APRIL 6, 2020 Albany, NY

Video, Audio, Photos & Rush Transcript: Amid Ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, Governor Cuomo Announces NYS on Pause Functions Extended for Additional Two Weeks

Directs Schools and Nonessential Businesses to Stay Closed for Additional Two Weeks Through April 29th

Increases Maximum Fine for Violations of the State's Social Distancing Protocol from $500 to $1,000

Requests Use of USNS Comfort Hospital Ship for Only COVID-19 Patients

802 Ventilators Have Been Distributed Downstate Through the State's "Surge and Flex" System

Establishes First Responders Fund to Be Used for Expenses Associated with COVID-19 First Responders - Blackstone is Making Anchor $10 Million Donation

State is Partnering with Headspace to Offer Free Meditation and Mindfulness Content for all New Yorkers

South Beach Psychiatric Center in Staten Island & Brooklyn Center Temporary Hospital at 170 Buffalo Avenue Will Open This Week Specifically for COVID-19 Patients

Confirms 8,658 Additional Coronavirus Cases in New York State - Bringing Statewide Total to 130,689; New Cases in 48 Counties

Governor Cuomo: "One of the reasons the rate of infection is going down is because social distancing is working. We have to continue the social distancing. Schools and non-essential businesses will stay closed until April 29. I know that's a negative for many, many reasons. I know what it does to the economy. But as I said from day one I'm not going to choose between public health and economic activity because in either event public health still demands that we stay on pause with businesses closed and schools closed."

Cuomo: "I'm going to call the president this afternoon and ask him to shift the Comfort from non-COVID to COVID. ... That is the only way we sustain this level of intensity in the hospital system. I understand what the original plan was with the Comfort, but I understand that there is no preordained strategy here. You have to feel it out day to day and you have to adjust with the facts. We do not need the Comfort for non-COVID cases. We need it for COVID."

Earlier today, amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo announced all NYS on Pause functions will be extended for an additional two weeks. The Governor also directed schools and nonessential businesses to stay closed for an additional two weeks through April 29th. The state will re-evaluate after this additional two-week period.

Governor Cuomo also announced the state is increasing the maximum fine for violations of the state's social distancing protocol from $500 to $1,000 to help address the lack of adherence to social distancing protocols. The Governor reminded localities that they have the authority to enforce the protocols.

The Governor today is asking the federal government to allow the USNS Comfort hospital ship to be used for COVID-19 patients. President Trump has already granted the Governor's request for the Javits temporary hospital facility to be used for only COVID-19 positive patients, and the addition of the USNS Comfort would help relieve pressure on the state's hospital system with an addition of 1,000 beds for COVID-19 patients.

The Governor also announced that 802 ventilators have been distributed downstate through the state's "surge and flex" system where all hospital systems are working together as one and sharing supplies, equipment and staff. Of the 802 ventilators, 38 were deployed to Rockland County, 36 were deployed to Westchester County, 505 were deployed to New York City and 223 were deployed to Long Island.

Governor Cuomo also announced the creation of the First Responders Fund to assist COVID-19 health care workers and first responders with expenses and costs, including child care. The State Department of Health is accepting donations for the fund, and Blackstone is making an anchor $10 million contribution to the fund. Donations can be made electronically at https://www.healthresearch.org/donation-form/ or by check sent to below address. Donors should specify the donation is for "COVID-19 NYS Emergency Response."

Health Research, Inc.

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The Governor also announced that the state is partnering with Headspace, a global leader in mindfulness and meditation, to offer free meditation and mindfulness content for all New Yorkers as a mental health resource for residents coping with the unprecedented public health crisis. New Yorkers can access a collection of science-backed, evidence-based guided meditations, along with at-home mindful workouts, sleep and kids content to help address rising stress and anxiety at www.headspace.com/ny.

The Governor also announced that the South Beach Psychiatric Center in Staten Island and the Brooklyn Center Temporary Hospital at 170 Buffalo Avenue will open this week and will be used specifically for COVID-19 patients.

Finally, the Governor confirmed 8,658 additional cases of novel coronavirus, bringing the statewide total to 130,689 confirmed cases in New York State. Of the 130,689 total individuals who tested positive for the virus, the geographic breakdown is as follows:

County	Total Positive	New Positive
Albany	319	14
Allegany	17	1
Broome	76	5
Cattaraugus	12	2
Cayuga	11	3
Chautauqua	15	4
Chemung	47	9

Chenango	46	3
Clinton	36	3
Columbia	59	8
Cortland	13	3
Delaware	29	2
Dutchess	1,189	112
Erie	1,023	105
Essex	7	0
Franklin	10	0
Fulton	11	2
Genesee	23	1

Greene	24	0
Hamilton	2	0
Herkimer	25	3
Jefferson	33	7
Lewis	6	3
Livingston	22	3
Madison	82	3
Monroe	574	26
Montgomery	15	0
Nassau	15,616	1,218
Niagara	120	4

NYC	72,181	4,630
Oneida	100	13
Onondaga	271	3
Ontario	32	0
Orange	3,397	295
Orleans	13	2
Oswego	29	1
Otsego	34	5
Putnam	345	31
Rensselaer	62	2
Rockland	5,703	377

Saratoga	153	5
Schenectady	138	10
Schoharie	11	0
Schuyler	4	0
Seneca	9	0
St. Lawrence	59	4
Steuben	75	12
Suffolk	13,487	1,082
Sullivan	253	19
Tioga	8	1
Tompkins	94	6

Ulster	372	40
Warren	26	1
Washington	19	1
Wayne	34	2
Westchester	14,294	571
Wyoming	23	1
Yates	1	0

VIDEO of the Governor's remarks is available on YouTube here and in TV quality (h.264, mp4) format here, with ASL interpretation available on YouTube here and in TV quality format here.

AUDIO of today's remarks is available here.

PHOTOS will be available on the Governor's Flickr page.

A rush transcript of the Governor's remarks, with Dr. Jim Malatras's explanation of COVID-19 projection models for New York State, is available below:

Governor Cuomo: Good morning. The start of another work week, or not. Everybody knows from my right Dr. Jim Malatras; medical doctor, still a doctor, Dr. Howard Zucker; to my left Melissa DeRosa, Secretary to the Governor; to her left Robert Mujica Budget Director, extraordinaire.

On the numbers, the number continues to increase. We're up to 8,658 new cases. Overall we have 130,000 people who tested positive, 16,000 people in our hospital system, 13,000 people have been discharged. Number of deaths are up once again, number of people we lost, number of New Yorkers, 4,758 which is up from 4,159 but which is effectively flat for two days.

While none of this is good news the possible flattening of the curve is better than the increases that we have seen. New York is still far and away the most impacted state. New Jersey is having real difficulty and speaking with Governor Murphy from New Jersey and anything we can do together we will. Michigan also, California has leveled off and Louisiana is having a difficult time so they're in our thoughts and prayers.

Total number of hospitalizations are down. The ICU admissions are down and the daily intubations are down. Those are all good signs and again would suggest a possible flattening of the curve. The number of discharged is down but that reflects the overall reduction in the numbers.

Big question that we're looking at now is, what is the curve? And we've been talking about cases increase, increase, increase - until they don't. When they stop increasing then what happens? The projection models have a number of alternatives. Some suggest basically the curve goes up and then drops precipitously. Some suggest a slight pause at the top. Some suggest there's a longer pause at the top which is effectively a plateau effect, or again the straight up and straight down precipitous drop which is the peak effect. No one can tell you which will occur. They say any one of the three options, you study other countries, you've had a combination of the above. We are studying it as we use the projection models from day one to determine actually what we do, how do we set policy and program by following the data.

Dr. Malatras has been working on the numbers, working with the statisticians and the projection models and helping us incorporate that into an operational model and, Jim, if you

want to take a moment and speak about the projection models here please?

Dr. Malatras: Great, thank you, Governor. As the Governor said, we have been looking at projection models from the beginning to determine the size of scope and severity and the Governor has mentioned this over his briefings. We've been working with many organizations and using the data, like Imperial College, the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, Cornell, McKinsey and others and some of the initial projections that we first saw at the beginning of this was at least up to 110,000 beds for COVID patients alone and the peak would come at the end of April. Those were some of earliest modeling from many organizations that it would be at the end of April around 110,000 beds just for COVID patients. There are other models too that we were tracking, one being lower at around 55,000 COVID beds, but again peaking at the end of April.

We follow, now that we have a pretty robust set to go by for the last several weeks, the bottom line the purple line is sort of where we are tracking today which suggests, it's a lower, and the question was what could you do to lower those initial projections from 110,000 and from 55,000? So a lot of the activity was we saw what the statisticians and the folks looking at these types of models said was going so what activities and what actions could you take to aggressively lower that number and the answer really was and what the Governor has been doing is aggressively enforce and enact social distancing to lower the overall number. This number and the current data suggest that that is exactly what's happening and it's not settled yet because we are going day-by-day, and the numbers as the Governor says, have changed a lot over time based on what numbers come in. But this could suggest that we are indeed potentially at the apex or beginning to be at the apex at this moment. Like the Governor has said, there has been a range of models 7 days, 14 days, 21 days, 30 days. It looks like we're at toward the earlier side of that time frame based on the current projections and modeling that we've been looking at.

Governor Cuomo: You also see on this slide where we are now and it can still go any way. We could still see an increase so it is hopeful, but it's also inconclusive and it's still depends on what we do. These models all have a co-efficient of what we do and how successful we are with social distancing, et cetera. From our decision making point of view, it doesn't really matter if we've hit the plateau or not because you have to do the same thing. If we are

plateauing, we are plateauing at a very high level and there's tremendous stress on the health care system. To say to this health care system, which is at maximum capacity today, this is a hospital system where we have our foot to the floor and the engine is at red line and you can't go any faster. And by the way, you can't stay at redline for any period of time because the system will blow. That's where we are. We are at red line. People can't work any harder. The staff can't work any harder and staying at this level is problematic. If we are plateauing, it is because social distancing is working. So we have to make sure the social distancing actually continues.

On the relieving the pressure on the hospital system, which is unsustainable at this rate, we're continuing what we call our surge and flex program where we get all the hospitals on the line on a daily basis. They're all doing inventories, they're all doing data sheets, they're all on the telephone, and we are shifting among the hospitals the ventilators, PPE equipment, who has gowns, who has masks, that happens on a daily basis, that adjustment. Also to relieve pressure on the hospital system, the Javits coming online is a very big deal. That is the relief valve for the entire downstate system.

The 1,100 military personnel started to come in. 300 were sent to New York City public hospitals to help the New York City public hospital system, the H&H system, which has been in distress. The rest will go to Javits to bring that up and running to full capacity. That transition is happening now. That is a COVID center now; it started as non-COVID; it's now a COVID center. The majority of the military personnel will be coming in tomorrow and the next day, but that Javits Center is going to be major release valve.

Second, the United States Navy ship Comfort, the original plan was that that would come in for non-COVID people. The original plan was it would also be a relief valve on the hospitals but not for COVID people, that it would take all of the non-COVID patients, if you will, from the hospital system. That was the plan. As it turned out, there's not a lot of non-COVID people in the hospital system, which is a separate story - happens to be a good news story. A byproduct of shutting everything down is you have fewer car accidents, crime rates is way down, fewer trauma cases, so there is not a large non-COVID population in the hospitals.

I'm going to call the president this afternoon and ask him to shift the Comfort from non-COVID to COVID. Then we would have Javits and the ship Comfort as a relief valve, that's 2,500 beds

and 1,000 beds - that's 3,500 beds - which could serve as a relief valve for the whole downstate system. That is the only way we sustain this level of intensity in the hospital system.

I understand what the original plan was with the Comfort, but I understand that there is no preordained strategy here. You have to feel it out day to day and you have to adjust with the facts. We do not need the Comfort for non-COVID cases. We need it for COVID.

If we had those two facilities as a relief valve that would make a significant difference. Bringing online 3,500 beds is no small task. Northwell Health is going to help us manage those. But they will be staffed by military personnel. Only the military could bring in that many people that quickly with that logistical operation and I want to thank DoD very much for their cooperation, because God bless the U.S. Military. We are fully aware of what they do to defend this nation, but this is a different application that we do not see every day and they are doing an extraordinary job. So I will call the President. He has been helpful to New York in the past and he has moved quickly in the past. I will ask him if he can make this adjustment for us because it would be truly beneficial. We would feel much better knowing that we can sustain this pace if we could start to offload patients to these two facilities.

In any event, plateau or not plateau, we still have to extend New York Pause because if that curve is turning it's turning because the rate of infection is going down. One of the reasons the rate of infection is going down is because social distancing is working. We have to continue the social distancing. Schools and non-essential businesses will stay closed until April 29. I know that's a negative for many, many reasons. I know what it does to the economy. But as I said from day one I'm not going to choose between public health and economic activity because in either event public health still demands that we stay on pause with businesses closed and schools closed.

Whether we've hit the apex or whether we haven't hit the apex, you would have to do the same thing. There is also a real danger in getting overconfident too quickly. This is an enemy that we have underestimated from day one and we have paid the price dearly. Well, the numbers look like they may be turning, yay it is over. No, it is not. Other places have made that mistake. Hong Kong has made that mistake, South Korea has made that mistake, and we are not going to make that mistake.

The weather is turning, people have been locked up, we've been talking about cabin fever. Now it is a nice day, I'm going to get out, I'm going to go take a walk. Now is not the time to do that. And frankly there has been a laxness on social distancing, especially over this past weekend, that is just wholly unacceptable. Look, people are dying. People in the health care system are exposing themselves every day to tremendous risk walking into those emergency rooms, then they have to go home to their family and wonder if they caught the virus and they're bringing it home to their family. If I cannot convince you to show discipline for yourself, then show discipline for other people. If you get infected, you infect someone else and you go an emergency room and you put a burden on all sorts of other people who you do not know, and who frankly you do not have the right to burden with your irresponsibility. And people, especially in New York City, the level of activity is up, partially due to the weather, made it a nice day. I understand people have been locked up for a long time, but now is not the time to be lax and it is a mistake. We all have a responsibility. We all have a role in this. We said that from day one. We have to respect the role that we play. Because the role we play is a societal obligation, that is how I see it.

I want local governments to enforce the social distancing rules. The local governments are charged with enforcement. I want them to enforce them. I want to be frankly more aggressive on enforcement, because all of the anecdotal evidence is people are violating it at a higher rate than before. So, we are going to increase the potential maximum fine from $500 to $1000. But it's not really about the fine. Nobody wants the money, we want the compliance. We are serious. And, again, it is not about your life, but you do not have the right to risk somebody else's life. You do not have the right, frankly, to take a health care staff, and people who are literally putting their lives on the line, and be cavalier or reckless with them. You just do not have the right. And we want to thank all the people who are getting us through this every day under very tough circumstances. And we see the illness rate among these essential workers, and we know the sacrifice they are making and we should respect it. It is that simple. You have the first responders who are out there, you have police officers who are out there, the transit workers who have to drive the bus and train every day, the health care workers who are doing extraordinary work -- so let's respect them, and let's help them.

We're also going to set up a fund run by the Department of Health to assist the health care workers with expenses, costs, childcare, etcetera. I want to thank Blackstone for making the

first contribution to that fund of $10 million to assist the first responders. I hope other individuals and corporations follow their lead. We are also very aware of the mental health aspect of this situation, and the stress, and the isolation that this has caused. And people are trying in their own way to grapple with what this means, and what is the impact? How do you rationalize this situation? And the mental health aspect of it is very real. Headspace is going to partner with New York. They're an app. They're going to have content for New York and free membership for New York. So we thank them. But we also have an emotional support hotline. We have thousands of mental health professionals who have signed up to volunteer to provide mental health services. So we want people to make sure they know about that and it's available.

I talk about perspective a lot. Maybe, frankly, because partially I'm speaking to myself. I had a good conversation with my daughters last night, Cara and Michaela, who are often wiser than I am and wiser than their years. It's very hard to see the number of deaths we're having. It's frightening, it's disturbing, that amount of loss. I'm the governor of New York. I see my job as preventing that kind of disturbance and negativity and loss for the people of the state. Perspective, you know, we like to think that we can control everything. We can't. We like to think that we can fix everything and fix all the problems for people. We can't. The undeniable truth here is that this virus is a deadly enemy and we will lose and we are losing people who are vulnerable to the virus. That can't be controlled, that can't be fixed. Why? That's Mother Nature, that's a question God can only answer. But, control what you can. Do what you can.

The challenge is to make sure that we don't lose anyone who could've been saved if our healthcare system was operating fully. Don't lose anyone who you could save. That is a legitimate, ambitious goal of government. And that we have done so far. That we have done so far. Have we saved everyone? No. But have we lost anyone because we didn't have a bed or we didn't have a ventilator or we didn't have healthcare staff? No. The people we lost are the people we couldn't save. Not for lack of trying and not for lack of doing everything that we could do as a society, not only as a government and as a healthcare system. So, to the extent we can find peace in that, it helps me. We are still New York tough. New York tough means tough, but tough in a New York sense also means compassionate. It means that we are unified, it means that we are loving, because if you're really tough, the really tough guys,

they're tough enough to show love. And because we're smart. And that's how we're going to get through this.

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