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Governor Phil Murphy

TRANSCRIPT: March 8th, 2020 Coronavirus Briefing Media Call

03/8/2020



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Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver: Thank you all for joining today's briefing. I would like to begin by noting that Governor Murphy resumed the duties of governor as of yesterday evening. He is currently in New Jersey. Since our call yesterday, we have received two additional presumptive positive test results, bringing to six the number of presumed positive cases of coronavirus in New Jersey. Commissioner Persichilli will speak more directly to the status of these cases in a moment, as well as to the status of all persons under investigation.

I want to repeat, overall the risk of the average New Jerseyan contacting coronavirus remains low. It bears repeating, and I urge you to continue informing the public that the best way residents can protect themselves is by practicing safe respiratory hygiene and to stay home and call their healthcare practitioner if they feel sick.

We continue to urge the public to visit the Department of Health's Coronavirus information page at www.NJ.gov/health (<http://www.NJ.gov/health>), or call our toll-free public hotline. Residents calling from a New Jersey phone should call 1-800-222-1222, and those with an out-of-state number should call 1-800-962-1253. I will now ask Commissioner Judith Persichilli to provide an update.

Commissioner of Health Persichilli: Thank you, Lieutenant Governor. Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for joining us.

As we've been saying, this is a rapidly evolving situation and you will see from the numbers I present today that we expect increasing activity daily if not hourly. We now have six individuals presumptively positive for COVID-19. One individual is a 70-year-old male, Bergen County resident from Teaneck. Onset of symptoms approximately February 28th. The individual was admitted to St. Joseph's Medical Center on March 6th and is in stable condition; however, is in the Intensive Care Unit. At this point, because of the condition of the patient the local Health Department has not been able to do a full interview to determine NJ contacts or potential exposure to COVID-19. So, I do not have that information. The individual is a healthcare worker, and again, that is the extent of the information that I have on this individual. More will be forthcoming when that individual can be interviewed.

Back
to top

The second person is a 32-year-old male, a Hudson County resident from West New York. Onset of symptoms February 28th. He was admitted to Hackensack University Medical Center in Montclair, New Jersey on March 5th. Again, the interviews have not been completed so we do not have information on potential exposure to COVID-19 or the New Jersey contacts.

As a follow-up to yesterday's call, as you know yesterday we had 15 persons under investigation. We were able to complete nine of those tests and two as we've reported came back positive, and seven came back negative. At this point we do not have the confirmatory tests from the CDC.

To give you an overall picture of what this looks like in New Jersey at this point, we have total tracking of 27 persons under investigation. Of the 27, nine are in Bergen County, one in Camden County, two individuals are in Cumberland County, three individuals in Essex County, two in Hunterdon County, two in Middlesex County, four individuals in Monmouth County, three in Union County and one in Sussex County. So, as you can see, from north to south the coronavirus seems to be spreading.

We are collecting and processing the specimens in our lab and will begin testing procedures later today on the remaining PUIs. Hopefully, we will start getting those specimens ready for testing and results will be received sometime tomorrow. The four individuals who had tests in process yesterday were all negative. These individuals were hospitalized at Capital Health Hopewell, Englewood Hospital, Hackensack Meridian Health Palisades Medical Center and Robert Wood Johnson Hospital. <https://twitter.com/GovMurphy>
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I want to assure you that all public health investigations of presumptive positives are ongoing. Once individuals are determined to be presumptive positive, local Health Departments are working quickly to determine who may be at risk and notify those individuals of their risk. Local Health Departments interview the individual to learn what and who they have been in close contact with since symptom onset, in what public places including mass transit, healthcare facilities and any public places they may have visited. Once those close contacts are identified, they are notified and asked to self-quarantine for a period of up to 14 days. If for some reason they are not able to identify contacts that were at one of those locations, a public notification will be issued to inform the public of a possible exposure. <https://www.instagram.com/govmurphy/>
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I also want to remind the public that the Department of Health is asking travelers returning to the state from countries with widespread, ongoing transmission to self-quarantine for 14 days. Currently, countries included in this advisory include China, Iran, Italy and South Korea. Individuals who are self-quarantined should remain at home, they should avoid having guests and visitors, and they should avoid having close contact with others. They should not go to work or attend school for that 14-day period.

Now, I'd like to share several follow-up items from yesterday. I shared with you yesterday that we were tracking two individuals who had attended conferences outside of the state. One was in New York and the other I am reporting today was the CPAC conference. CDC notified me directly that the Bergen County resident that attended a conference outside of the state had in fact attended the CPAC conference in Maryland. The CDC confirmed his attendance and is working with CPAC to notify all the attendees.

That call came in approximately 1:08 yesterday. Dr. Butler from the CDC and I did not connect until later in the day when he shared that information directly with me, although it had already been in the press. My understanding, the onset of the symptoms for that individual was on the 27th and it is reported that he attended the conference from February 27th to March 1st.

I also want to share with you that we were notified that an Uber driver from New York had transported individuals to New Jersey. At this time, New Jersey and New York officials are in the process of getting information from the driver to ascertain New Jersey exposures.

And lastly, there are various rumors about school closings. Commissioner Repollet and I have sent out guidance to the schools and have also held stakeholder calls with them, advising the schools to access the guidance on our website and to follow their internal policy. We are tracking this activity daily and are in contact with the schools that are considering closures or dismissals. Although it has been reported to us that several schools have closed for one day, it is our understanding that those schools have closed for one day to work with their faculty on readiness and resiliency and to also amplify their cleaning processes.

And with a that, I'll return this to the moderator for Q&A.

Communications Director Mahen Gunaratna: Can you start with Sam Sutton from POLITICO?

Sam Sutton, POLITICO: Thank you. The first question has to do with the CDC confirmations. [inaudible] CPAC indicated that they had received CDC confirmation, so I just wanted to see which pieces have been confirmed at this point by the CDC and what your [inaudible].

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: I'm sorry, Sam, your question didn't come through clearly. What was it?

Sam Sutton, POLITICO: It was what cases have you received confirmatory testing on from CDC and which cases are you still awaiting confirmatory testing?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: We're waiting for the confirmatory testing on all of the cases at this point Chris, you're on the line?

DOH Assistant Commissioner Chris Neuwirth: Yes, I am.



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Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: What are we waiting for?



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DOH Assistant Commissioner Neuwirth: Yesterday we expected, as we shared, the CDC to confirm the first two cases. That did not occur. We reached out to the CDC this morning for clarification and explanation, what the delay was regarding those confirmations. They did not offer an explanation. And so at this point the first two cases could be confirmed by the CDC at any point and for cases three or four we expect CDC confirmation either late Tuesday or early Wednesday.



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Sam Sutton, POLITICO: Appreciate it, thank you.

Communications Director Mahen Gunaratna: Carey, can you open up for the next question Tracey Tully from the New York Times?

Tracey Tully, New York Times: Yesterday you had indicated that the 32-year-old male, the very first case in New Jersey had attended a medical conference in New York. What was the name of that medical conference? When did he attend?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: I don't have that information. Dr. Tan, have you ascertained that information yet?

State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan: Yes, we do have that information but I don't have it in front of me either. That information was conveyed to New York for additional follow up.

Tracey Tully, New York Times: Okay, and what is his medical profession? Why would he have attended that conference?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: My understanding is that he is a physician.

Tracey Tully, New York Times: Okay, do you think you might be able to follow up with the name of the conference and the date?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Sure.

Tracey Tully, New York Times: Okay, great. Thank you. That's my only question.

Communications Director Mahen Gunaratna: We'll now go to Tom Bergeron from ROI News.

Tom Bergeron, ROI News: Hey, thanks for taking my call. I'm just curious to see if the state has released or is thinking about releasing any guidance to businesses about employees coming to work, working from home, attending events. Are they in any way trying to give any guidelines for what people should do, when and where? And have they been asked by any companies to provide guidance?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Yes, yes, and yes. We have posted guidance on the Department of Health's website. We have also had a conference call with the Governor and hundreds of businesses dialed in to amplify that guidance. That was last Monday and we are fielding questions almost every day from different businesses about how they should be dealing with their employee issues.

Tom Bergeron, ROI News: Okay, thank you.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: You're welcome.

Communications Director Mahen Gunaratna: We'll now go to Brian Thompson from NBC.

Brian Thompson, NBC: The 30-year-old male at HUMC Montclair, can you give us his medical status please?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: First I want to make a correction. I just got a text that he is not at HUMC Montclair. He's at the Hackensack University Medical Center. I do not have a condition on him.



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Brian Thompson, NBC: No condition, okay.



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Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: No.



(<https://www.youtube.com/njgovernoroffice>)

Brian Thompson, NBC: Okay, the New York Uber driver, he was infected, correct? Do we know how many people he brought to New Jersey and when?



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Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: No, that's what we're trying to find out now.



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Brian Thompson, NBC: Okay, but he was infected, correct?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Our understanding is that he tested positive for COVID-19 but I don't have any confirmation of that. That's why we keep this under investigation and we're trying to track it. It's not that easy to find the Uber driver.

Brian Thompson, NBC: I guess there are quite a few of them. As far as the tracking 27 total please, does that have anything to do with the remaining six who have yet to be tested out of 15? Which is a totally separate number. You said you completed testing on 9 out of 15, two positives, seven negative. And then you said "We're tracking a total of 27" and you gave us the counties. Are the six more you're waiting for test results on part of the 27?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Yes, the 27 was giving you a total picture of how many cases are under investigation.

Brian Thompson, NBC: Right, I just wanted to make sure. But in tracking these other... Let's see, you're still going to test six, so the other 21 are not at the point yet where you want to test them. Is that correct?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Some of them have already been tested. That's the total picture from the start.

Brian Thompson, NBC: Oh okay, so when you say nine Bergen that includes the now four people from Bergen County that we're aware of that tested preliminarily positive, correct?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Yes, and then also those from Bergen County that may have tested negative. So, the total amount of people that have been...

Brian Thompson, NBC: If they test negative are you still tracking them? Or are you saying this is the total number of people you have tracked throughout the course of investigation?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Exactly that, the total number.

Brian Thompson, NBC: The total number that you've tracked. So, some have already returned negative so it's not like we're looking at 27 more people immediately who...

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Yeah, I apologize if that wasn't clear. I was trying to give a full picture of how persons under investigation are being reported.


Brian Thompson, NBC: Got it. The 70-year-old healthcare worker from Teaneck, do you know where he's a healthcare worker?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: I don't.


Brian Thompson, NBC: Don't know, okay. Thank you so much.


Communications Director Mahen Gunaratna: Thank you. We'll now move to Ximena Conde from WHYY.


Ximena Conde, WHYY: Yeah, so there was a little bit of backlash yesterday, not immediately releasing the towns where these presumptive cases were. I noticed that you said them today. What is the protocol going forward? Are you just going to immediately release this information?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: We're going to be posting the information on our website. We started that today and it'll be posted at 1:00 PM every day.  (<https://twitter.com/GovMurphy>)

Ximena Conde, WHYY: Can you walk me through the reasoning, like why the change?  (<https://www.facebook.com/governorphilmurphy>)

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: The change from what to what?  (<https://www.youtube.com/njgovernorsoffice>)

Ximena Conde, WHYY: From not releasing all the information to doing so now.  (<https://www.instagram.com/govmurphy/>)

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: I think we're listening to some of the comments that you all have made and trying to be responsive.  (<https://www.snapchat.com/add/philmurphy>)

Ximena Conde, WHYY: Perfect, that's all I have.

Communications Director Mahen Gunaratna: Thank you. We'll now go to Tom Davis of Patch.

Tom Davis, Patch: Thanks, just two quick questions. First of all, I just wanted to make sure I heard that right – the second person was admitted to where, I'm sorry? I missed the change there. It's not HUMC in Montclair, it's where?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Hackensack.

Tom Davis, Patch: It's the one in Hackensack, okay. And also another publication, The Daily Voice had actually showed a notice from the Passaic Health Division saying that somebody there had developed or actually was a presumptive positive case. Do you know anything about that?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: I don't. The six cases that I've shared with you are the ones we know of.

Tom Davis, Patch: Yeah, they actually published a letter from the Health Division in Passaic. It says there was some positive case there. I'm not sure I have to admit. I can send the link if you want, or I can text it to you if you want.

Communications Director Mahen Gunaratna: If you want to email that over to us we can track that down.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Is the Passaic letter maybe in reference to the New York rabbi?

Tom Davis, Patch: Yeah, actually I'm sorry, that is what it says.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Yeah, that was the news from yesterday. The New York rabbi tested positive.

Tom Davis, Patch: Okay, so that's what that is, 'cause the report said it was the fifth case, but that was not a New Jersey resident, okay. Just wanted to check to make sure. Thanks very much, I appreciate it.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: I'd like to ask Chris Neuwirth, I got a note from him that he can clarify the PUI numbers that might be helpful. Chris, are you on the line?

DOH Assistant Commissioner Neuwirth: Thank you, Commissioner. I wanted to just circle back to Brian Thompson's question earlier. Just to clarify, as you can all appreciate the difficulty in trying to provide you with the most accurate numbers as possible given the dynamic nature of the situation. So, just to ensure that the information you have is absolutely spot-on, currently we have 27 PUIs. As Brian, you pointed out, six of those were the remaining individuals from the 15 from yesterday; and since then we had 21 additional PUIs, new ones. And so, today, among those 27, depending on which specimens we receive, some of the 27 would be tested this evening. Now again, we're in a period of flux – some of the specimens are still in route to the lab, some we've received. And so, depending upon what we have at the time testing begins is what we will test this evening for results tomorrow morning.

Communications Director Mahen Gunaratna: We'll now go to our next question, Dave Madden from KYW News Radio.

Dave Madden, KYW News Radio: Hello. I can tell we have a lot of confusion here. I was actually on a wrong line or something when we were connected so I just get to the point. For those of us who are joining the call late, we're gonna need you to recap – and I know this is gonna drive some people crazy – the announcement at the top. And I may have a question based on that.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: The announcement that I made at the top was that we have two more individuals who tested positive for COVID-19. Their specimens are now being sent to CDC for confirmatory testing. The first case is a 70-year-old male resident of Bergen County, a resident of Teaneck. Possible onset of symptoms on February 28th, admitted to St. Joseph's on March 6th and is in ICU in stable condition. We have yet to interview this individual. He is a healthcare worker. Because we have not been able to interview him we do not have any further information on his contacts or exposure to COVID-19. The second one is a 32-year-old male from Hudson County West New York. Onset of symptoms on the 28th; admitted to Hackensack University Medical Center in Hackensack on the 5th. And again, his exposure to... We have not been able to interview him yet or we are in the process and I don't have the information. So, I cannot share what his exposure to COVID-19, when it occurred, if it occurred and his New Jersey contacts.

Dave Madden, KYW News Radio: Okay. So, we now have a total of six presumed cases. In terms of getting confirmation from the CDC, where do we stand?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Chris, do you want to take that?

DOH Assistant Commissioner Neuwirth: Certainly. So, yesterday we had shared that we were awaiting confirmation from the CDC on the first two cases by end of business yesterday. That did not occur. We reached out to the CDC this morning for clarification and an explanation about why we didn't receive the results. They did not offer an explanation and so at this point, we could expect results, confirmation of those first two cases really at any point and we're continuously following up with the CDC to get that. Regarding the other two cases, and now subsequently the fifth and sixth, cases three and four we would expect end of day Tuesday or into Wednesday; and then by the end of the week for five and six.

Dave Madden, KYW News Radio: Okay, alright. And just so I have the rest of it because I jumped into this about 15 minutes in, you're tracking another 27 statewide for possible exposure?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Chris?

DOH Assistant Commissioner Neuwirth: There are currently 27 PUI of which yesterday we reported 15 PUI. Six of them are still awaiting testing as we reported on nine, seven negative, two positive. So, we have six left over from the 15 yesterday. We have 21 new PUI for a total of 27 statewide.

Dave Madden, KYW News Radio: Thank you.

Communications Director Mahen Gunaratna: Our next question will come from Stacie Sherman with Bloomberg News.

Stacie Sherman, Bloomberg: With regards to the CDC, do you know is New Jersey alone in encountering delays on confirmation? And can you explain does confirmation... What does that do for New Jersey? Does that open up certain funding or what is the importance of having that confirmation?

DOH Assistant Commissioner Neuwirth: Sure, so we do understand other states are having similar experiences where the CDC may be a day or two behind making notifications to them of confirmatory testing. As far as the actual process of confirmatory resting, it's really a quality control issue. Because of the FDA's Emergency Use Authorization for this testing to occur in the states, one of the requirements is that samples are sent to the CDC for that confirmation just to ensure quality control.

Stacie Sherman, Bloomberg: Okay. The other question I have is about this medical conference which you were asked about by another reporter and you said you'd have to get back with the name of the conference. But I think we've been asking for that conference name for several days now; you see the importance in disclosing CPAC. Is there a procedure or a reason why? Is it that the conference has to be the one to give its name? Or this person, we're going on several days ago that this person was at this conference and nobody knows what that conference was. So, why is this delay? Is it because you want the conference to release it or what is the deal?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: I just don't have it in front of me. Dr. Tan, can you get that while we're on the line?

State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan: This is Tina. I'm going to try.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: There's no reason for us not to release it now.

Stacie Sherman, Bloomberg: Okay, and a last question, the two additional cases... So, you've had it confirmed as of yesterday and so you've only had a chance to interview them between yesterday and today, that's why... Even though they've been admitted since March 5th or 6th, you begin the interviews once you confirm, is that correct? I'm just trying to understand the process.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: That's correct.

Stacie Sherman, Bloomberg: Okay, thank you.

Communications Director Mahen Gunaratna: Our next question will come from Bob Olivier with NJ.com.

Bob Oliver, NJ.com: Okay, great, just two clarifications. The 70-year-old man who was admitted to St. Joe's, that's St. Joe's in Patterson we're talking about?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: That's right.

Bob Oliver, NJ.com: Okay. And then, the 32-year-old man, when was he admitted to HUMC in Hackensack?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: On March 5th.

Bob Oliver, NJ.com: March 5th, that's it. Okay, thank you, guys.

Communications Director Mahen Gunaratna: We'll now go to Bill Westhoven of The Daily Record.

Bill Westhoven, The Daily Record: I'm covering Morris County and in Morris County, the Mt. Olive School District, the Superintendent has cancelled classes for tomorrow. Students will not report but the teachers will to discuss a plan for the possible period of remote teaching. I'm wondering what information and direction is going out to the school systems right now regarding all this, and if and when a student tests positive what's the procedure?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: The guidance for the schools is posted on our website, on the Department of Health website. And as I've shared, we have had conference calls with all of the schools. We've asked them to develop their resiliency plans, to review their policies and procedures for remote learning and to work with all of their faculty on readiness in case of school closures and/or dismissals. So,

a lot of the schools, I think we will see them taking advantage of the guidance that we've given them and spending time with the teachers to develop or re-look at their plans, and be prepared in case there is an increase in absenteeism.

Bill Westhoven, The Daily Record: Thank you.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: You're welcome.

Communications Director Mahen Gunaratna: We'll now go to Patrick Wall from Chalkbeat.

Patrick Wall, Chalkbeat: I have a related question. Commissioner, you mentioned that some districts have closed school to have training with staff around readiness and do some additional cleaning. Do you have a sense of how many schools have done that and is that something that you recommend other schools and districts consider doing as well?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: I don't recommend them to do anything except be prepared for what might be the remote possibility that we might have to close some schools. We keep a running list, Commission Repollet knows. I believe there's only one district at this point that has closed for a day. That does not include the school in Passaic that closed for a couple of days that had the 28 students that had been exposed at a Bat Mitzvah.

Patrick Wall, Chalkbeat: Okay. And can I ask, just in addition to coming up with a plan are there any immediate actions that districts and individual schools should be taking right now to kind of prepare?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Well, I think the guidance that we've given them is for them to dust off their plans and update them and be prepared to perhaps develop and initiate remote learning.

Patrick Wall, Chalkbeat: And does that include also doing some additional sanitizing around schools? Should they be working on that as well?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Well, the sanitizing of schools and many public areas are already with the disinfectants that are effective against coronaviruses. So, as with New Jersey Transit and some of the other public agencies, they're just stepping up their sanitation, perhaps doing it more times during the day rather than once or twice or whatever their schedule is. If you go on our website at the Department of Health there is guidance from the CDC on disinfecting surfaces.

Patrick Wall, Chalkbeat: Got it, Thank you.

Communications Director Mahen Gunaratna: We'll now go to Alex Zdan from News 12 New Jersey.

Alex Zdan, News 12 New Jersey: Alright, I have two questions – one very quick one and one more broad one. A very quick question because I think the answer is probably no, the 70-year-old man from Bergen County who is a healthcare worker, is there any evidence that he is connected to the urgent care facility in Bergen County where the first two presumptive positive cases visited?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: I do not have evidence of that. Dr. Tan, you want to weigh in?

State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan: Sorry, can you repeat the question? I was on mute and I did not hear the question.

Alex Zdan, News 12 New Jersey: The 70-year-old man from Teaneck who's now presumptive positive, he's said to be a healthcare worker. Is there any indication that he worked or has a connection to the urgent care center in Bergen County where the first two presumptive positive cases sought treatment?

State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan: We do not know at this time. We're still in the process of conducting interviews. We simply don't have that information.

Alex Zdan, News 12 New Jersey: Okay. And the broader question I wanted to ask really to Dr. Tan or for Commissioner Persichilli, we're seeing with Cases #s 5 and 6, you said that these people had symptoms, onset was February 28th and neither of them sought hospitalization till March 5th or March 6th

respectively. I know we don't want to beat up on these people but is this evidence of what can happen when someone waits to seek hospitalization, waits to seek treatment? Can you talk generally about the perils of waiting to try and get an answer on why you feel the way you feel if you feel sick?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Dr. Tan, do you want to take that?

State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan: Yeah sure, this is Tina again. It's always a challenge sometimes because we have to remember that we're in the middle of flu season. And we have to remember that probably we have to consider other diagnoses, other than COVID-19 as we're considering diagnoses. We can't speculate as to why individuals might seek care when they do or why decisions are made for when people go to the hospital. But to your point, it's a reminder that if people do have concerns about their health they should go talk with their healthcare providers. We know that individuals who are older, individuals who might have underlying medical conditions might be at risk for more serious complications. We know that based on some preliminary information of the cases nationwide, this is based... And again, because the numbers are still out there and we're trying to characterize the illness, we've got to look at this a little bit more. But sometimes we're seeing what we call kind of this biphasic presentation where sometimes, some people might feel okay at the beginning, and then get improvement in symptoms; and then they'll have additional progression of illness presented. But again, knowing that based on previous calls, the vast majority of people, if they might come down with COVID-19 will likely have mild illness that won't necessarily require hospitalization or warrant hospitalization. But again, knowing that older individuals and people with weaker immune systems might be at higher risk for complications, that's something that individuals should be mindful of moving forward. I hope that answers the question.

Alex Zdan, News 12 New Jersey: Yes, thank you, Dr. Tan.

Communications Director Mahen Gunaratna: We'll now go to David Levinsky of the Burlington County Times.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Before he starts, I'd like to share with everyone based on a prior question that the conference that was attended by the individual, attended in New York was an Empire Medical Training, Westin Town Square and he attended from 2/28 to 3/2, till March 2nd.

David Levinsky, Burlington County Times: I wanted to see, have you guys had any luck tracing the exposure from the Cherry Hill man from Camden County, as far as any suspected source or contact person?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Dr. Tan, do we have any further information on the Camden County individuals?

State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan: I do not have any updates at this time, but as mentioned yesterday, it's in the process of identifying those households and healthcare worker contacts.

David Levinsky, Burlington County Times: Okay, thanks.

Communications Director Mahen Gunaratna: We'll now go to Jim Walsh of the Cherry Hill Courier-Post.

Jim Walsh, Cherry Hill Courier-Post: Thanks very much. This is more of a mental health question. Many stores in this area have been stripped bare of hand sanitizer, toilet paper and other products. And I'm wondering if there's a concern on your part that this undermines good hygiene practices by making products unavailable to others, or that it leads people to perceive an exaggerated threat from the virus, or even that it sends people into excess public exposure by going from one store to another trying to find something to protect themselves.


Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: It's a difficult question to answer. We are encouraging everyone to wash their hands with soap and water, and we do know that soap is available. You wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds it's as effective if not more than hand sanitizer, 'cause if they're not using the right percentage of alcohol in the hand sanitizer, soap and water is more effective. People respond to situations like this in different ways. We hope that with the guidance on our website and the hotline – we encourage people to use the hotline – that we can help quell some of their fears and they will





not consider stockpiling; although we are recommending that they need to plan ahead, particularly if they have children and maybe a child would be sent home from school, and they would have to be with that child for a period of 14 days. Make sure they have appropriate nutrition. And plan as you would for any major snowstorm when you know you're going to be in the house for awhile so that they are not caught without medication, nutrition, and things like that. So, we're hoping they'll access our hotline first and ask their questions so that we can help them through the process.

Jim Walsh, Cherry Hill Courier-Post: Thanks very much.

Communications Director Mahen Gunaratna: We'll go to Paul Mulshine of NJ.com.

Paul Mulshine, NJ.com: Concerning the case of the person who was at the Conservative Political Action Conference, I believe you said he got to the conference on the 27th and immediately had symptoms. What does that indicate? What is the latency period? I mean, that sounds like if he got it at the conference he sure got it quick. Do you have any idea what the latency period is and how that fits into it?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Dr. Tan, do we know that?  (<https://twitter.com/GovMurphy>)

State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan: I don't know exactly what you mean by the latency period, but generally speaking, from the point that an individual becomes infected, is exposed to a COVID-19 source and becomes infected, there is an approximately one- to 14-day incubation window in which people can develop symptoms. It's unknown at this time given the information we have right now about specifically when people might become symptomatic, but generally speaking, we know that for coronaviruses and respiratory pathogens in general is that people are most infectious when they become symptomatic – because again, the way the virus is spread is through respiratory droplets when people are coughing, sneezing, where they potentially spread droplets to others.  (<https://www.facebook.com/governorphilmurphy>)  (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgovmurphy>)  (<https://www.instagram.com/govmurphy/>)  (<https://www.snapchat.com/add/philmurphy>)

Paul Mulshine, NJ.com: Great, thanks.

Communications Director Mahen Gunaratna: We'll go on now to Brenda Flanagan of NJTV.

Brenda Flanagan, NJTV: Good afternoon, thanks for taking my question. I was hoping you could discuss whether there's any connection between the cases that you've been able to say are positive at this point and also to discuss possibly the connection to New York. I know Governor Cuomo has called that a cluster and whether cases in Jersey have radiated out from that.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Well, for the first question I don't have any information that would lead us to believe that any of these cases are connected. But because we haven't finished all of the interviews, you know, that may happen – we may find something out. We may find something out through contact tracing. So, I really don't have an answer to that except that the process would uncover that, but we're not through the process of fully interviewing all of the cases. And the second part was... I'm sorry, what was your second question?

Brenda Flanagan, NJTV: Regarding New York – Governor Cuomo has called what is happening in Westchester at this point a cluster of cases. And I wanted to see if you could talk about the infection, the cases in Jersey that might be connected to that.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Dr. Tan, do you want to talk about the definition of a cluster and an outbreak and then we can talk about the effect in New Jersey.

State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan: Right. What they're experiencing up in New York State is that as everybody has been seeing, there was one index case, one person who became ill. And because of all the close contact within that particular immediate community in New York, which has also extended out to other areas as well, that there have been a lot of secondary cases associated with that one individual. So, that's what we mean by kind of the cluster and the clustering around that particular individual.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: And then the connection to New Jersey?

State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan: Right now, we do have two cases that have out of state contacts of which they are linked to the New York cluster.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Could you say which ones those are?


State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan: Hang on, I get the numbers confused a little bit. It is Case Number #2 and Case Number #4. And I believe, Commissioner, you had alluded to some of those contacts before in your previous comments.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Right.

Brenda Flanagan, NJTV: Thank you.



Communications Director Mahen Gunaratna: We'll now go to Pat Robinson of New Jersey Hills Media Group.

Pat Robinson, New Jersey Hills Media Group: Real fast, looking at yesterday's figures, they had reported that there were two cases under investigation in Morris County and I don't see them on the list today.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Let me see if I can find the  (https://twitter.com/GovMurphy) the PUIs? We had one at Morristown I believe.

Pat Robinson, New Jersey Hills Media Group: Would that be only one then?  (https://www.facebook.com/governorphilmurphy)

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: I'm still looking for it, I'm sorry.  (https://www.youtube.com/njgovernorsoffice)

Pat Robinson, New Jersey Hills Media Group: No, that's okay, because you've got two in Hunterdon today and I didn't see two from Hunterdon yesterday, which  (https://www.instagram.com/governorphily/) isn't mean anything, I mean as far as my  (https://www.snapchat.com/add/philmurphy) calculations.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: They're coming in constantly.

Pat Robinson, New Jersey Hills Media Group: Yes, yes, that's why it's a little overwhelming.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Chris, can you help us out there?

DOH Assistant Commissioner Neuwirth: I'm looking through the list now. We have it by facility not by the county in front of me. It's certainly something we can circle back with you on.

Pat Robinson, New Jersey Hills Media Group: I would appreciate that, yeah, if someone can confirm.

Communications Director Mahen Gunaratna: Yeah, if you send an email to Alex Altman, Alexandra.altman@nj.gov (mailto:Alexandra.altman@nj.gov) we'll get back to you ASAP.

Pat Robinson, New Jersey Hills Media Group: I sent an email, I think it went through. Alexandra.Altman@nj.gov (mailto:Alexandra.Altman@nj.gov), correct?

Communications Director Mahen Gunaratna: Yeah.

Pat Robinson, New Jersey Hills Media Group: Okay, just another question. The CDC had recommended that your elderly and your vulnerable kind of avoid crowds while this is going on. And even while New Jersey is still below, the average person is still considered to be at low risk to come in contact with this, is that something that you would support? Or would you just support something like that in any kind of contagious disease element like cold and flu season?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Dr. Tan?

State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan: This is Tina. Of course. We recommend that anybody who is in those high-risk populations, again aside from doing those everyday preventative measures, to really consider for example anything that might put them at higher risk for getting any sort of disease, whether it's COVID-19 or flu or other respiratory pathogens because they might be potentially at more risk for serious illness because of underlying health issues. And again, as you had mentioned, CDC, their recommendation for elderly and those with underlying medical conditions, reconsider travel to areas that [are level three], reconsider cruise ship travel. Reconsider going to public areas because the idea is to try to enhance social distancing. And what we mean by social distancing is decreasing the frequency, decreasing the duration of

your interactions among other individuals because again, I'm sounding like a broken record but again, you want to try to limit opportunities for transmission of infected respiratory droplets to you. And by taking those steps, those everyday steps and by doing social distancing activities, that will try to minimize your risk.

Pat Robinson, New Jersey Hills Media Group: Okay, thank you very much. And yes, if you could get back to me about Morris County that would be great.

Communications Director Mahen Gunaratna: Will do. We'll now go to Lindy Washburn of USA Today.

Lindy Washburn, USA Today: So, I want to circle back to a question that many of us had asked yesterday which is what is the name of the urgent care center where the Ft. Lee man and the Englewood woman initially sought care? And if you cannot provide that, many, many readers are asking me that 'cause we're the local paper and they want to know, would you please explain why you don't have the information?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: I did get that information while we've been on the line. The centers where the individuals had visited, the one in North Jersey that two individuals visited was City MD on Route 4.

Lindy Washburn, USA Today: In what town? Route 4 in Hackensack or do you know?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: That's all I have is City MD on Route 4. The other one is Cooper University Urgent Care on Route 70 in South Jersey.

Lindy Washburn, USA Today: Okay. I noticed you did say the Ft. Lee man was a physician. Can you tell us what type of healthcare worker the 70-year-old who's now at St. Joseph's is and where he worked?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: I don't have the definite on that. Oh, by the way, it's City MD Paramus on Route 4. I just got a text on that. I don't have a definite on that healthcare worker. There was, there's been an assumption that he's a physician but I don't have confirmation on that.

Lindy Washburn, USA Today: Okay, and do we have a condition report on the 32-year-old who's at Hackensack University Medical Center?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: I don't have... That's one of our newest cases. I don't have his condition.

Lindy Washburn, USA Today: Okay, last question. At what point will the state declare a public health emergency and are we closer to that today?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: That's Lieutenant Governor.

Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver: Yes. In New Jersey, we have an Emergency Management System and we also have the Coronavirus Taskforce that Governor Murphy formed several weeks ago. Commissioner Judith Persichilli chairs that Taskforce. Whenever we receive guidance from either the Commissioner of Health in tandem with the Emergency Management leadership, if they advise that it is advisable to declare some sort of emergency, that is when we would do that – which is normal protocol for any type of emergency or crisis situation in our state. As of today, we have not been requested to do that either by EMS or by the Commissioner.

Lindy Washburn, USA Today: Commissioner, are you growing closer to that decision?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: That's going to be a discussion of the Corona Taskforce meeting, trying to establish the criteria by which we could guide the Governor, who is the person who calls for the emergency; but develop some criteria that would be helpful in the discussion.

Lindy Washburn, USA Today: Okay, thank you.


Communications Director Mahen Gunaratna: We'll now go to... Matt, is there anything you wanted to add on the State of Emergency question?

Chief Counsel Matt Platkin: Just to say a public health emergency which has never actually been declared in New Jersey before is set in statute. There are specific guidelines that the Taskforce will follow and then obviously a broader state of emergency under the Disaster Control Act, which is the Act that gives the Governor the broadest powers, is something that the Taskforce will also consider. And once they make a recommendation to the Governor is when it would be appropriate for a state of emergency to be ordered.


Communications Director Mahen Gunaratna: Thank you, Matt. We'll now go to Elise Young with Bloomberg News.



Elise Young, Bloomberg: Hi, good afternoon. The Ft. Lee gentleman who is a physician, he's a physician in what sort of setting – a hospital, a clinic and in what state?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: I don't have that information. Dr. Tan, do you have that information?

State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan: This is the first case, right? The healthcare worker works in New York City.  (<https://twitter.com/GovMurphy>)

Elise Young, Bloomberg: Is he a hospital doctor? Does he work in a clinic setting or a research setting?  (<https://www.facebook.com/governorphilmurphy>)

State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan: He works in several clinical settings which we have provided to New York to do the appropriate follow-up with their [workers and facilities.]  (<https://www.youtube.com/njgovernorsoffice>)

Elise Young, Bloomberg: Okay, very good. And regarding the urgent care centers, have health officials been in touch with folks who may have been there at the same time? And also, are both location still open and treating patients?  (<https://www.instagram.com/njhealth/>)  (<https://www.snapchat.com/add/philmurphy>)

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: I can answer the first question. The health officials have been in contact with the administrators of the urgent care centers. The urgent care centers are informing and advising their own healthcare workers and also any visitor to the urgent care center during the dates when the two individuals were present. And I do not have the dates, what those dates are. But I can tell you that the urgent care centers have been very responsive.

Elise Young, Bloomberg: And are they open? Are they still treating patients?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: I don't know if they're open.

Elise Young, Bloomberg: Okay, thank you. That's it for me.

Communications Director Mahen Gunaratna: Our next question is from Kimiko de Freytas-Tamura of the New York Times.

Kimiko de Freytas-Tamura, New York Times: So, my question was, I just wanted to double-check the name of the location where the 32-year-old was infected with the virus. Was it the Westin Hotel?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Your question was where he was infected with the virus? We don't have that information.

Kimiko de Freytas-Tamura, New York Times: Well, he had attended Empire Medical Training, right? And where was that held?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: We don't have information that he was infected. Are you saying that he was there when he was infectious?

Kimiko de Freytas-Tamura, New York Times: No, I just want to know where the Empire Medical Training Conference was held.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Westin Town Square.

Kimiko de Freytas-Tamura, New York Times: Westin Town Square, and where is that?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: I don't know. Does anybody on the line know where that is?


State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan: Manhattan.

Kimiko de Freytas-Tamura, New York Times: Okay, alright, so it's the Westin Hotel I'm assuming. Okay, thank you.

Communications Director Mahen Gunaratna: Thank you. The next question is from Tracey Tully of the New York Times.



Tracey Tully, New York Times: Hi, I believe my question was just answered but I just want to make certain that it was in the Westin Hotel in Times Square in Manhattan? Is that accurate? Because there's some confusion with a Florida conference I believe. I don't think there's a Town Square, so I just want to make sure it was in Times Square.


Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: I'm just looking at what was sent to me by text. Dr. Tan, I think you sent this to me?

State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan: Perhaps it's the Manhattan Westin  (<https://twitter.com/GovMurphy>)

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Empire Medical Training, Westin Times Square?  (<https://www.facebook.com/governorphilmurphy>)

State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan: That's the information that was provided.

Tracey Tully, New York Times: Okay, as long as that's accurate. If you find out differently if you could just let us all know, please. I have no other questions. Thank you,  (<https://www.youtube.com/njgovernorsoffice>)  (<https://www.instagram.com/govmurphy/>)

Communications Director Mahen Gunaratna: Thank you  our next question is from Charlie Stile of USA Today (<https://www.snapchat.com/add/philmurphy>)

Charlie Stile, Bergen Record: Good afternoon. I just really want to quickly follow on Lindy's question about a state of emergency. Scott Gottlieb, the former FDA Chairman has been recommending that we may need to take preemptive, local and state jurisdictions may need to take preemptive and in some cases dramatic action now, closing theaters, closing businesses, cancelling big events. Has that been discussed even in a preliminary way before we wait for this recommendation from both the Emergency Management and the Department of Health. And I ask that to you, Commissioner, since you would obviously play a big role in that decision or that recommendation to give to the Governor.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: What we've discussed at our Corona Taskforce and also within the Department of Health with our daily meeting, our internal group, it's our Crisis Management Team, is a couple of areas that you take into consideration. The first is when you move from containment to mitigation – containment, quarantining people, screening people, being vigilant about removing people that could expose other individuals to stop the spreads; to mitigation, where you take all steps to control the spread. When you move over to mitigation and controlling the spread, that's when things like mass gatherings and school closures and dismissals, all nonpharmaceutical interventions take hold. And we've discussed when do you actually pass over that line? And one of our discussions... Go ahead. Did someone try to break in?

Charlie Stile, Bergen Record: No, that was just me, I apologize.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: And then the second thing is the concept of community spread. I'm going to use a term that maybe Dr. Tan would not use so I would certainly open up to her suggestion here. But right now we have, given the dispersion of the PUIs, we have sporadic spread. We haven't seen significant community spread in one areas where we would say like Westchester, there's an outbreak or a cluster; or we haven't seen pockets of community spread through the state. When you see pockets of community spread you have to start being more vigilant to the mitigation strategies and looking at things, again, things like school closures, dismissals, mass gatherings, things like that. Dr. Tan, with your wealth of experience in this, do you want to jump in?

State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan: Commissioner, I think you have it spot-on. Again, it's a matter of looking at the local epidemiology. And that's why we're continuing to look at this really closely and that's why we're continuing to follow and to try to monitor as closely as possible. There's going to be, just like we

saw during the H1N1 pandemic back in 2009, there's a point where our routine containment strategies such as the very rigorous follow-up, the close contact tracing isn't going to be the best strategy to use. That's why we have all these other strategies that kind of assume that there's already going to be spread in there, spread in the community. And that's why the social distancing measures such as the school dismissal, such as limiting mass gatherings; that's why reinforcing the issues related to the preventive steps such as self-quarantine play a bigger role as we move towards the mitigation phase. Was that helpful?

Charlie Stile, Bergen Record: It is helpful but I gathered from Mr. Gottlieb's remarks, he's going for an even more preemptive approach. Because the inevitability of this, coming in even a larger degree than we anticipated is inevitable; or the spread, I'm sorry. So, it seems to be what you're saying is until we have clear evidence of community spread there is no... You're not going to take that next step of mitigation, those kind of drastic steps. Did I hear that correctly?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Charles, that's just one criterion that we would use. There's other criterion. The reason for me to share where we are seeing persons in an investigation from North Jersey to South Jersey starts getting me thinking that there'll be more and it'll be throughout the whole state. And it might be that we don't see one community spread but we see a bunch of it with the state that that is another criterion that we would use. But there is a number of different criterion. And we've discussed, do we take more aggressive action when it's in a couple of counties but not when it's in a three-quarters of the counties? I mean, there's no hard and fast rule but the epidemiologists will tell you, and I think Dr. Tan will agree, that they will know when it's time to move to the next phase of this particular situation, because these things kind of follow a regular pattern.

Chief of Staff George Helmy: Charlie, it's George. I think it might be helpful for Matt to just table set here a little bit on this emergency declaration. Matt, can you give some color?

Chief Counsel Matt Platkin: Yeah, thanks George. So, the Commissioner obviously spoke very well to the public health components of it, Charlie. It's also important to remember that a state of emergency is not necessary in many instances to take the preemptive actions that you're talking about. I haven't seen the guidance that you're referencing from the FDA individual, but every state has its own unique set of laws with respect to emergency powers and what authority the Health Commissioner has, the Governor has, etc. And we've obviously been using broad powers to date, starting with the Governor standing up the Taskforce over a month ago to take the very preventative actions you're talking about. And with respect specifically to schools, we don't need a state of emergency for schools to close which is how some have already limited those settings, taking those decisions. So, as soon as OEM and the Taskforce makes a recommendation to the Governor that we need it, or as soon as we determine, relatedly determine that we need the authority – the real question is when do we need that authority to do things that we can't currently do? That hasn't been the case yet it's obviously an active discussion. And as soon as it is the case the Governor will take action.

Communications Director Mahen Gunaratna: Thank you all. We're going to try and wrap this up shortly. We've got three more questions so we'll try to get through them as quickly as possible. We're going to close down the queue so please don't submit any new questions, or if you have something pressing please just email us. [Al Pellas] of WCBS TV asked that I read out his question as he's having technical difficulties. But Al asks the question "Is the Uber driver mentioned the same as the one mentioned by Governor Cuomo yesterday?" Commissioner Persichilli?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: I believe it is. I don't have written confirmation of that but all indications point that it's more than likely the same person. Dr. Tan, did you get any more recent information on that?

State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan. No.

Communications Director Mahen Gunaratna: Thank you. We have two more questions. We're going to go now to Tom Bergeron of ROI News.

Tom Bergeron, ROI News: Hey, thanks for taking another question. And you answered most of mine on the health state of emergency. You talked about needing to discuss this and move this along, and obviously this is a very fluid situation. It's 2:30 on a Sunday. Is it fair to say you might have another meeting on this before the end of the day if more results come in? Is this something you do? I know you guys are moving in real time. How often would these discussions come up?

Communications Director Mahen Gunaratna: Tom, I'll take that. If we have an update between now and tonight we'll be sure to notify the press as soon as possible. We also plan on holding a press conference tomorrow with the Acting Governor, sorry Lieutenant Governor Oliver will be hosting it along with Commissioner Persichilli and other state Health Officials at the ROC in Ewing and at 2:00 PM. So, you can look out for that on our public schedule this evening but we'll have an in-person briefing tomorrow with the Colonel, Lieutenant Governor, Commissioner and others. Our last question right now will come from Elise Young of Bloomberg News.

Elise Young, Bloomberg: Amtrak cancelled a New York City to Washington Accela, and I'm wondering whether Health has a particular point person for NJ Transit and keeping an eye on operations there. Murphy) does the state have the authority, and I'm not saying we're anywhere near this but does the state have the authority to say to New Jersey Transit, "We have to stop the buses?" (https://www.facebook.com/buses/) (https://www.facebook.com/buses/)

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: I can answer the first part of that question. The (https://www.youtube.com/njgovernorsoffice) Commissioner in charge of Transit sits on our Corona Taskforce so she's intimately involved with all the decisions that we're making, and all the Commissioners have been (https://www.instagram.com/njgovernorsoffice/) (https://www.instagram.com/njgovernorsoffice/) plans, their own resiliency plans, their own plans for anything that might impact them, from moving the trains and busses to business interruption if their employees (https://www.youtube.com/njgovernorsoffice/) (https://www.youtube.com/njgovernorsoffice/) terms of the authorities, I am not aware of. Maybe someone else on the line could help with that?

Chief Counsel Matt Platkin: Yeah, I'll jump in Commissioner. Under a state of emergency pursuant to the Disaster Control Act at least, the Governor has very broad powers. I'd have to look specifically at the question you raised, but as a general matter in weather-related emergencies and other similar situations, we have worked very closely with NJ Transit to adjust schedules. And should that come, obviously it would be something we'd consider.

Elise Young, Bloomberg: Okay, and NJ Transit has submitted some type of either operations plan or shutdown plan?

Chief Counsel Matt Platkin: I'm sorry, with respect to this situation?

Elise Young, Bloomberg: Yes.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: This is Judy. I have not seen their plans. All Commissioners are encouraged to have plans for circumstances like this, similar to what we have in the Department of Health.

Elise Young, Bloomberg: Okay, and as far as you're aware you don't have one from NJ Transit yet?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: No, I didn't ask for one. That's something that Commissioner...

Elise Young, Bloomberg: Okay, thank you.

Communications Director Mahen Gunaratna: We have one more question from an analyst who hasn't asked a question yet – Cesar Darias of Darias News.

Caesar Darias, Darias News: At the Westin Times Square there's more than one, they may be more. I found a couple. Do you know which particular medical conference this person in question attended?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: I do not. That's all that I received but we'll certainly try to find out and let you know.

Caesar Darias, Darias News: Okay, thank you. And just a second question, please. This morning at his press conference the Governor, I'm going to give a short quote here, said, "The Centers for Disease Control I believe were slow to begin with. They were not ready for this. They should have been ready for this. We saw what was happening in China. Anyone who didn't realize that someone from China was going to get on a plane and come to the United States was delusional." And then he said to the CDC, "Wake up" – that was a quote. Do you feel you're getting the proper communication and information and resources from the CDC? And are you at the point in New Jersey that you may be overwhelmed by this? Do you have everything that you need?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: From my perspective, I've been in regular contact with the CDC, particularly Dr. Jay Butler. And he's always been available, and from February 2nd when we found out that Newark was a funneled airport, for a period of time I was speaking with him every day. Dr. Tan, your communication with CDC, has it been what you suspected?

State Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan: Yeah, this is Tina. CDC has been doing a great job in conjunction also with a lot of the state health departments and also with their associations to get information out. The challenge is always that this is a rapidly changing situation and that information changes I mean literally every day. And we are getting updates as fast as we can. We have a Facebook for the Governor (https://www.facebook.com/governorphil) and for the briefings and publicly for the press as well as for the state separately.

Caesar Darias, Darias News: Thank you. If I could just come back real quick to the healthcare worker from Teaneck who went to Times Square presumably. Do you know if that person, again people, and it was a three-day conference, would have been Friday when he was feeling sick on the 28th. That was a Friday and you said he was there till the 2nd, that would be Monday. Most people commute from Teaneck from Bergen Hudson to New York. Do you know if the person took NJ Transit and/or was that at the Port Authority Bus Terminal? Or did the person drove into this multi-day conference?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: I don't have that information but I am sure that the local health officers do and that New Jersey local Health Departments are speaking to New York Health officials. That would be part of the contact tracing activities that are taking place for all of these individuals.

Caesar Darias, Darias News: Okay. Would you be able to let us know that when you have that information, please?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Yeah, I don't expect that I will have that information. When they start the contact tracing and they're working between New Jersey and New York, that's a local Health Department responsibility.

Caesar Darias, Darias News: Okay, so you're referring to Teaneck and/or the County.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Yes.

Caesar Darias, Darias News: Okay, thank you.

Communications Director Mahen Gunaratna: Those are all the questions that we had. We've exhausted every question that's been submitted. As a reminder, if you have any follow-ups please email Alex Altman, Alexandra.altman@nj.gov (mailto:Alexandra.altman@nj.gov). And tomorrow, Lieutenant Governor Oliver, state Health officials, Commissioner Persichilli will be on a multi-state conference call, a video call with Vice President Pence and Whitehouse officials and Secretary Azar. That'll take place around midday; immediately after that we'll hold a press conference at the ROC in Ewing with the Lieutenant Governor, Colonel, Commissioner Persichilli and others. So, 2:00 tomorrow at the ROC. Thank you all for joining today and please email Alex if you have any follow-up questions. Take care.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Thanks, everyone.

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