

Governor Andrew Cuomo COVID-19 Press Conference – March 23, 2020

Top Line Items

- Emergency order will be issued today to hospitals requiring them to submit plans to increase capacity by a minimum of 50%, with a goal of a 100% increase.
- All nurses will be required to enlist in service to manage COVID-19 – the Governor plans to issue an Executive Order to mandate this requirement.
- NYS will begin drug trials tomorrow with chloroquine / Zithromax combination therapies.
- 25% state share for FEMA declaration has been waived by President Trump.
- NYC is required to submit a plan to the Governor today to reduce outdoor and parks density, they have yet to do so. This plan may be adapted for Westchester, Nassau and Suffolk counties.
- Melissa DeRosa said there may be an Executive Order regarding the directive on no gatherings since there seems to be some confusion

Budget Update

- The Governor was asked about some of the more detailed policy proposals and some legislative policy priorities being done in the State budget during this crisis.
 - The Governor responded that they won't do detailed, weeks-long negotiation-needed type bills. If it is highly complex issue, it will be put off because he doesn't want to do something sloppy that will require the State to return to fix.
 - He again reiterated that something must be done on bail reform.
 - There was a press question on whether the Governor was considering clemency for the elderly in prison.
 - The Governor responded that yes, they are considering.
 - He continues to want to legalize recreational marijuana.
- The Governor was asked about the proposed Medicaid cuts as part of his budget and if that was wise given COVID-19.
 - The Governor responded that some of the recommended cuts have absolutely nothing to do with what the State is doing in response to the coronavirus crisis.
 - He said that some parts of Medicaid have grown exponentially and there is gross waste and he believes that every individual program should be reviewed to see what is necessary.

Updated Facts and Figures

- Increase in number of cases continues:
 - 20,875 total people have tested positive, with 5,707 new positive cases.
- Total People Tested: 78,289 to date, with 16,739 new tests since yesterday.
 - As of yesterday, about 25% of nationwide testing is happening in NYS.
- 2,635 people are currently hospitalized, out of the 20,875 people who have tested positive (13% of cases). The 13% rate is less than the 15% rate that New York has been seeing.
 - Of those hospitalized, 621 are ICU patients (24% of hospitalizations).
- NYS remains #1 in cases, compared to 1,914 in New Jersey - which is now #2 in the nation.

Reducing the Spread

- Reduce Density and Do more Testing
- Increase Hospital Capacity
 - Beds
 - 53,000-110,000
 - ICU: 3,000 current to 18,000-37,000 needed

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- **Emergency order to hospitals will be issued today**
 - ❖ 50% increase minimum
 - ❖ 100% goal
- Staff
 - Last week, letters to retired health professionals and medical and nursing schools to help – 30,000 responses to date.
 - He has not legally mandated they respond (but he could) – so far this is voluntary.
 - **Executive Order: All nurses must enlist.**
 - DFS to request health insurers to provide details regarding nurses and doctors on staff.
- Supplies
 - NY has had some success securing supplies and will be sending out PPE, masks and gowns and can get supplies out today to anyone who needs them. However, these supplies will not last long and that is why we need the federal government to step up.
 - Larry Schwartz has been working with Simonida Subotic (Deputy Secretary to the Governor) on supplies. The Governor's daughter, Cara, will also join that team to help.
 - Masks
 - 339,760 N-95 to be distributed statewide.
 - 861,700 Surgical Masks to be distributed statewide.
 - PPE
 - 353,500 Gloves to be distributed statewide.
 - 145,122 Gowns to be distributed statewide.
 - 197,085 Face Shields to be distributed statewide.
 - Ventilators
 - AD HOC problem
 - NY continues to compete with other states.
 - We need the Federal government to use the Defense Production Act, which will not “nationalize” industries, but will require that certain manufacturers begin production of needed equipment, for which the Federal government will compensate such businesses.
- President Trump delivered yesterday to help increase hospital capacity:
 - Emergency hospitals
 - Javits Center
 - SUNY Stony Brook
 - Westchester Convention Center
 - SUNY Old Westbury
 - FEMA Funds: 75% Federal - 25% State – the President is waiving the state share as the Governor requested.
 - FDA approval for DOH Drug
 - Tuesday
 - Hydroxychloroquine and Zithromax
 - NYS DOH
 - FDA-approved
 - Experimental drug NYS will institute
 - Antibody injections

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- Density Control
 - Gyms, theaters and other high density businesses closed.
 - Non-essential employees work from home.
 - Social distancing required for essential businesses, public transportation.
 - Matilda's law.
- Testing Increase
 - On March 13, FDA gave NYS the authority to do COVID-19 testing at all labs.
 - In 10 days, we went from 1,000 people tested per day to 16,000+ per day – more than any other state.
 - It is also more testing per capita than South Korea, which tested 20,000 per day at peak, even though that nation had more than double NY's population.
 - Multiple locations are now doing testing, and NY will have more testing locations.

Greatest Density Control Issue: NYC

- Plan due today on reducing density especially in parks.
- Focus on young people gathering.
 - You can get it – you can transmit it.
- NYC should pass any legislation necessary for the plan, or tell the Governor what is needed.

Still Figuring It Out

- The Governor has recruited some celebrities to help send the message to stay home, including videos he showed from Robert DeNiro and Danny DeVito.
- There has to be a balance, or parallel tracks in the current crisis:
 - Protect Lives.
 - Economic Viability – Governor takes responsibility for shutting off the economy and for sending workers home. Open questions remain:
 - Does everyone stay out of work?
 - Should young people go to work sooner?
 - Can we test for those who resolved and immune and let them return to work?

Is There a Risk Stratification?

- Isolate vulnerable.
- Question whether exposing vulnerable to younger people is actually riskier?
- We implemented NY PAUSE.
- We must plan NY FORWARD.
 - How do we restart the economy?
 - How do we dovetail this with a public health strategy?
 - The Governor believes it is unsustainable to run the state and an economy with businesses shut down, so we need to come up with a plan to restart the economy while we continue to respond to this health crisis.
 - He reaffirmed that he does not have any second thoughts on the decisions he has made thus far to require 100% of the workforce to be home, especially since it still has yet to bring the COVID-19 rate down – though he knows at some point he will have to allow at least some people to go back to work.
 - He recognizes there will likely be political consequences and that some people are very angry with him.

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Governor's Personal Opinion

- Don't be reactive, be productive!
- This goes on for several months – don't know how long, but will be several months.
- What do you do with this time?
- Avoid negative effects – Don't underestimate emotional trauma and isolation.
- Settle in:
 - Normal operations will continue.
 - There is no chaos.
 - Net effect – many will get the virus, BUT few are truly endangered.
 - Realize the time period we are expecting.
 - Help each other.
 - “Socially distanced, spiritually connected.”