

Governor Phil Murphy

# TRANSCRIPT: May 2nd, 2020 Coronavirus Briefing Media

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Holding a COVID-19 briefing. WATCH:



**Governor Phil Murphy:** Good afternoon, everyone. I'm joined by the woman who needs no introduction, to my right, Health Commissioner Judy Persichilli. To her right, another guy who's migrated into that same category, the Department of Health's Communicable Diseases Service Medical Director Dr. Ed Lifshitz, great to have you both. And to my left, the guy who needs no introduction, the Superintendent of the State Police Colonel Pat Callahan. Director of the Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness Jared Maples is in the house, and I suspect we'll be joined by Chief Counsel Matt Platkin at some point.

Before we get to the daily update, late yesterday afternoon, I received a call from Eric Hargan. Eric is the Deputy Secretary of the US Department of Health and Human Services. He informed me that of the 395 hospitals hardest hit nationally by COVID-19, and which collectively will share \$12 billion under the latest distribution of federal funds, 53 of those hospitals are in New Jersey. Altogether, these 53 hospitals will be receiving \$1.7 billion directly from the federal government. That is the second-largest amount of funding awarded, only behind New York. This funding will be deposited automatically, no further paperwork required, with the hospitals in the middle of this upcoming week. Getting more critical financial aid to our hospitals and health systems, no one knows this more than Judy, to support our frontline healthcare workers has been a constant and central part of our ongoing dialogue with our federal partners. As legislation was being negotiated, we continued to make the case and demanded at the highest levels that the breakdown of funds be needs based and that New Jersey receive its fair share. I'm incredibly satisfied to see this need being fulfilled, and I thank President Trump, Secretary Azar, and their teams for hearing us out. And I thank as well our federal delegation for their efforts.

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Many of our hospitals have taken quite simply a financial beating over the past two months, in addition to the general beating they've taken, as all of their resources have been focused on getting their staffs everything they need to be protected, and everything COVID-19 patients need to beat this virus. We cannot afford to lose one hospital, or frankly even one nurse or doctor from one hospital. This federal funding will certainly help our healthcare systems remain on a firm financial standing, and we will work closely with them to understand how these funds are being used to advance access and treatment for residents. Access is a big deal for us and we're learning that the hard way through this crisis.

Ensuring the health of our healthcare systems is critical to our getting ourselves on the road back. When we look at metrics we need to fall in line for us to restart and recover, the health of our hospitals is one of the most vital. And that's not just about bed capacity or PPE stocks, although it is about that. It's also the ability of our hospitals to stay open, to be fully staffed and to be able to provide the levels of care we will need for the COVID-19 cases we know will come as we begin to reopen our economy, our society, our businesses. This \$1.7 billion will certainly help ensure that our entire healthcare system is itself healthy to join us on the road back. And again, I thank our federal partners for hearing us on this critical need and for delivering.

Now let us turn to the latest information on our battle against COVID-19. Today, we are announcing an additional 2,912 positive test results for a statewide total of 123,717. The new case numbers are starting to rise again, but we also need to remember that we don't have a complete picture of the denominator or the universe. Let's go back, Mahen, if you could. Let's remember, these are folks who have been tested. As Judy and Ed know far better than I, that is a proxy for the amount of folks who may be infected or for the denominator, but it is not the denominator. As we have gone from zero capability to test to having among the most robust testing of any state in America, part of this is due to infection, certainly. Another part of an uptick like this is due to the fact simply we've got a lot more access to testing. Sorry, we could hit the map now.

This county map of New Jersey we've turned to almost daily continues to get lighter and lighter, as the rates of the doubling of new cases continues to slow. And again, our hope is we get as many counties, frankly we want all counties, in that 30-plus day lighter shade. However, we'll be watching both these charts over the coming days to see if the reopening of our parks was successful. The reports from the park personnel and stay Police and local police on the ground will be a big determinant of compliance as it relates to social distancing. And I don't want to get too ahead of my skis at 1:05, but the reports back, early reports, and these are early, preliminary, anecdotal, so far, so good. We've got to make sure they stay that way.

But these numbers will also tell a significant story. If we hear minimal reports of knucklehead behavior in our parks, and we see the metrics we need to meet being met over the next couple of days and weeks, then we know that you all have taken to heart your responsibility, continued to take to heart, I might add. You've done an extraordinary job so far in helping us mitigate this pandemic. Frankly, knowing New Jerseyans, this is what we should expect. We are smart. We have all followed best practices and together we are flattening the curves and we are making progress.

But, and I hate to keep saying but, if we hear reports of people not taking either their health or the health, maybe even more importantly, of other park-goers seriously, we will not hesitate, and I don't say this with any joy, to close them again. And if those reports are followed by spikes in the numbers of new cases and increases in the spread of COVID-19 over the next couple of weeks, then the action would be justified. I certainly hope it is the first of these two scenarios. I want everyone to enjoy this extraordinary weekend. The weather's unbelievable, but enjoy it responsibly. And if we could do this, and I know we can, we'll be able to move forward.

In our health care system as of last night's reporting, hospitalizations continue to drop significantly, with 5,713 patients, unless you correct me, currently hospitalized for COVID-19. That's a drop of more than 1,000 patients in one week. And across every region of the state, you can see North, Central and South, we continue to see progress with each reporting drops in the number of hospitalizations. Yesterday, you could see the South in blue had been trending up, that's begun to flatten, and that's a very good sign, on top of the come downs we're seeing in both the North and Central regions.

Our field medical stations reported 51 patients and have treated a total of 393 of our fellow New Jerseyans since opening, and let's stay on that for a second. Let's remember those field medical stations are not just there for this week or last week or next week but in the likelihood, I hope low likelihood, but in the likelihood

that this virus comes back and bites us, having capacities of beds, PPE, ventilators, healthcare workers, medicines, will be extraordinarily important and that's something we look forward to working with our federal partners on as well.

There were 1,715 patients reported in either critical or intensive care, and this continues, bless you, the overall downward trend over the past week. Not quite the same steepness of reduction, but a reduction. Ventilator use currently stands at 1,230 and that's a decrease from yesterday. There were 378 new hospitalizations yesterday, that's the lowest one-day count since last weekend. And on discharges, 525 live patients were released from our hospitals yesterday. That's the sort of trend and gap you want to see.

All of the important metrics in our hospitals continue to show positive trends. We need to keep seeing these lines moving in these directions before we can put New Jersey on the road back, and before we're able to responsibly restart our economy. And remember, we're operating under two very simple ideals. First, public health creates economic health. That means that we need to build confidence that we are ready for our restart, so you can have the confidence that you need as it begins.

And second, data determines dates. That means that as we see the numbers unfold, we can have a better idea of the specific timetable for our restart. And again, this can never and must never be only about numbers. These are precious lives we have lost who are infected or hospitalized. But the numbers do lead us, whether we like that or not, in either bad, less constructive directions or of late, in much more positive directions. Let's keep that up together. We are the biggest determinants of that. And by the way, because the data determines dates and public health creates economic health, that's why this weekend and how we all respond is so important.

So unfortunately, even with the positive trends we are seeing, we continue to lose too many of our precious brothers, sisters, residents to COVID-19. With the heaviest of hearts today, we report 205 additional lives lost from among our New Jersey family. Our statewide total is now 7,742. Unfathomable. Let's remember a few of them right now.

These are Dennis and his brother James, or Jim "Cricket Traverso, two inseparable brothers from Neptune. They both passed from COVID-19 complications roughly one week apart. And these guys were renowned in Neptune, in Monmouth County. They spent their childhoods together. They formed a shared love for antiques and classic cars, and then in adulthood settled their families only blocks away from each other, continuing their tight bond. Jim was a model train enthusiast and craftsman, and was also considered nothing short of a craftsman when it came to cars. He had a daughter, Tracy, and a grandson. And that's Jim, Cricket, on the right.

Dennis, on the left, had a love of history and made that his secondary vocation as a dealer in collectibles and as a recognized specialist in antique glass. He leaves his two daughters, Denise and Margaret, with whom I had the honor of speaking yesterday afternoon and heard so much about their dad and their uncle. He also leaves behind six grandchildren and one great grandchild. This was a bond between two brothers that even death cannot break. We wish them and their families peace. God bless them both. Look at those two guys. Bless them.

Speaking of a couple, here's another one. Charles and Elizabeth Mylod from Oradell, Charlie and Betty. They were married for 55 years and passed within 48 hours of each other. Charlie was an army veteran and a programmer for IBM. He was also a lifelong baseball fan, first of the Brooklyn Dodgers and then, unspeakably, of the Giants. And as we know, the Dodgers were the ones that first agreed to leave Brooklyn for California, and that was kept quiet while the Giants formed their deal, because Major League Baseball needed two teams out there. I only wish I could speak with Charlie and understand how he migrated from the Dodgers to the Giants.

Betty, a nurse for 50 years, by the way, was a Yankees stalwart. They were both from New York but settled in Oradell soon after marrying, where they raised their three sons Charlie Jr., with whom I had the honor of speaking yesterday, Eddie and John. They assisted and coached Little League Baseball. Both were active in the life of St. Joseph's Church in Oradell. As a couple, they leave their sons and seven grandchildren. Charlie leaves behind his eight brothers and sisters, and Betty leaves her brother, and they also leave so many

friends. This is a tremendous love story. To Charlie Jr., Eddie and John and their families, we send our deepest condolences. To lose Charlie and Betty in such close proximity together is indescribable. May God bless them and each and every one of the members of their family.

Finally, this is Englewood's Leonard Trugman sitting with his wife of 55 years, Riva, with whom I had the great honor of speaking yesterday, who by the way, is also being treated for COVID-19. I'm knocking on wood here, so far so good, and bless her. Leonard was a writer and worked in business before settling into a teaching career, first at the City College of New York, where he also studied engineering. Leonard would earn an MBA from Fairleigh Dickinson, and was even halfway through a PhD at the Stevens Institute of Technology where he, by the way, also taught. He was a lifelong member of Temple Israel in Ridgewood, a fixture at Shabbat services, and he loved the State of Israel, visiting 17 times over his lifetime. He was also an inveterate sports fan. In addition to his beloved Riva, again with whom I had the honor of speaking yesterday, who we also keep in our prayers, he leaves his son Jonathan and daughter Robin and their families, including five grandchildren. He also leaves behind his sister, Barbara. May his memory be a blessing to all.

The family, friends and neighbors who we have lost are the reason why we cannot rush our restart. We have lost so many already to COVID-19 and we know sadly, tragically, we're going to lose more. But if we are reckless, we will lose not just more, but many more beyond that. We know that will happen if we're not smart and if we're not responsible. We have to learn from everything we report here day to day. We have to learn from the data, and from the trend lines that are pointing us in a good direction at the moment. But we also have to learn from the thousands of lives we have lost, we have to learn that COVID-19 is real, it is virulent, and it is indiscriminate in who it takes from us.

So let's keep doing this together. We can keep pushing these curves down and when we do, we know we will have fewer and fewer lives to have to remember, because we will keep more of our family and friends with us. Let's do this, and let's make this weekend the point at which we realized that we were ready to begin the process of our recovery.

As I've said here before from time to time, and we all know this, you all know this, life goes on in this state. Births, deaths, other developments that have, in many cases, nothing whatsoever to do with COVID-19. As all-consuming as this is, we also know that there is a life. We lost two lives of two people I knew over the past couple of days and I want to acknowledge them very briefly.

First, Union Beach Mayor Paul Smith. Paul was a really good guy. I spoke with his wife, Sharon, yesterday. And she said, and I agree, I'm not too far from Union Beach down in Middletown. He was Union Beach. He was not only the mayor, he was Union Beach. He was a friend. He was overwhelmingly popular. He won his two elections for mayor, I recall, by 71% and 61%, I forget which order. I ran a 5K there a couple of years ago, he was gracious in hosting us. We did a Sandy Memorial event with our two great senators, Senator Menendez and Senator Booker, and Mayor Smith hosted us, God rest his soul. Again, he passed unrelated to COVID-19.

And secondly, a dear friend Gloria Landy, who was a giant, even though she was 4'11, as her husband reminded me. I spoke with her husband Gene earlier today. She was incredibly passionate about and was a leader in Jewish causes, about clauses related to the State of Israel. She and I engaged in a speech I gave at the UN a few years ago. She was Secretary of the World Jewish Congress. She was President of the New Jersey Poetry Society and most importantly, she was a wife, a mom, a grandmother and a great-grandmother. God bless each of them and all the lives that we have lost.

I have one quick announcement. Today, I will sign an Executive Order extending a number of statutory deadlines required under environmental laws that will be difficult to meet due to the pandemic. Under normal circumstances, the Department of Environmental Protection is required to act on construction permits, including development in coastal and wetlands within 90 days, or the permit is deemed approved. This order will ensure the DEP has the necessary time to get the information it needs to make fully informed decisions.

Before I turn things over to Judy, I want to highlight a couple of people in our state who deserve a shout out. First up, 13-year-old, there he is, James Freeman of Monroe Township in Middlesex County. Like many kids his age, his parents give him an allowance for doing his chores around the house. And certainly there's been no lack of those with everyone staying at home. But instead of pocketing his allowance money, James has been using it to buy filament for his 3D printer, which has been turning out ear guards to make wearing a mask more comfortable. He's so far made and donated 500 of them to healthcare workers, first responders

and essential workers. And James has even turned down offers to donate money. He's doing this all by himself, one shore at a time. So to you, James, New Jersey, thanks you and I hope your community spirit never, ever, ever dims.

And second, we're going to head to Passaic County where the spirit of giving back that is a central part of the celebration of the holy month of Ramadan is fueling the work of SMILE For Charity and the Islamic Center of Passaic County, among many other partners. I want to give a shout out to the Islamic Center, our friends Imam Catanami, Salim Patel, and Omar Awad, and all their brothers and sisters. Together, and this is SMILE For Charity, volunteers are putting together and delivering food packages to 500 homes across the area, more than four times the usual need, helping to make sure that no family goes hungry. So to SMILE For Charity's co-founder Passaic City Councilman and friend Salim Patel, and all the partner organizations and countless volunteers keeping families fed, New Jersey thanks you.

And again to all of you who are doing the right things, and there are millions of you, I also thank you. Again, in this beautiful God-given day we've got, let's make sure that we have a good weekend and a safe weekend. Let's make sure we can keep our parks open for us to enjoy and that we can take the other steps we will need to take to responsibly reopen our state, sooner than later. 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. I am also pleased to report that we continue to see positive trend in the declining hospitalizations, with a decrease of 4% in the daily growth rate. Since the peak in the northern region on April 14, we've seen a 41% decrease in hospitalizations in that region. Over that same period, we saw a 26% decrease in hospitalizations in the Central region. However, we continue to see increasing hospitalizations in the South, with some leveling off over the past two days. Hospitals are starting to transition from what we call crisis standards of care to standard operations. Crisis standards of care are situations where clinicians practice in extreme circumstances with scarce resources like staffing, personal protective equipment and ventilators. As hospitalizations decrease, and intensive care beds and medical surgical beds have capacity, our hospitals are returning to standard procedures.

Despite the increase in patients with COVID 19, our hospitals have treated almost 60,000 non-COVID patients during this timeframe, since April 1. 90% of them returned home safely, 8% went to alternative care settings, and 1% expired. Through all of this, our hospitals remain true to their mission to safely care for all who come through their doors.

There are however, as I've reported, reports from across the country and here in New Jersey that people are delaying care, specifically emergency care. That's why the New Jersey Hospital Association President Kathy Bennett and I have done a public service announcement that you will be seeing on social media over the next week. It will be telling New Jersey residents not to risk their health by delaying emergency care, specifically for things like stroke and heart attacks.

Last evening, our hospitals reported 5,713 hospitalizations. As I reported, a decline of 4% from the daily growth rate. Only two of our hospitals in the Central region were on divert last evening, and it was for psychiatric services only. There are approximately 1,715 cases in critical care. Of those cases, 1,230 are on ventilators. That's a decline overall of 2% and we currently have a little bit over 70% of our patients on ventilators.

Today we're reporting 2,912 new cases and 205 additional deaths. The breakdown of deaths by race and ethnicity is as follows: White 52.4%, Black 19.6%, Hispanic 17.2%, Asian 5.3%, and other 5.4%. There are now 505 long-term care facilities and assisted living facilities in the state reporting COVID-19 positive residents. At the state veteran homes, among a census of 793 residents, there have been 358 residents that have tested positive for COVID-19, and they are reporting two additional deaths today for a total of 114 deaths of our veterans due to COVID-19.

At our state psychiatric hospitals with a current census of 1,250, 163 of their patients have tested positive and they are reporting one additional death today. I believe that was at Trenton Psychiatric. According to lab data from this morning of COVID-19 results, of 16,835 tests performed, 6,749 positive for a positivity rate of

40.9%. That concludes my daily report on the statistics. Again, please continue to follow social distancing guidelines, it is making a difference. Stay connected, stay safe, and stay healthy. I hope you all realize the impact that you are having on saving lives in New Jersey. Thank you.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Judy, thank you for that. Thank you for the report. Top six counties remain the same in terms of overall positive cases. The new cases we're reporting today, generally in the same category, but in terms of order: Passaic, followed by Middlesex, Essex, Hudson and Union, which is a little bit of a shift. And again, we've seen that shift over the past week or so. The positivity rate of 40.9% is the lowest we've seen, I think, since we started this.

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Yeah, I want to make a correction, Governor, if I may. That was from the mass testing sites. The overall testing sites, we've performed 234,577 total tests; 95,982 have tested positive, for a positivity rate overall of 40.9%.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Well said and as Ed reminds us, that's the cumulative number. The spot number overnight is going to be meaningfully, God willing, meaningfully lower. And again, these are not entirely, but historically, overwhelmingly symptomatic folks. We had our road to recovery presentation on Monday. There were six guideposts, four of them were health, one was economic recovery, the other was resiliency. And your comments, Judy, about the sort of stepping down from crisis mode to normal mode was up on our charts on Monday. That's a very important trend as well that we have to acknowledge. So, thank you for everything and thank you Ed, and your colleagues.

I would love to turn to Colonel Pat Callahan for an update on compliance. Again, I think Pat will be the first to say anything so far this morning, or up through now is anecdotal, but anything overnight, you've got PPE, other infrastructure, any other matters. Thank you, Pat.

**State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan:** Yes, sir. Thank you, Governor. Good afternoon, everyone. A relatively quiet night, if I could use the Q word in law enforcement. Newark Police Department issued 61 Executive Order violations and closed two non-essential businesses. In Ventnor, one subject was cited for being on a closed boardwalk. In Paterson, one subjects For an EO violation for failure to disperse. And in Union City, a barber shop owner was cited for remaining open.

And to the Governor's point, as of walking in here at one o'clock, it was generally quiet, up to and including our marine service State Police stations, because we are even asking on the water I know on a day like today, I've been out on Lake Hopatcong myself and Byram Cove and tied up with 20 other boats or so, but we still need to practice social distancing on the water.

And just my last two, as the Gov says, shout outs, our graduate nursing students have stepped up phenomenally to be a part of this historic response, between that education and their boards. I think I said a couple weeks ago, troopers and nurses get along and our 196 recruits of our State Police class that wasn't postponed, they had the option to opt out and they did not, and they are staffing various functions from north to south in that capacity. So once again, you have nursing students and hopefully troopers-to-be out there in this historic response and I just thought that was worth mentioning, Governor.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** That's great, Pat. And here's to nurses, here's to troopers, and you've got them both under your roof. So, bless you. Martel, we're going to start over here. Just one housekeeping matter. Number one, which is not something that we've talked about yet publicly, we have our first Commission meeting on Monday morning. Matt Platkin has joined us. Matt, good to see you. That will be an important kickoff for the Recovery and Restart Commission that we've established. Very excited to get that going. There's a lot of preparation for that already underway from the minute we in fact announced that august group.

Secondly, we had a very good call this morning with a range of leadership in the General Assembly, designated by Speaker Clafin and it was a very good discussion. In each the Senate and the Assembly, they've got their own teams looking at steps that they think are prudent. And we agreed, as we did with our Senate colleagues, to have a high degree of communication and cooperation and that's great.

The Regional Council continues to meet regularly and so I know there was a call last night among Matt and George Helmy, Rich Besser, Jeh Johnson, but the seven states have been meeting with their three representatives on a pretty regular basis and that proceeds well. We need all of this. In New Jersey, we need

our neighbors, we need the federal government, and we need all of that. We landed on Monday, due to a White House VTC, we're going to meet you here unless you hear otherwise at noon. Have I got that right, Mahen? A little bit of a complicated day, but we'll be back, God willing, to see you here at noon on Monday. Tomorrow, we'll be with you electronically, or on paper unless we determine, Judy, Pat and I and our colleagues, that we've got a reason to be with you on the telephone or in person. Otherwise, if you don't hear from us, you'll hear from us electronically, and then we'll see you again Monday at noon. Martel has been here every single day. Martel, again, great to have you. Let's start with you, Brent, and let's try to do this fairly quickly.

### Q&A Session

**Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger:** So what kind of reports are you getting from parks? Any violations so far? Have you seen – I know there was some people were saying down at the shore, there's already out-of-state plates. New federal data from the Marshall Project shows New Jersey has the highest coronavirus death rate in the nation among prisons. Is there anything else that the state can do to slow the toll in prisons before mass testing begins in a week?

People continue to be incredibly angry about problems filing for unemployment, including many who say they haven't even heard back from the state. And now readers are telling us today that the unemployment site has been down all morning. People were told to check back at 4:00 p.m. What happened and when can we expect this to start to get better?

And how many people died from nursing homes and other long-term care facilities? Can you share where those facilities are from, North Jersey, Central Jersey, or South Jersey, over the last 24 hours?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** The reports are anecdotal and preliminary. Is that fair to say, Pat? I don't think there's really any more color on that. We're going to give you a much more. Believe me, we're out there. Pat's colleagues are out there. We're out there at all levels. We'll give you a more robust report after the weekend.

In terms of our corrections facilities, cohorting, the process of releasing folks, ramping up testing, using the space to our maximum abilities, that's a combination of steps. Matt, anything you want to add to that?

**Chief Counsel Matt Platkin:** Just that as of last night we're up to 63 people on furlough with 35 more pending release, and they're continuing to go through that, in addition to all of the other steps that the Governor mentioned the Commissioner is taking.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I've got no insight, Brent, on what may have happened this morning with the site. And we will try to, Mahen, if you could follow up, we'll get you that information. Again, I don't blame people for being frustrated and we don't begrudge that for one second. This is an extraordinary crisis. But I would also say we have chopped through and our friends and colleagues at the Department of Labor have chopped through an enormous amount of claims, but they're trying to stay above water. These keep coming in at extraordinary levels. The fact that we're doing better than other states is, at one level, a point of pride and I'm sure it gives nobody one speck of satisfaction. We know independent contractors have been a particular challenge, we broke a log jam on that today. I would ask Mahen, perhaps on Monday, let's put back up the chart, any update on the chart we can. I know Matt has reminded me that federal guidelines limit us to certain things only come out on Thursdays, but we can at least update you on more tactical developments.

Long-term care facility fatalities, Judy?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Sure. In long-term care and assisted living together there's about 67,000 residents. Right now, 505 of those facilities are reporting 20,284 positive cases and 3,670 deaths. I do have the last 24 hours, just give me a minute.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Just one other thing about unemployment insurance, to remind folks who are watching, you won't lose one penny of what's coming at you. Regardless of the delays, or how long or how frustrating this might be, this will not have any impact on the amount of benefit that you get.

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** 83, in the last 24 hours, numbers of deaths associated with long-term care clusters or outbreaks.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Thank you. Charlie, good afternoon.

**Charlie Kratovil, New Brunswick Today:** Good afternoon, Governor. When was the Central region peak? Is there an exact date for that?

You signed an Executive Order to allow renters to use their security deposits to pay rent, but of course, that's at most a month-and-a-half. We're already two months into the crisis and a lot of people are still out of work and coping with this. What are you planning to do for renters for the next month, and so on and so forth, as this continues?

And then I did want to follow up on the Middlesex County Democratic Organization trying to cancel their party elections until 2023. Did you have any comment on that?

And finally, the Executive Order 111 data that you've said there's no reason not to disclose, still have not been able to get that. Can you comment on that? Thank you.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Bear with me. Judy, I'll say a couple of words and then turn to you for the Central region question. Yeah, I would say as it relates to renters, mortgage payers, driver's licenses, insurance, we've created windows, and we have to see where the road takes us right now, in terms of whether or not any of those windows, any other steps we need to take to extend those windows. Too early to tell, fair point, security deposits only cover so much. To be determined. That will be somewhat dictated, more than somewhat, but it will be dictated by the extent to which we remain hunkered down versus our ability to get back on our feet.

No update on either Middlesex or EO 111, so apologies for that. And Judy, back over to you on Central region peaking.

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** I can't guarantee that this is all hospitals reporting, but for the ones that reported, it was April 13 with 2,256 cases.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** That's Central.

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Central.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Thank you.

**Reporter:** I've been talking to a lot of educators and teachers, and that sort of thing. We know that a decision is coming. They're very concerned about what the future holds for them. Can you sort of give an idea what we're looking at time-wise and help with their concerns?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Sure. The answer is we will give you that guidance on Monday and we want to make sure we're as complete in our guidance on our next steps as we have been in our other steps that we've taken in education. Clearly, Judy and Ed and their colleagues have a huge amount of input into any decision on education, or frankly, any other element of our society. The health components are overwhelmingly the most important. And those inform, in addition to, by the way, the fact that we wear as a badge of honor the number one public education system in America, among the very best private schools in America. We care deeply about that. We care about our educators, our kids, our parents. We want to make sure we get this right. Health their health, all of their health, is our concern number one. We'll be back to you and we will give you guidance, I think, with almost virtual certainty on Monday as to what the next steps are. Thank you.

Do you have anything sir? Please, and then we'll come back to you in a minute.

**Doug Melegari, Pine Barrens Tribune:** Hi, Governor Doug Melegari, Pine Barrens Tribune newspaper. As of last report, 142 people associated with the New Lisbon Developmental Center have tested positive for COVID-19, including 103 clients, by far the highest of any state developmental center. A Burlington County spokesman told me Thursday that the county has elevated their concerns about the center, including PPE not being given to first responders responding to it, and high burn rates, to multiple individuals and departments at the state.

And then we also had a few folks contact us, one an employee of the center, who said they are stressed to the max and sick. There are few of them, not enough of them, and they have not had a break. She goes on to describe a very dire situation at that facility and that they need help. Is help on the way to the New Lisbon Developmental Center? And what steps have your administration taken to protect against the virus ravaging developmental centers? Thank you.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Yeah, I mean, obviously, this is a concern. By the way, this is my fault, because I couldn't hear you so this is on me, but Marthelle could you could you wipe down the mic there. And again, that's on me, not you. As a general matter, this is one of the vulnerable populations that we've spoken about regularly, and so it's a general matter and I'm going to give you a general answer. I suspect we're going to come back to you, Mahen, with some specifics. I'll defer to Judy on this particular center. But this is a population, as a general matter, of grave concern for us. I think we've said that repeatedly. It's part of the reason why, when we think about deploying a new wave of testing capability, this is exactly the population, both the patients themselves, clients as well as employees that we want to prioritize and we will prioritize, and in fact have to some extent already, including with Rutgers. But with that, Judy, do you have any particular specific comments or otherwise we'll come back.

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** I'll have to come back to you. We will definitely look into it. The developmental centers totally are being tested, along with the Department of Human Services and Rutgers, but I'll look specifically into New Lisbon. Thank you for bringing it up.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Again, we will come back to you, so if you could bear with us on that. Thank you very much. And again, these are just awful situations and bless them all. That's all. Please, this is my fault, but keep your mask on.

**Reporter:** Thank you, Governor. The long-term care data, positive cases, has that all been reconciled yet? Because some families are still being told that the data includes staff members and residents at their facilities.

And then number two, a medical director for several long-term care facilities in the Mercer County area, David Burrell, he's written letters and op-eds. He's called on the state to send in the National Guard to help out of these private long-term care facilities. What is your response to that? Are you considering that? Why or why not? And if so, what might be the National Guard's role at some of these facilities?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Judy, I'll give a general comment. The data, I'm going to take words out of Judy's mouth, I can almost say it, the data is more than directionally accurate. I can't speak that it's accurate, personally, I'm not sure that for a particular operator, but it's more than directionally accurate and it was well overdue coming from the operators that we would get that information. And again, the communication, as a general matter, has left more than a little bit to be desired.

The National Guard notion as an option has come up, it is certainly something that we have as an ongoing consideration. That has happened in other states and that's something that we continue to consider in New Jersey. I don't want to speak for my colleagues. And by the way, our challenges in the long-term care reality are dire and they're not unique in America right now. We look at the devastation in our veterans homes, by the way, in the week where we will acknowledge the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II, to lose some of these veterans to this thing, after all that they did for our country is just particularly wrenching. But no decision has been taken. That remains an option.

Judy, anything you want to add to that?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Yeah, for long-term care, I'm going to look at Pat also, we put in a request. And the initial request was, I don't want to say denied, the National Guard was diverted to another area. I think we're putting in another one. I have received Dr. Burrell's letter. It's the second letter. I totally appreciate his concern. We're working as hard as we can and we're going to be looking at student nurses to call them up to go to long-term care.

The difficulty is, we might be able to get people to clean, we might be able to get people to feed, it's very difficult to get people to do the hands-on activities of daily living, and that's what we're working on. We have sent over 1,000 names from our volunteer portal to the nursing homes, and when they call up to see if people can come to volunteer, not all of them are very anxious to do the work that we need. So we're working really hard on it. Thank you.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I'm going to mask up here and I see that these allow me to do one of two notches here, which is a particular positive feature that a lot of the other masks don't allow you to, you get two. Again, we'll be with you, we hope at noon on Monday, electronically tomorrow. I want to say this is the end, this has

been as tough a week as it relates to fatalities as we have had and it is sobering, to say the very least. It has also been a week where we have gotten a disproportionate amount, by the way, proportionate to the challenges we've faced, but disproportionate to what we had gotten prior. We've had a big week in terms of federal assistance, enormous amount of supplies to help us more aggressively test and we'll be coming back to you with more robust specifics on testing. An enormous amount of PPE being sent directly from the federal government to long-term care facilities, \$1.7 billion to our hospitals.

Some weeks I've been up here pounding the table that we need X or Y or more, our caseload, our fatality rate, our hospitalization rate all merit a higher consideration as it relates to federal help. This week, we saw three very significant examples of that.

We continue to need an enormous amount of cash assistance that is to be determined. We look forward to the interpretation on the CARES Act on Monday, again financially. But I want to acknowledge that there were several very big, important steps taken in partnership with the federal government this week that will have real, tangible benefits.

I want to thank Judy and Ed and their teams. Pat, you and yours, Jared, Matt and others. Again, enjoy this weekend, but please enjoy it responsibly. The weather is extraordinary. Get some fresh air, but social distance. Please wear something over your face. Don't congregate. A successful weekend really allows us a lot more degrees of freedom across a whole number of fronts, and we can do this together. You've been extraordinary so far. God bless you. Thank you for your continued partnership and vigilance. Take care, everybody.

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