again, remember one thing which we've said 1,000 times, but it bears repeating. We've expanded testing dramatically. Our friends at Camden County, I think it was about 10 days ago, said that they were trying to weigh up the spike, to what extent is it community spread? East Camden, the community of East Camden, or the part of Camden City that was a particular concern remains, to some extent, a particular concern, but you also had much more access to testing in that county. I'll let Judy come in.

On gowns, I think we've said this, gowns continue, have now become someone said, quote-unquote, the new ventilator. Gowns are a problem. I would say they should not go to the feds, they should come to their OEMs I would think, at the county or go right to The Rock and I'll let Judy and Pat come back to that. Tennis courts, Matt.

**Chief Counsel Matt Platkin:** Up to the county or the municipality.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Up to the county or municipality. Any comments, first of all, on PPE, on gowns? And where should folks go? I've heard from Central State, for instance, a couple of times.

**State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan:** We still have them on order and it is not just a New Jersey problem. We were on a call with Connecticut and New York last night on gowns, not only from ordering them, I think the shift in local manufacturers to making them for us is another avenue that we're pursuing. They remain a top priority.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Judy, anything on either gowns, the press in the Central part of the state and/or where new cases are coming from?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** We can't tell where new cases are coming from, that's the point. That even if there's few cases in a county, we have to assume that people are being exposed. So even if you have one case, we know that you've exposed someone. That's why it's so important for us to keep up with social distancing. To stay home, to do all the things we tell you to do. I think we learned our lessons in New Jersey in the very beginning, when we had a whole family, from a family gathering, fall sick and many of them, unfortunately, passed. We learned our lessons that the social gatherings and being apart from one another is the only way to stop this.

I did want to talk, if you don't mind, I was trying to get Dr. Tan's opinion on this. The serology tests in previously recovered positive COVID-19 for plasma infusions is still recognized. They do the serology test to see if you have the antibodies. And if you want to donate your plasma, because they are finding the plasma infusions may be helpful. I'm going to let the real doctor.

**State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan:** Right, that's absolutely correct and if individuals are COVID recovering patients that if you just Google it, I don't have this here, but the American Red Cross and the FDA are running all these efforts to try to collect and to pursue this plasma collection for that purpose, therapeutic purpose.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I think you can also go on covid19.nj.gov and Mahen, if you can't, let's make sure we get a page up on where to go as it relates to plasma. I'm going to mask here as I take us out. I want to thank Commissioner Judy Persichilli, Dr. Christina Tan, Superintendent Colonel Patrick Callahan, Director Maples, Chief Counsel Matt Platkin, to each and every one of you.

A housekeeping matter, we'll be here tomorrow at 1:00 p.m. Mahen, one o'clock, as has been our habit. On Sunday we will communicate electronically or so-called on paper, unless there's a reason to get together with you either telephonically or in person. And then Monday will be somewhat dependent on whether or not we have a White House VTC, and Mahen and team will come back and give you details. I know this will be largely in Pat's arena and his colleagues in law enforcement, including the State Park Police, up and down the state, but we will give you a pretty rich readout on Monday of what we saw over the weekend. The weather should be decent so we are completely respectful of the enormity of the effort put in so far, folks, and also the mental health challenges to all of us. Who doesn't want to get out right now and get some fresh air and exercise a little bit? Not only do we not begrudge that, we want you to do that.

But please, please keep doing what you've been doing. Again, don't congregate, social distancing of at least six feet, wear something on your face. Do the little things, washing your hands with soap and water. If you keep doing that, we have a good weekend, that bodes well not just for outdoor activity, but for other steps we think we can responsibly take going forward. Thank you all and God bless you all.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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