

Governor Phil Murphy

TRANSCRIPT: November 20th, 2020 Coronavirus Briefing Media

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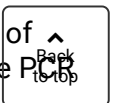
Governor Murphy Signs Daniel's Law



Governor Phil Murphy: Good afternoon, everyone, sorry to be a couple of minutes behind, we have a lot of ground to cover today. I'm honored to be joined by the woman to my right, who needs no introduction, the Commissioner of the Department of Health, Judy Persichilli. To her right, the Department of Health's Communicable Disease Service Director, Dr. Ed Lifshitz, another familiar face, great to have you back, Ed. To my left, the Superintendent of the State Police, a guy who needs no introduction, Colonel Pat Callahan. The Director of the Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, Jared Maples, Chief Counsel Parimal Garg, and Councilman-Elect from Green Brook, Matt Stanisci in is the house. If that weren't enough, the First Lady of the Great State of New Jersey, Tammy Murphy, remember the New Jersey Pandemic Relief Fund is still doing extraordinary work, NJPRF.org. Your money will go right to the point of attack to the people who need it the most in this state.

I want to spend a few minutes giving an update on our testing program, so I think the first thing to do will be to give the results of those tests of the day. Today we're reporting 3,635 positive cases, which gives us a cumulative total since March 4th of 297,370. The positivity for all PCR tests recorded this past Monday was 7.98%, that's a little bit better than the past couple of days. Statewide rate of transmission today is 1.40.

So we run through these numbers every day and they are the resulting data from the tens of thousands of PCR tests we record on a daily basis. You can see here how our testing has increased exponentially throughout this pandemic. We recently hit a high of roughly 70,000 tests in one day, and for the month of November, we're averaging approximately, Judy, 45,000 tests per day. And remember, these are just the PCR tests. This data does not include antigen-rapid test results.



On this chart, we're going to go to another one, you can also see some days where the numbers of – I guess it's this chart, pardon me – the number of tests generally drops off. These are usually on the weekends. Big flashing sign here.

So, where you could be tested on a weekend, we would encourage you to do so, as you may encounter shorter lines and shorter waits at our testing facilities. And to that, there are more than 400 active testing sites located throughout our state. The dots on that map, a little bit of an eye chart, Judy, forgive me, represent all but our mobile pop-up testing sites. You can locate a testing site near you, including participating pharmacies, healthcare and urgent care facilities, and state and local government sponsored sites by visiting [covid19.nj.gov/testandtrace](https://www.nj.gov/covid19/testandtrace).

And for pop-up testing, we are collaborating at the state level with local leaders to stand up multiple sites in several hotspot areas, and these have opened over the past several days and I'm told by the time we're gathering, these sites will also be on that page, Test and Trace.

So first up, testing is available in Harrison tomorrow from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Harrison Community Center on Warren Street. Next up, Jersey City, tests will be available from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. this upcoming Monday and Wednesday at the United Way on Bergen Avenue, and from 1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday and Wednesday at the Buffoon Center on MLK Drive. Next up, Passaic County testing will be available next Saturday, November 28th, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Passaic County Senior Services in Totowa. And, starting tomorrow and running through December, testing will be available in Union City with our dear friend Brian Stack at the helm, at 1600 JFK Boulevard. Now these are all in the North. I spoke to my team, I think I will preview that on Monday we will give you some Southern locations and Dan Bryan will make sure I'm an honest man on that front.

Each of these sites has been made possible through the Department of Health under Judy's leadership, and in coordination with local partners and we thank everyone involved for bringing these opportunities together. We will promote these locations through our various social media channels.

So aside from these sites, we also continue to move forward with putting the Binax NOW rapid antigen tests we have received from the federal government out into the field. Some 600,000 Binax NOW tests are currently in the distribution pipeline to our long-term care facilities, and another, as you can see, 160,000 have gone to rapid response teams and county-based testing sites. We have, next up there you can see, about 100,000 Binax NOW tests currently inventoried, with another 1.75 million Binax NOW tests expected to be delivered soon from the federal government and from the Department of Health and Human Services. And we'll be ready to move on getting those to congregate housing facilities, Judy, schools, colleges and universities, healthcare centers, among other places where emergent needs may arise.

Remember that the Binax NOW test does not at the moment fit into – the results do not fit into any healthcare databases, either in New Jersey or anywhere else, but we're working very hard on fixing that, addressing that. The Cue Health tests that we referred to, I guess earlier in the week, they're coming I hope within the next week or so, they in fact do automatically report into the data system. So when we talk about our testing capacity, remember, it does not include results from the Binax NOW.

Separate and from this, it is expected that Pfizer will be applying to the FDA for an emergency use authorization for their new vaccine, which their clinical trials have put at 95% effectiveness. I was on with Albert Bourla, their CEO, yesterday back and forth. Their team spoke with our Restart and Recovery Commission and went through the details of this. Should this application be approved and should this be approved, we would then expect that our first shipment of roughly 130,000 doses would arrive in state around Christmastime, with more to follow. I'll ask Judy, as I know she was going to do anyway, to give a little bit more color on this process today and we'll also have more to say about this at our Monday briefing.

All of this is to say that we are in a far, far different place than we were at the early stages of this pandemic. We have the testing program in place, and it is working overtime. We have the resources to continue to not only ensure a full testing regime across the state, but to ramp up testing when hotspots emerge. We can begin to anticipate the arrival of a vaccine. We encourage you, please, to get tested especially if you've been in a crowded indoor group setting where others have not been social distancing or taking proper precautions.

Now, as Judy and I and others have reminded you over the past number of months, the other side of the testing program is our contact tracing program, which we continue to build out to meet the tremendous challenge posed by this second wave. On Monday, 207 prospective new contact tracers begin their training, and they will be deployed statewide over the coming days as they complete their training. Once that happens, we will have more than 2,300 contact tracers on the ground. Our goal remains to get every county to a minimum number of 30 tracers for every 100,000 residents. This past week, 120 new tracers came online, and with their additions, both Essex and Union Counties now exceed this threshold. Five other counties, Passaic, Warren, Mercer, Cumberland and Salem, have also reached this benchmark, as has the great brick city, the City of Newark.

However, as we note regularly, we continue to see a lack of cooperation with our contact tracers. The percentage of cases in which people refuse to provide any contacts for follow-up tracing continues to hover. Judy, my numbers are at about 60%. I urge you, folks, please take the call. Our contact tracers have a clear job. They're not on a witch hunt, making sure you have the resources you need to safely self-quarantine and notify those who you may have exposed, so they can take steps to protect themselves and slow the spread of this virus throughout the community.

We also urge you to download the COVID Alert NJ App to your smartphone, which is also a vital tool for keeping you protected. The app has been so far downloaded more than 375,000 times, that's an increase, by the way, of 30,000 since Monday, and every phone we add is another tool we have at our disposal to fight this virus. COVID Alert NJ is free and it is secure. It uses Bluetooth technology to exchange secure, non-identifying codes between smartphones that have downloaded the app. All notifications are anonymous. You'll never know who it was you were near and they won't know that they're notifying you either. It'll all be done through the secure code. Multiple other states also use this platform, so the more people who download, the better position we are across our entire region. So please add your phone to our fight and download COVID Alert NJ.

Before I get to the rest of today's numbers, a few other brief announcements. First up, we will be issuing an administrative order today clarifying that for outdoor -- I think this is coming from you and me Pat, is that right? -- for outdoor organized high school sporting events. Individuals necessary to the sporting event such as players, coaches, and referees will not count toward the 150-person limit. This will mean that these sporting events, including the upcoming Thanksgiving week high school football games, can have up to 150 spectators. However, all spectators must continue to abide by social distancing requirements. Does this sunset, Parimal? It sunsets, I believe, after the -- this is almost exclusively for the football games that are coming up over the next week.

And while we're on schools, yesterday I was pleased to join with six of my fellow regional governors from New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island to reiterate the importance of keeping our schools open for in-person instruction with strong and appropriate and responsible protections against in-school transmission in place. The growing body of medical research shows that the path we are on with regard to in-person instruction is the right one, and is the safe one, and we're also seeing the increasing evidence of the importance of time in school on a child's mental health and learning. We continue to closely track the metrics within our schools and we continue to work alongside our district leaders, educators and others to ensure that our schools can remain safe places for our educational communities.

Remember, we have said as of Wednesday, 50-odd experiences of in-school transmission cumulatively since the beginning of the school year in late August. That's now a good two-and-a-half months, impacting 200-something persons. We take every one of those transmissions and every one of those cases deadly seriously.

But if you look at where the safe places are in the state, and by the way, where contact tracing is as good as it gets, I think outside of our hospitals and healthcare systems, it's the schools. We know exactly who are in those buildings. Now, this is not to say -- a couple of things, by the way. It's not to say that there is not transmission. And in fact, one of our kids' schools had this from outside the school into the school, you've got to be very careful of that. That has existed, does exist and you've seen districts from one here and there go to all remote because six persons came in from the outside as was the case with our kids' school.

And that's not to say that this is a normal school year, or that this is a stress-free school year. It is not and I want to salute again our extraordinary educators who are at the point of attack; our extraordinary parents, our kids, our superintendents, our administrators and staff. They are, you know, they are leading in a time of extraordinary, unusual circumstances and I take my hat off to each and every one of them.

But there's no question. It's not – we can't bat a thousand. There's no normal school year. Our principles are safety of our kids and educators and other staff. It's high quality education, it's equity, with flexibility wrapped around that, that's where it's been since day one, as it relates to school. That's the way it'll continue. But I can't say enough good things about how well set up and well-functioning and executing our schools have been,

I was just back and forth this morning with another guy who's been a great advisor to us, Dr. Ashish Jha. When this whole pandemic began, he was at Harvard, and he's ended up at Brown University since then, he's a leader, Judy knows him. He and I were back and forth. He did an outstanding piece yesterday in the Washington Post that sort of summarized what I've just said even more articulately, and really captured that sense. He and I were back and forth on that this morning.

So let's move on. It's the first time together since our Thursday, which means unemployment is up. I want to reiterate the new unemployment claim numbers that were released yesterday by the Department of Labor, which showed a 38% week-over-week drop in initial claims. Roughly 13,000 New Jerseyans filed for unemployment benefits last week, that's nearly 8,000 fewer than two weeks ago. That'll be little solace, if any, to the 13,000 people who did apply this week. That is the fifth consecutive week of decline. I guess that's a good thing. However, we will not lose sight of the tremendous impact that this pandemic has had, as nearly 1.8 million New Jerseyans have sought unemployment benefits since March. That is an unimaginable number and we have to hold up and pray and help out every single one of them.

And for the 1.5 million who have been deemed eligible for payments of that group, a total of \$19 billion in combined state and federal benefits has flowed to them and their families. Labor Commissioner Robert Asaro Angelo and his team have done tremendous work over the past, coming on now nine months, and I thank them again for all they continue to do to help our workers and families.

I had a conversation with a friend last night, who said, "Hey, gosh, I'm still hearing stories about people not able to get their unemployment insurance." Folks, I'd say two things. One is if you know someone, get us that person's details and we will follow up. We have followed up on countless people over the past nine months.

Secondly, now literally every case, it is a very particular reason to that individual. There's no broad systemic issue. The tsunami has quieted down; it's still pretty darn significant. 13,000 people in one week is not normal. That's way off the peak but there's no sort of tsunami-related reason. There's no systemic-related reason why folks aren't getting it. It is overwhelmingly, I think it's literally 100% at this point, specific to the individuals.

And by the way, I don't even blame the many folks out there who have been told they're not eligible, and they're still out there screaming that they deserve unemployment insurance. I don't blame them for one second. We have a lot of folks right now at the end of their rope. Who could blame them? I understand that completely. But the fact of the matter is, there's no systemic issue. The tsunami has largely – we're up to speed with it, even though it continues to be a very high number. The reasons are very particular to the individual case. And I will just reiterate, if you know of people like that, get the details to us. Get them to me personally, I promise you, we will follow up on them.

A couple of other items, and I apologize for all the items we have today. Last night I signed an election-related Executive Order. I guess I did that today or last night, and it does two things. First, it extends the certification deadline to next Wednesday, November 25th, only for counties unable to meet today's deadline because of the impact COVID-19 has had on their board of election staff and facilities for those counties. Two counties, Ocean and Salem, qualify for this extension. And we get a lot of folks who have been impacted by COVID-19 in the Board of Elections community there, keep them in your prayers.

Secondly, it extends by one week from December 4th to December 11th the date by which all counties, not just those two but all counties, must conduct their election audit. This extension will enable counties to quarantine employees who have been exposed to the virus for the recommended two weeks, while ensuring that the audit occurs before the meeting of the electors on December 14th.

With that, let's take a look at the other overnight numbers, and let's begin by looking at our hospitals. As of last night, Judy, I've got 2,505 in our hospitals, of whom 2,272 are known COVID-positive and 233 are persons under investigation awaiting test results. Of that group, 452 patients required intensive care. 233 ventilators are in use, and that percentage is up meaningfully. You or Ed may want to opine on that.

Throughout the day yesterday, 333 new COVID positive patients were admitted, while 290 patients were discharged. That's a good thing. And again, this applies to oranges because this is not included in our confirmed COVID fatalities, 27 patients died in our hospitals yesterday. But in terms of confirmed losses of blessed lives, we can say that there were 23 newly confirmed deaths from COVID-19 complications. That brings the statewide total to 14,900 confirmed deaths with another 1,812 probable deaths.

As we do every day. Let's take a breath and sit back and remember three of the blessed souls we have lost. We start today by celebrating the life of Richard Smith Jr. of Berkeley Township, that's a town Tammy and I know quite well. He had made the Jersey Shore his year-round home for nearly 40 years. He served honorably in the United States Air Force National Guard and for the United States Department of Defense for 31 years, retiring in 2007 with the rank of Chief in the 108th Air Refueling Wing Base out of Joint Base McGuire Dix Lakehurst. He was a leader with the Berkeley Little League, taking on the role of team scorekeeper and statistician for numerous teams. Pat, both Tammy and I have quote-unquote the book in the dugout on many an occasion and I, frankly at a certain point, gave up and handed it to Tammy full time a few years ago. And one of his greatest joys after his retirement from service was coaching his now 20-year-old son, AJ, who lives with his mom.

Richard is survived by his wife of 39 years Patty Kelly Smith, with whom I had the great honor of speaking the other day. She's now in Forked River, and their three sons, AJ, I mentioned who lives with her, Tim, who's a retired state police lieutenant Pat, and now a teacher, and Christopher who has his own business, as well as by Tim's wife Ruthie and Christopher's fiancé Heather. He also leaves seven grandchildren, Danika, Steven, Mateo, Cameron, Diego, Santos and Marcos, and two great grandchildren Talon and KJ. We thank Richard for his years of service to our nation and his community, and God bless him watch over him and his Patty and his family.

Next up, we recall Rita Frassetto, from the Smithville section of Galloway Township in Atlantic County. Rita was a South Jersey gal born and raised in Camden. She was the salutatorian of her class at Camden St. Joseph High School, and that's where she also met her future husband Robert, sitting right beside her there in that great family photo. For 42 years they made their home in Runnymede, raising their daughter Kathleen. For three decades, Rita worked for the medical equipment company Medic PRN, and was twice recognized as Employee of the Year.

But outside of work, she was also a Girl Scout leader, and active member of the woman's social organization, the Red Hat Society and she put her love of crocheting to great use, making lap robes for the St. Mary's Nursing home in Cherry Hill, and baby caps for the nursery at Atlantic Care Hospital. Rita could also be found on the water on her and Robert's boat, Kathleen 4.

She leaves behind her husband Robert, with whom I had the great honor of speaking and as you can imagine, it's been tough as nails on him after nearly 62 years of marriage. She also leaves behind Kathleen, with whom I also had the great honor of speaking, and her granddaughters Kristen and Kimberly and their families including her three great-grandchildren, Robert, Katie, and the newly born Joseph, whose mom is Kimberly. When I say newly born, November 16th, among so many other family members and friends, God bless you Rita Frassetto and watch over you and your soul and your family.

And finally today, we remember Albert Gardner, who called Bellville home for the past 17 years. Born in Newark, Albert was a proud Vietnam veteran, and he spent 40 years working for the Diamond Air Production Company in Morris Plains, retiring in 2008 as the company's Vice President. Retirement meant he had more time to devote to his family, and especially watching his grandsons Richie and Gerard play hockey, and next-door Nutley. Albert leaves behind his wife Antoinette. She also was COVID positive, please keep her in your prayers, after 49 years of marriage by the way. He's also survived by his daughter Lisa, with whom I had the great honor of speaking. She hangs her hat in North Wildwood, and the aforementioned Richie and Gerard.

In eulogizing his grandfather, Gerard sums him up this way, and I quote him "The most selfless and caring person who wasn't just a grandparent to me, but like a father and best friend." How about that? I think that's all we need to know about the type of man Albert was. He also leaves behind many siblings, Daniel, Billy, James, Beatrice and Betty, and their families, including numerous nieces and nephews. May God bless you, Albert and to Richie and Gerard, I know he's going to continue to smile at everything you accomplish in life.

Every day, we remember more and more of the New Jerseyans we have lost to this pandemic, there is nothing more that I would like than to reach the day when there is no one left to mourn. But we cannot get there unless we commit to doing all that we can to slow the spread of this virus: wearing our masks, keeping our social distances, avoiding private indoor parties and making sure to wash our hands frequently with soap and water. We have to use common sense, we have to recognize that this is not going to be not a regular school year, it's not a regular year and it's certainly not going to be a regular holiday season from Thanksgiving all the way through to New Year's. We have to get into a different mindset for the next six weeks, We have to put the health, our health and the health of our loved ones and our communities before our want to party and celebrate. We want everyone to make it safely into 2021.

And that also goes for our small businesses, who have been hit just as hard throughout this pandemic. Tens of thousands of them have worked with the New Jersey Economic Development Authority over the past months to receive the help that they need to keep their doors open. Let's meet another one right now.

This is Popcorn For the People. This is one Tammy and I know. A social enterprise of let's work for good, a nonprofit that creates meaningful and sustainable employment for adults with autism and developmental disabilities. What started as a mall kiosk in 2015 is today a broad business that provides popcorn for numerous collegiate and corporate clients, including Rutgers University, the Philadelphia Eagles, and multiple Broadway theaters. You can imagine what happened to their business, by the way, when you hear that model, right? This is an instance where we can testify to the quality of their product as we have purchased and enjoyed their popcorn while watching the Scarlet Knights play basketball.

Obviously, the pandemic, given this sort of business, has closed down many of the venues where Popcorn For the People is sold. Founder on the left, Barbie Zimmerman Bier and COO Rachel Chang on the right with whom I had the great honor of speaking the other day, turned to the New Jersey EDA for assistance and received a grant that has allowed them to cover expenses and stay in business. Rachel also reminded me that they've applied for a phase three grant as well as a Middlesex County grant. And when we get to the day, I hope sooner than later when our sporting arenas and venues and theaters are open again. I know that my first stop will be, our first stop will be to get some popcorn in support of Popcorn For the People and the good work they do.

Their website, by the way, check them out, popcornforthepeople.com. Rachel reiterated to me that they are, in their judgment and their belief, the number one employer of autistic workers in New Jersey, bless them and bless you all.

I want to note that today is the 75th anniversary of the start of the Nuremberg trials when the Nazi officials who undertook some of the most despicable crimes against humanity ever recorded were brought to justice. Only one member lives from any side of that trial. He was a member of the prosecution team, Benjamin Ferencz. He survives to this day. He is 100 years old and we had the tremendous honor of getting to know him during our time living and working in Germany as the US Ambassador. We can never forget the sinister rabbit hole through which humanity fell that allowed for the Nazis to rise and for totalitarianism and hate to flourish. We cannot allow any part of our world to again fall down that hole. We cannot lull ourselves into thinking that this is just something from history. We have to remain vigilant and uproot authoritarianism wherever it attempts to sprout. Never, ever, ever forget.

Before I close, there have been two notable non-COVID passings that we must take a moment to acknowledge. The first is a guy I knew well, Arthur Imperatore Sr., founder of The New York Waterway Ferry and the man who almost singlehandedly transformed the Hudson County waterfront. He grew up in the two-bedroom apartment above his immigrant father's grocery store in West New York, where he also worked as a boy. After returning from service in World War II, he was, by the way, a navigator on B-24 Liberators and B-29 Superfortresses. He started an interstate transport business with his brothers and the rest, as they say, is history.

He had numerous other business interests throughout his storied career, including owning the hockey team that would one day, and under different owners, ultimately become the New Jersey Devils. But he'll always be most connected with New York Waterway, which changed the way many commuted to work and which famously ferried survivors home on 9/11. And by the way, I'm one of those people whose commute changed thanks to Arthur. For all he did in his life and in business, Arthur was inducted in the New Jersey Hall of Fame in 2017, quite deservedly. Arthur was 95 years old when he passed on Wednesday. I spoke to his son Arthur Jr. I reached out to his stepson. May he rest in peace, and I want to also thank him explicitly to his service to our nation.

That brings me to a second passing, this young man, United States Air Force Senior Airman Richard Samaroo. Rico, as he was known by many, lived in North Brunswick and I thank my dear friend Mack Womack, its Mayor, for raising Rico's passing to me. He was only 21 when he passed away while on active duty at Osan Air Base in South Korea earlier this month. He was born in Guyana, and came with his family to New Jersey in 2003, when he was just a young boy. He was a member of the North Brunswick high school class of 2017. His funeral is today, and he's being laid to rest at the Brigadier General William C. Doyle Veteran Cemetery where I normally spend Memorial Day, not this year, and in his memory and honor, I'm today ordering that all flags throughout the state of New Jersey will be lowered to half-staff this Monday, November 23rd.

Before we leave Rico, I want you to look at that guy. I want you to also hear what I said, that his family immigrated to this country from Guyana. That is the United States of America that I know. A guy who immigrated here as a kid with his family, served our nation and died for our nation, for our freedoms that we must never take for granted. We are the ultimate immigrant nation. May it always be that way, and may we never waver from being that beacon on the hill to the rest of the entire world.

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 and good afternoon. While, as the Governor shared, Pfizer announced this morning that it expects to apply today for the emergency use authorization, EUA, from the US Food and Drug Administration for their COVID-19 vaccine. The application will be reviewed by the vaccines and related biological products advisory committee, which is an independent group of experts that advises the FDA. This group, which includes scientists, physicians, infectious disease experts, and a consumer representative will review the data and they may ask for more information from Pfizer. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, ACIP, which advises the CDC, will also make recommendations to the CDC, and the CDC will then issue guidance before distribution of the vaccine.

In anticipation of the approval of a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine, the Department of Health is working with many other state, federal and local agencies to plan for a fast and equitable distribution of the vaccine to the New Jersey communities. Our goal is to vaccinate 70% of the adult population, or 4.7 million New Jerseyans in six months. Prioritization of who will get vaccinated first is based on the CDC's playbook, which outlines three phases to this process.

In Phase 1(a), the first shipment of Pfizer vaccine will be reserved for paid and unpaid persons serving in healthcare settings who have the potential for direct and indirect exposure to patients or infected materials. This includes approximately 650,000 workers in New Jersey. It includes staff who work in hospitals, urgent care centers, community health centers, doctors and dentist offices, pharmacies, dialysis centers, and home healthcare workers. We consider staff and residents in long-term care facilities to be a high priority. There are 90,000 residents in our long-term care facilities, and they are served by 100,000 staff. The majority of long-term care facilities will be vaccinated through agreements that the federal government has set with CVS and Walgreens. The Pfizer vaccine, if approved, is expected to be available first in limited amounts in mid-December, followed shortly by vaccines manufactured by Moderna.

The Pfizer vaccine is a two-dose vaccine spaced 21 days apart. Moderna doses are spaced 28 days apart. So, by the third week of December, the state expects to receive 130,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine, followed perhaps by the last week of December by another 130,000 Pfizer doses. There may be some overlap with

Moderna by the end of December or the beginning of January. We then could receive another two shipments of Moderna of 100,000 each, so we could have between 400,000 and 460,000 doses of vaccine in the state by early January.

We expect the vaccine to be shipped directly to hospitals with ultra-cold chain storage for the Pfizer vaccine, and those hospitals that have the ability to manage ultra-cold chain storage with the Pfizer shipping infrastructure system. About 40 of our New Jersey hospitals have told us that they do have capacity in their ultra-cold storage.

We have more flexibility, by the way, with the Moderna vaccine. This vaccine requires refrigeration, which is available in all hospitals and pharmacies. As additional shipments of vaccine arrived, including Moderna, phase 1(b) would include other essential workers, people at higher risk, including those over the age of 65, those with underlying medical conditions, and those who live in congregate settings.

When we get to Phase 2, there will be a larger supply of vaccine that would include anyone in Phase 1 and 1(B), who had yet been vaccinated, including critical populations in the general population.

When we get to Phase 3, there should be sufficient supply in April or early May to meet the overall general population demand. While we wait for the vaccine to arrive, as Dr. Fauci has said, we need to actually double down on our public health measures. As we're waiting for that help to come, we must continue to social distance, wear a mask and wash our hands frequently, especially now that we have statewide community spread. We will also still need individuals to get tested and participate actively in the contact tracing process.

As the Governor outlined, we continue to expand access to testing in our state, particularly among our vulnerable populations and areas of the state that are seeing rapidly increasing cases. We've partnered with Optum to continue to provide testing opportunities in our urban centers Elizabeth, Paterson, Newark, Trenton, Atlantic City and Camden. To address hotspots, we've deployed both PCR and Binax tests to the following :counties Atlantic, Essex, Hudson, Mercer, Middlesex, Ocean, Passaic and Union.

In addition to our rapid test deployment, Binax tests have also been distributed to long-term care facilities and county testing sites. They will also be sent to hospitals, institutes of higher education and K through 12 schools.

As we discussed last week, New Jersey will be among the few states receiving the Cue rapid molecular test which will be used at our states' veteran homes.

Moving on to my daily report, as the Governor shared, our hospitals reported 2,505 hospitalizations. We are seeing increases in hospitalizations by about 100 to 150 a day. There are 452 individuals in critical care, and an astounding 51% of those critical care patients are now on ventilators. Fortunately, there are no new reports of multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children.

At our state's veterans homes, the numbers remain the same and at our psychiatric hospitals, there is one new positive case at Ancora.

The state positivity on November 16th overall is 7.98%. The Northern part of the state is 8.18; the Central part of the state 7.45; and the Southern part of the state 8.84m and that was November 16th. Today, it's up to about 11%.

That concludes my daily report. Stay safe and remember for each of us, for us all, please take the call and download the COVID Alert NJ app. Thank you.

Governor Phil Murphy: Judy, thank you for that and thank you for all. We're going to keep moving along today because we're going to sign a bill right after this but Judy, fair to say we'll hit vaccines again, most likely on Monday, with a little bit more but that's a great framing. The news is largely really, really good on the development side. The distribution is really complicated and expensive. I think we can we can't understate that. This is a never been done before sort of hurdle, which listen, this is the United States of America. We can do stuff like that, but we've got to make sure we've got all oars rowing together.

Colonel Pat Callahan, great to have you. Bless you. Over to you.

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: Thanks, Governor. Good afternoon. Just very briefly on compliance, ABC investigators, in partnership with Division of Criminal Justice investigators went out last night on compliance inspections in Hudson County. They visited 51 licensed establishments and of those 51 visited, eight of those licensed establishments were cited for EO violations concerning capacity, facial coverings, and no social distancing. That's all I have, Governor.

Governor Phil Murphy: Pat, thank you and thank you for all. We'll start over here. We will be virtual, Dan Bryan, and will be virtual tomorrow and Sunday. And unless you hear otherwise we'll be live and in person. at one o'clock on Monday. And again, we will sign Daniel's Law, with a heavy heart. right after this.

I just read a quote that someone sent out to me, this is in an article, "Shut the school down, don't shut hockey down. You could go to school online." We've got our priorities straight there. Dustin, over to you.

Dustin Racioppi, Bergen Record: Perfect segue. Leadership of the NJEA said they're dismayed that you have downplayed the danger to students and staff by allowing in-person instruction and that the data you're using to support keeping schools open is misleading at best. What's your response to that in general? But if the NJEA is correct, why are you not counting school-related activities like sports in the data?

Have you contacted Mondelez officials about keeping the Nabisco factory in Fair Lawn here? And if so, can you share any insight into that discussion, or what your pitch was to stay in New Jersey?

Several progressive groups are protesting a lack of diversity on the Legislative Redistricting Panel, with much of their eye focused on the Democratic Party's failure to name a Latino, despite the growth of the Latino population over the past decade. Given your role as the de facto leader of the Democratic Party and your well-documented emphasis on diversity, what's your reaction to that, and any defense of the lineup? Are you comfortable with the panel's composition?

One last one from NBC. Do you have any reaction to the Howell police chief saying he won't enforce the 10-person limit at Thanksgiving unless it's egregious behavior? Thanks.

Governor Phil Murphy: I thought you were going to ask me about hockey, by the way, you got me all excited about a hockey question, Dustin. Listen, we're on with the NJEA all the time and I repeat what I said today and I've said on many days, including recently, educators are on the pedestal. They are heroic, they're at the front lines. This is not a normal school year, this is not stress free, by any means. Bless them. I can't say enough good things about them.

I don't have a whole lot more to add other than the data that we present is the data that is vetted, and we wouldn't present it if it weren't blessed by the Department of Education and the Department of Health. Again, but there is behavior outside of schools that does have a behavior on the inside and we've got to make sure we say that all the time, we've got to make sure folks hear that, and that is absolutely the case. We've got to watch that like a hawk.

But other than a hospital or a healthcare setting, when you look at the PPE barriers, one-way stairs and hallways, face coverings at all time, surfaces, hyper hygiene, I don't know any structures indoors that are that are safer than our schools.

And again, I think it's also fair to say – and again, we've had a great exchange back and forth on this with all stakeholders, including educators, it is safe to say and I think a lot of people are coming to this conclusion, that it's an easier riddle for sort of the pre-k up through eighth grade than it is for the high school students who begin to feel their oats and feel like they're invincible, and we watch all of this, as you can imagine, including and especially the folks who were in the upper grades. And again, bless our educators.

Mondelez, I've spoken to the North American head on the phone, I've got a Zoom call with labor this afternoon. I've got a Zoom call again with the North American head. Too early to tell. It feels to me like they're consolidating their bakeries, East Coast, Central, West Coast, from multiple locations in each of those respective locations to one in each. I'm going to make the case that there's no better place to do business than New Jersey. I just can't fathom, there are several hundred folks here who would be impacted and their families right now. I can't fathom the impact that that would have on them. I think we're as good a place to do business as any in the United States, including as I was proud to acknowledge earlier this week, the number one port on the East Coast, number two port in the country; Los Angeles, we love you but we're coming after

you. Quality of the talent, I mean, there's just an overwhelming reason to be here. Mondelez has, in addition to the Fair Lawn facility, they've got over 1,000 people in other locations in New Jersey, but we're going to give it everything we've got.

Yeah, I'm a big believer in diversity. I acknowledge and take the question and the point. I will say this, that I was gratified to see Saily Avelenda appointed as the executive director for the commission, and that represents some significant step in the right direction as it relates to diversity, and we continue to be pounding away. We are the most diverse state in the nation. Our administration puts the most diverse set of folks on the field every day in the history of the state and that is what we aspire for every single day,

I was told only of the Howell Chief, I have no idea who this guy is but I would just say it is the obligation, Pat, if you see this differently you'll tell me, it's the obligation of all members of law enforcement, especially leadership, to enforce the laws and enforce the Executive Orders that are in place, particularly if the objective is the modest hope to save every life that we can. I think I speak for you here. We don't condone underage drinking. Right? It's illegal and we don't want it.

This is not about some minor infraction. These Executive Orders are about saving people's lives and folks need to be reminded of that. And by the way, overwhelmingly law enforcement has been heroic. You talk about folks who are fatigued? Pat, I don't have to tell you, going out there every day enforcing compliance, almost nine months into this, like everything else in life, overwhelmingly extraordinary actors laying it out every day, and especially early in the pandemic, putting their own health at risk when people were being extreme knuckleheads.

But we're still in the soup here, and these Executive Orders and these laws have got to be enforced. And that is literally to save people's lives. Do you have any sir or no? Okay. Nikita, how are you?

Nikita Biryukov, New Jersey Globe: I'm well, Governor. Yourself?

Governor Phil Murphy: I'm well; I'm as well as you can be right now,

Nikita Biryukov, New Jersey Globe: Of course. So there are no announced plans for a Biden inauguration yet, but it's proceeding as though is going to be a fairly major event. I'm wondering if you plan to attend yourself and whether or not you have any recommendations for New Jersey Democrats who are thinking about traveling to DC for unofficial or official Biden inaugural events?

Separately. I'm wondering if you have an opinion on whether legal guidance or opinions issued by Attorney General Grewal regarding the 2020 election and vote-counting procedures to state and county election officials should be made public? Currently they're shielded from disclosure by an attorney-client privilege.

And lastly, on the election Executive Order from today, does that make any changes to the recount deadline, which is also today? Because now you have a situation where counties might be certifying after the deadline to file for a recount has passed?

Governor Phil Murphy: I'm going to wave in Parimal Garg from the bullpen for your second and third question in a second. I've got no insight onto the inaugural plans other than Joe Biden will be inaugurated as the 46th President of the United States at noon on January 20th.

I would say, again, I've got no insight. I'd be surprised, this is one guy's personal opinion, given that we're still in the throes of this pandemic. I'd be surprised if it is business as usual. So I'd travel if I could travel safely, but right now we're telling people not to travel. Judy, I hope it's different two months from now, but I'm not sure it will be. I hope it is.

I would just repeat something -- you didn't ask this, but I will take this opportunity to say the following. Think of a triangle. There's a huge missing link right now. And if we don't solve this soon, people's lives are going to be put at risk and I suspect lives will be lost, and I'll use us as an example. We have wide open -- Judy, Pat, myself, the whole squad, Ed, we have wide open communication with the Trump administration, on testing, on vaccines, on other matters. There's another call. Monday afternoon, as I recall, we'll be on it.

We have wide open communication with the Biden team. I mentioned Vivek Murthy, Ashish Jha is on that team, Ron Klain who battled Ebola as the czar, and that's wide open. And there's a fair amount of common consensus on some stuff including timing on vaccines and the development. There is literally no link between

those two camps. There's literally no link, which is unfathomable. And there's no question whose fault it is, it's these guys.

Forget about, God bless you if you want to count every last vote and recount it, recount it again and go to court and then if you didn't like that, go to court again. God bless you. It's not what I'd be doing but that should be completely disconnected from making this link, and by doing so, saving lives. It's despicable that that link has not been connected.

Parimal, either on the Attorney General's opinions as well as on whether or not our extension of the deadline includes impacts the recount deadline,

Chief Counsel Parimal Garg: On the Attorney General's guidelines, we would need to look at the specific guidance and see if there's anything we could disclose there, so we can get back to you. And on the recount piece, we'll circle back this afternoon.

Governor Phil Murphy: It's a good question on the last one. We'll come back to you. Sir, good afternoon.

Reporter: I just have one quick question to clarify from earlier. You said New Jersey hit 70,000 reported tests per day. Do you know exactly which day that was that we hit that threshold?

Governor Phil Murphy: No, but we can get that for you. Is that it?

Reporter: Yeah.

Governor Phil Murphy: I may slip you a \$20 after the press conference. Brent, you're out of your \$20 opportunity.

Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger: Good news about the vaccine but numbers for now still keep moving in the wrong direction. What's next for the state? Do you think pleading for cooperation is enough? Or do you see the state following Newark's lead and asking everyone to stay home for 10 days to kind of get a grip on this?

What's an update with the situation in nursing homes? I see deaths have been rising there recently, a little more than usual. We're getting reports about people waiting a long time for tests even though we have a lot of them. What is the state doing about that?

Governor Phil Murphy: The news on vaccines, by the way, is unquestionably good, including and again, this is all subject – we're not going to tell you, in fact, you and I are going to be first and second in line, I believe, Pat will be right with us. We're not going to take this vaccine, we're not going to recommend you take it unless we separately do our own tire kicking and putting our own holy water, led by Judy and the independent panels that she has in the state. But boy, it feels like it is going very meaningfully in the right direction. And you won't say it's safe unless it is safe. And if you do say it's safe, I dare say when you say it's safe, we need everybody to get in line to get it. And again, it's going to be vulnerable populations, frontline workers, healthcare workers, the folks you'd expect us to have up front.

The numbers are not going in a good direction and we've said that that is going to continue. I mean, I want to be unequivocal about this. If you look at our modeling, and again, we should put modelling up sooner than later. I know we're going to hit vaccines hard again on Monday but Dan, could you help us do a modeling discussion here? It is going to get unequivocally worse. That includes everything from cases per day to hospitalizations.

Can behavior impact that curve? You betcha. We believe the combination with surgical action and pleading for responsibility will have an impact. And again, we don't just sort of take steps. Judy, Pat, myself, none of us take steps that are symbolic, that don't have any umph under them. So when we saw restaurants – not all – but a lot of restaurants migrating toward a sort of sloppy environment after 10 o'clock, we took action and we've lowered the indoor limits. With all due respect to the guy with the hockey quote, we cut out interstate indoor sports. NJSIA is actually pushing back the winter season.

We're in a vortex of cold weather, it's getting darker and you've got one holiday after another. Everything is on the table. There's no necessarily obvious next up to bat. We would really like to see what's in place take hold, I think through, for instance, non-essential businesses. People ask me about non-essential business, indoor

dining all the time. By the way, indoor dining I put separate from where we know establishment x has had an outbreak, either they on their own or with the local health authorities, we will combine, take the right step.

But I mean just the known increased risk that we have by more indoor activity that we've talked about. So people ask us all the time, indoor dining, non-essential retail, non-essential businesses. I've just got to say this. As long as Mitch McConnell is sitting on his hands and not getting behind a major stimulus, that I believe both the White House and I know Speaker Pelosi, with whom I spoke the other night, and so many others, Bob Menendez, Cory Booker are about to join us for the next bill signing. As long as he's sitting on his hands, you shut without absolute evidence that there's spread and transmission, you shut non-essential workplace or indoor dining, you're basically putting a bullet in them. Unless we see explicit transmission coming out of there, that's blood on our hands in a different respect.

It's shameful that they have not acted in Congress, especially McConnell and the Republican Senate to throw a lifeline to small businesses. Listen, could you see a different scenario where there was that lifeline and you could afford, you had more latitude? So you know what, we can afford to take a two-week pause there, because they're getting cash on the barrel in order to do that. That's the trade. That trade should be available. If Judy determines that those businesses are a place of transmission, and we know they've got a lifeline that will keep them in business, that gives her and me more latitude to do something.

And by the way, other states are talking about pauses. Take a look at Rhode Island's pause in their indoor dining. Their pause is coming down to 33%. We never went above 25%. So I'm glad they're taking a pause. Great governor, by the way, but also you've got to parse through exactly what some of these steps actually mean.

I'm just going to hit tests and waiting, I think we hit that earlier. There are long lines, we have enormous sympathy for folks waiting in long lines, which is why we are plussing up more testing resources as we went through earlier, especially in the hotspots and encouraging people, if you can, to get tested on weekends when we know the lines are less, and we're going to continue to put as much up against that as we can.

By the way, we've also said this, Brent. This is not a New Jersey, only thing. Look at Philadelphia, I saw pictures earlier today around the country, this is raging and that puts a supply – that means more demand and it puts a strain on the reagents and other supply side stuff. Judy, any comments on nursing home transmission? You said that deaths are – cases and/or deaths are up?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: We have calls with nursing homes almost every day now. We have over 260 outbreaks that we're monitoring. Our goal is to work with them to increase testing of everyone that enters the facilities. So next week, I expect that we'll be putting out some pretty aggressive guidance on testing in our nursing homes.

Governor Phil Murphy: As they say, I'm not sure this is in sports or in the movies, that's all she wrote. Let's mask up. Again, I have the honor in a few minutes, with an august group including both of our United States Senators, all prime sponsors, Judge Esther Salus and her family, Chief Justice Stu Ratner to sign Daniel's Law into law. God bless that lad. He will remain forever in our prayers and this will forever stand as a memory to him and as a legacy and as a step in a direction that sadly needs to be taken.

I want to thank Judy and Ed. Ed, we didn't pull you in from the bullpen today. I hope it was still worth the trip. Pat, thank you for everything. Jared, Parimal, Dan. Again, Tammy Murphy, thank you. Virtual this weekend, Saturday and Sunday. Monday at one o'clock right here. Not sure yet on our schedule next week with Thanksgiving.

I just ask folks, bear down everybody, I know this stinks. I know you've got fatigue. Who could blame you? I know we all do. Keep these on, keep away from each other. We have good weather today and tomorrow. It's going to be a decent Sunday but colder; but today and tomorrow is really decent. So get outside folks, stay out there safely. Enjoy it. We've got Thanksgiving next weekend. Again, I'm begging you. Keep it to your immediate family, please..

Do everything you can to protect multigenerational, particularly older members of the family. Don't cross bubbles. If you've got kids, as we do who have been at college, they've got to either self-quarantine there and get tested or continue that process here. Again, it's not normal. It's not fun. We get it, but I will tell you this.

Between personal responsibility and exceptional New Jersey behavior, and we've proven this already to the rest of the country that nobody can do this better than we can, and you add to that more testing, and far more importantly vaccines that are real, that are coming, that will be safe – we won't recommend it unless they are, and we have an overwhelming sense they will be. You start looking at distribution as early as next month, potentially, and then by April or May, broad access. We are in a completely different place.

This is it. This is crunch time. This is the locker room. The next six to eight weeks are the Super Bowl. We've got to win it. Thank you all and God bless you.

Governor Phil Murphy

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