

REMARKS

Remarks by President Trump and Members of the Coronavirus Task Force in a Press Briefing

HEALTHCARE

Issued on: **March 30, 2020**



Rose Garden

5:12 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, thank you very much. Thank you. Very comfortable here. A lot of room. And we appreciate you being here.

Yesterday I announced that we would be extending our social distance guidelines through the end of April. This is based on modeling that shows the peak in fatalities will not arrive for another two weeks. The same modeling also shows that, by very vigorously following these guidelines, we could save more than 1 million American lives. Think of that: 1 million American lives.

Our future is in our own hands, and the choices and sacrifices we make will determine the fate of this virus and, really, the fate of our victory. We will have a great victory. We have no other choice. Every one of us has a role to play in winning this war. Every citizen, family, and business can make the difference in stopping the virus. This is our shared patriotic duty.

Challenging times are ahead for the next 30 days, and this is a very vital 30 days. We're sort of putting it all on the line, this 30 days. So important because we have to get back. But the more we dedicate ourselves today, the more quickly we will emerge on the other side of the crisis. And that's the time we're waiting for. The more we commit ourselves now, the sooner we can win the fight and return to our lives. And they will be great lives — maybe better than ever.

Today we reached a historic milestone in our war against the coronavirus. Over 1 million Americans have now been tested — more than any other country, by far; not even close — and tested accurately.

And I think what I'd like to do is ask Secretary Azar, who's done a fantastic job, to come up and just say a few words about the fact that we reached substantially now more than 1 million tests.

Please. Thank you, Alex.

SECRETARY AZAR: Well, thank you, Mr. President, for your leadership in marshaling all the resources that we have for this unprecedented testing effort. And thank you, Mr. Vice President, for leading a whole-of-economy approach to testing.

As the President mentioned, today the United States hit more than 1 million samples tested — a number that no other country has reached. We're now testing nearly 100,000 samples a day, also a level that no other country has reached.

I want to thank every partner that has been involved in this effort. That includes all of the men and women of the FDA and the CDC, including Director Redfield and Commissioner Hahn. Together, the FDA and CDC have worked to balance the need for testing on an aggressive scale with the scientific rigor that Americans expect.

Working with our testing coordinator, Admiral Giroir, they have now truly unleashed the ingenuity of the private sector and our state and local leaders, the centerpieces of America's historic approach to testing.

I want to thank those state and local leaders who have used their on-the-ground resources and knowledge to lead testing and make it much more easily accessible to the Americans who need it.

I'm also grateful to FEMA, with whom we are now working closely to get state and local partners what they need.

I also want to thank CMS, where Administrator Verma has given healthcare providers unprecedented flexibility to scale up capacity for testing and treatment, and has ensured that tests will be paid for.

Finally, we would not be where we are today without the many American companies, entrepreneurs, and scientists who have worked day and night to develop, as of today, 20 different emergency testing options. With the FDA responding to request for authorization typically within 24 hours, the number of options is growing nearly every day. FDA has also opened up new options for using the available tests, like self-swabbing and new options for reagents.

I also want to thank FDA and other components of HHS for incredibly rapid action on other tools that we need. This weekend, we actually worked to secure 30 million tablets from Sandoz and 1 million tablets from Bayer of hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine, which are potential COVID-19 treatments. And we authorized Battelle's new decontamination machines, which can each sterilize thousands of essential N95 masks for reuse every day.

So thank you, Mr. President, for your leadership and thank you to everybody who's played a part in getting us where we are today. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Thank you.

I'd like to ask Dr. Hahn to come up — FDA — because we have some really good stuff. First of all, the numbers have been incredible on testing, but in the days ahead, we're going to go even faster. And we have something from Abbott Labs, which is right here, and that's a five-minute test, highly accurate.

And I maybe can show that as we listen to our FDA Commissioner — the job he's done in the approval process. We talked about the chloroquine and the hydroxychloroquine just now. I thought that I'd mention it, but Alex has already done that, but we have that now under test with 1,100 people in New York. And it was only the fast approval by FDA that allowed us to do that. It was a really rapid approval.

And, Doctor, please say a few words. And this is the first one on the line of the five-minute test from Abbott.

DR. HAHN: Thank you, Mr. President, for your leadership. Thank you, Mr. Vice President, for your leadership of the task force. I'm very proud of FDA staff's work in the last few months to expedite the availability of testing in this country. I'm also incredibly appreciative of private industries' ingenuity and willingness to work with us quickly to develop and distribute those tests.

We've had a substantial addition to testing with the authorization of point-of-care tests, especially the Abbott point-of-care test, which the President has pulled out of the box.

A point-of-care test is a test that gives you a result where you're getting care. This is truly a patient-centered approach — whether it's the doctor's office, a hospital, an emergency room, an urgent care center, or a drive-by testing site.

Just like tests for flu or strep, where go to the doctor's and you can get the test done, you can get an answer within minutes of having this test done. Now, with those tests being approved for Abbott and for others, these are available around the country. They're planning to scale up the number of tests that can be put out throughout the country over the next month. And patients can get the answer within as little as 15 to 5 minutes. And then, of course, an appropriate plan of treatment can be given.

We at FDA are working quickly with Abbott, as well, and other testing approaches. And normally these tests take months to develop. I was on the phone today with the Abbott CEO. He told me that normally this is a 9- to 12-month approach to developing a point-of-care test. They did this in collaboration with FDA and U.S. government within weeks.

Abbott has shared that they will be delivering these tests tomorrow and then will be ramping up. I'd just like to emphasize one thing: The most innovative and safe products come from the private sector in partnership with government, taking an all-hands-on-deck approach, just like in this case. And the other point here is that Abbott and FDA worked together to make sure that we had a fast, reliable, and accurate test to market.

Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Doctor. Great job too. Really great job. Thank you, Steve.

So, the pharmaceutical company, Sandoz, has been working with us very closely. And as Alex mentioned a little bit, 30 million doses of the hydroxychloroquine to the United States government has been given. And Bayer has donated 1 million doses of the chloroquine, which will soon be distributed to states and state health officials around the country. Teva Pharmaceuticals is also donating 6 million doses of hydroxychloroquine to U.S. hospitals. That's 6 million doses.

So the private sector, as you'd say, Steve, has been amazing, what's happened. Really amazing. And we're going to introduce you to some of the greatest business executives in the world today, no matter where you go, and they're going to say a little bit about what they're doing. And then we have so many more.

The FDA has also authorized the — Battelle's N95 respirator mask sterilization kits. It's an incredible thing. I've been asking, "Why are we throwing these masks away?" You look at some of these masks and they're significant pieces of equipment. And I say, "How come you throw them away? Why aren't they using sterilization techniques?"

And I got a call from Mike DeWine, the governor of Ohio — and he's a tremendous guy, a tremendous governor — and he said, "We have a company named Battelle, and they're having a hard time getting approval from the FDA." And I called up Dr. Hahn, and within a very short period of time, they got the approval. Steve, we really appreciate it. I want to thank Mike and I want to thank Steve.

And they're going to be able — each machine now can disinfect 120,000 masks per day. Now, think of that. Each machine can disinfect 120,000 masks per day. It'll be just like a new one. It can go up to about 20 times for each mask. So each mask can go through this process 20 times. And they have two in Ohio, one in New York, and one will soon be shipped to Seattle, Washington, and also to Washington, D.C. So that's going to make a tremendous difference on the masks.

This morning, I spoke to our nation's governors to help each state get the medical supplies they need. And yesterday, Vice President Mike Pence asked our nation's hospitals to begin reporting total bed capacity, ICU bed capacity, ventilator capacity, and vital medical supply levels on a daily basis. And, Mike, thank you for the great job. Thank you very much.

In New York, the 2,900-bed hospital under construction, which is now completed — they completed it in three days; you might say three and a half days — at the Javits Center will be completed today. Will be — and when you look — so they're going up. I think we're going to be adding some more beds, which will be completed today.

And we've opened up — whoops, there goes our box. And my hair is blowing around, and it's mine. (Laughter.) The one thing you can't get away with. If it's not yours, you got a problem, if you're President.

And nearly 3,000 medical beds will become operational. The U.S. Navy ship Comfort also arrived today, equipped with 12 operating rooms and 1,000 hospital beds. Work has begun on additional temporary hospital sites, including a 600-bed capacity nursing home facility in Brooklyn, and numerous floors of a high-rise building on Wall Street.

So it's been really pretty amazing what they've done, and the Army Corps of Engineers, what they've done. They've done — they just completed — think of it — a 2,900-bed hospital in New York in just about three days, maybe four days. And the whole city is talking about it.

On top of that, we floated in a great ship, which is going to be 1,000 rooms, which is being used for patients outside of what we're focused on. And that will free up a lot of rooms for what we're focused on. So, it's been great.

The Army Corps of Engineers has awarded contracts for the construction of alternate care facilities, also, at the State University at Stony Brook, State University Old Westbury, and the Westchester Community Center. We're sending 60 ambulances to New York City today. We have a total of 60. We're getting some additional ones, with up to 190 more to follow at different locations.

To date, FEMA has obligated more than 1.3 billion dollars — billion dollars in federal support to the State of New York. So we're spending a lot of money in New York. It's a hot — it's a hotbed. There's no question about it. And we're spending a lot of time, effort on New York, New Jersey. Spoke with Governor Cuomo a lot. Spoke with Governor Murphy a lot, in New Jersey. And we're — we're really getting the job done. People are very impressed, and I'm very impressed by the people in FEMA, the people in the Army Corps of Engineers because what they've done, I've never seen anybody do anything like it.

In addition to the 8,100 ventilators that we've already delivered over the next 48 hours, we're delivering more than 1,000. We're going — 400 ventilators are going to Michigan very shortly, 300 going to New Jersey, 150 ventilators to Illinois, 150 to Louisiana, and 50 to Connecticut.

FEMA and HHS already delivered 11.6 million N95 respirators, 26 million surgical masks, 5.3 million face shields, 4.4 million surgical gowns, and 22 million gloves.

And I don't know if you just saw it. It just came over the wires that Ford just announced, just a little while ago, that they will produce, along with General Electric Healthcare, 50,000 ventilators, and they're going to be doing it in less than 100 days.

On top of that, we have other companies that are doing ventilators, including General Motors. But we have nine other companies doing ventilators. As we outpace what we need, we're going to be sending them to Italy. We're going to be sending them to France. We're going to be sending them to Spain, where they have tremendous problems, and other countries as we — as we can. But the fact that we're doing so many so quickly is a tribute to our great companies.

More than 14,000 National Guard members have been activated and can help supplement state and local efforts to distribute personal protective equipment, where we're sending a lot. We have planeloads coming in. We have 51 loads from various locations all around the world, and they're landing. We had our first big cargo plane land this morning, and we're getting it from all over the world.

And we're also sending things that we don't need to other parts. I just spoke to the Prime Minister of Italy, and we have additional capacity. We have additional product that we don't need. We're going to be sending approximately 100 million dollars' worth of things — of surgical and medical and hospital things to Italy. And Giuseppe was very, very happy — I will tell you that. They're having a very hard time.

Joining us this afternoon are CEOs of the great American companies that are fulfilling their patriotic duty by producing or donating medical equipment to help meet our most urgent needs. What they're doing is incredible. And these are great companies.

Darius Adamczyk of Honeywell — you know that. And Darius has been somebody that I've dealt with in the past, and he's a great leader of a great company.

Debra Waller of Jockey International.

A friend of mine, Mike Lindell of MyPillow. Boy, do you sell those pillows. That's unbelievable what you do.

David Taylor of Procter & Gamble and Greg Hayes of United Technologies Corporation.

And I just want to tell all of you that America is very grateful to you and what you've done. An amazing job you've done, and we thank you very much.

I'd like you to come up and say a couple of words, if you might, about your companies. Mike, come on up. Come on up, fellas, please. Come on up. You have to say what you're doing because it's been really incredible.

Go ahead, Mike.

MR. LINDELL: Okay, well, MyPillow is a U.S. vertically integrated company, which has been forced to adjust to the changing business environment as a result of the pandemic. MyPillow's unique position as a U.S. company functions as a manufacturer, logistics management distributor, and direct-to-consumer. Given our current business lines, we are experiencing the effects of this pandemic firsthand.

What MyPillow has done — we've established an internal task force, which is monitoring future needs of companies across the country as a result of this pandemic. And given our position, we've begun to research and develop new protocols to address the current and future needs of U.S. businesses across multiple sectors, how companies are going to prepare themselves when they once again open up, and changes to their current operations in order to adjust to future threats and pandemics.

MyPillow has designated some of its call centers to help U.S. companies navigate the many issues that resulted from this pandemic. We've dedicated 75 percent of my manufacturing to produce cotton facemasks. In three days, I was up to 10,000 a day. By Friday, I want to be up to 50,000 a day.

I proud to manufacture our products in the United States, and I'm even more proud to be able to serve our nation in this great time of need. Thank you, Mr. President, for your call to action when —

which has empowered companies like MyPillow to help our nation win this invisible war.

Now, I wrote something off the cuff, if I can read this.

THE PRESIDENT: Okay.

MR. LINDELL: (Laughs.) God gave us grace on November 8th, 2016, to change the course we were on. God had been taken out of our schools and lives. A nation had turned its back on God. And I encourage you: Use this time at home to get — home to get back in the Word, read our Bibles, and spend time with our families.

Our President gave us so much hope where, just a few short months ago, we had the best economy, the lowest unemployment, and wages going up. It was amazing. With our great President, Vice President, and this administration and all the great people in this country praying daily, we will get through this and get back to a place that's stronger and safer than ever.

THE PRESIDENT: That's very nice. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mike. Appreciate it.

Please come on up. I did not know he was going to do that, but he's a friend of mine, and I do appreciate it. Thank you, Mike, very much.

Please.

MR. ADAMCZYK: First of all, Mr. President, Mr. Vice President, the entire administration, and all the agencies, thank you for your strong leadership during this time of crisis. It is noticed and it's making a difference.

Second of all, I'd like to say a big thank you to all the healthcare workers out there. You're putting yourself in harm's way every day, and we really respect what you're doing, and we couldn't be thankful enough for it. And I can tell you that more help is on the way.

We, as Honeywell, we're an industrial technology company. And one of the businesses that we're in: We protect the industrial worker. But what we're doing today is we're repurposing a lot of that equipment to serve the healthcare worker.

A few days ago, we announced the start-up of a new manufacturing facility in Rhode Island. We're going to be hiring 500 employees. We have already 200 onboard. And we're going to be starting the production of N95 masks within the next two weeks.

Furthermore, today we're announcing the start-up of another manufacturing facility in Arizona. We're going to be hiring another 500 people. And we're going to be starting up production in that facility by the middle of May. So, in total, we've doubled our production of N95 masks already. It's going to double again within the next 60 days. And then within the next 90 days, we're going to have 5x the capacity we do today.

Furthermore, we're going to be providing other safety equipment to support all the efforts going out.

Lastly, I'll say a big thank you to all the Honeywell employees, and also announce a \$10 million fund for them, for all the hourly and administrative employees who are having a hard time during this time of crisis.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Fantastic. Thank you. Normally, I'd shake his hand, but we're not supposed to do that anymore. So, that's okay. Great job. Thank you to Honeywell.

Please, go ahead. Debra, please.

MS. WALLER: Thank you, Mr. President and Mr. Vice President, on your guidance during this unprecedented time. And I'm very honored to be here today. Founded by a minister 144 years ago, Jockey International is a family-owned company headquartered in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Since 1876, we have been providing socks and underwear for generations of families.

It is part of our DNA to roll up our sleeves and help our country in her time of need. During World War Two, we made parachutes for the military. And today, we are eager to serve this great country by providing support for the healthcare workers on the frontlines of this fight. As the President and Vice President have said, it's a whole-of-America approach and we are committed.

Jockey has had a longstanding partnership with Encompass Group, headquartered in Georgia, serving the healthcare community. When we learned of the critical need for PPE, we knew we had to help. That meant restarting production on tier three isolation gowns. Monumental lifting by Jockey, Encompass, FEMA, and the FDA was done in just a few days to be production ready. As a result, we expect to begin delivering 30- to 50,000 gowns per week, helping those that need it the most right now.

In addition, this week we are also donating 10,000 units of scrubs to the frontline doctors and nurses at the Javits Convention Center in New York City. We would not have been able to do this without the collaboration of the administration, representatives from the federal agencies, and Congressman Bryan Steil.

Thank you very much, Mr. President and Mr. Vice — Mr. Vice President.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much.

MS. WALLER: Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Fantastic job. Thank you very much.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. President and Mr. Vice President, for bringing us together today. I'm proud to be able to represent the men and women of Procter & Gamble, who every day, 24 hours a day, are working to build and make essential cleaning products, hygiene products, and healthcare products for families everywhere. These include healthcare workers and for institutions that are serving those on the frontline.

P&G people are the faces of brands you know and trust — brands like Tide, Pampers, Bounty, Charmin, Mr. Clean, and Vicks. In addition to making, packing, and shipping these essential items, they've worked together to transform our plants to make things we've never made before, like hand sanitizers and facial masks. Some of these are already getting to national, state, and local agencies. Some of them are in the hospitals already.

Everywhere around the world, PNG people are working every day to serve everybody — consumers. And they're working together to bring together the full capability of our research and development, our engineering, our manufacturing, and our communications capability to make

sure we make a difference to the consumers we serve and to all the audience that we can make a difference to. I want to thank them and I'm very grateful for what they do every day in service to others.

Thank you, Mr. President, Mr. Vice President for bringing us together today.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

Please.

MR. HAYES: Mr. President. Good afternoon. I'm Greg Hayes from United Technologies, and on behalf of the 240,000 employees of United Technologies and the 70,000 employees at Raytheon, which will join together with UTC this Friday, I want to first of all say thank you to the President and the Vice President for your leadership during what is really a war. It is a different war than anybody has ever fought before, but it's a war that we're uniquely qualified to help.

As one of the world's largest defense contractors and some of the best technology, we're using that technology to try and solve some real-world problems. Today, we're working with the Air Force to try and help pilots as they're moving medical evacuees with the COVID-19 virus, such that they can be protected and that the patients can be protected.

Again, we're working also with logistics. And if you think about a war, strategy is important, but logistics wins war. It's — it's imperative, I think, with FEMA, along with the Mr. Navarro's office, that we coordinate all of these activities. Last week, we donated about 90,000 pieces of personal protective equipment to FEMA. Next week, we'll have another almost million. Again, working through our supply chain partners around the world.

We're also today — this week, beginning the manufacture of face shields. Using the additive technologies that we have and the machines that we have available within UTC, we'll be able to produce approximately 10,000 shields in the next four weeks — again, all needed equipment. We stand ready to help in any way we can. We don't need the Defense Production Act to ask us to act. All of the people at UTC and Raytheon are focused on this war and winning it.

Again, I also want to say thank you to all of our employees for their work during this crisis, as well as to the frontline medical and other first responders. Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Thank you. Fantastic. Great company. Those are great companies. Thank you very much.

I'd like to ask Seema to come up and say a few words about what you're doing and what's happening and how positive it's been. I really appreciate it. Come on up, Seema Verma.

ADMINISTRATOR VERMA: Thank you, Mr. President. And let me start by saying, I want to convey my deepest sympathies to those that have lost loved ones to the coronavirus. We're all thinking of you.

Today is Doctors' Day and, even without it, I want to send a message of gratitude to the foot soldiers in this war: men and women that are providing care and comfort to Americans that have been affected by the virus. Your country is grateful.

And, in short, as the President has said, we are engaged in a war against an invisible enemy. In wartime, the assumptions of peacetime must be revisited and adjusted to meet the demands of the moment. And so, under the President's leadership, CMS is waiving a wide and unprecedented range of regulatory requirements. Now, many healthcare systems won't need these waivers and they shouldn't use them if they don't need them, but the flexibilities are there.

In a time of crisis, regulations shouldn't stand in the way of patient care. And there are several components to our announcement today, but the first one is CMS's Hospitals Without Walls, and this is going to allow hospital systems to create new treatment sites outside of their facility to expand capacity and be able to safely separate patients that are infected with the coronavirus and those that are not.

Now, FEMA is doing incredible work, setting up temporary hospitals in New York and other areas. But under these waivers, we are empowering local communities to complement and augment the work of FEMA and allowing hospital systems to tap into the capacity that already exists in their communities, making use of dorms and hotels or gymnasiums, and allowing the main hospital to focus on those that need the most intensive care. There are surgery centers out there today that are delaying elective surgeries and they may have excess capacity that can be devoted to hospital-like care.

We're also making changes to the Medicare program to facilitate testing. So some people that need a coronavirus test can't leave their home or patients that are in a nursing home, and now we will

pay for labs to go out to these locations and perform testing.

And we're also expanding the workforce. We are taking action today to relax some of our regulations to allow hospitals to increase their workforce. And we're allowing a broad range of flexibilities so that we can let healthcare workers operate at the top of their license.

And we are also allowing our hospitals to give — to provide more support for our healthcare workers. Under today's regulations, they can only provide minimal support to healthcare workers, but now we're going to allow them to provide child care, meals, laundry services.

And then there's also telehealth. The President already directed a dramatic expansion of telehealth to our nation's 62 million seniors with Medicare. And we're so proud of all the healthcare — healthcare providers and patients that have rapidly implemented telehealth.

But today, we're announcing that we're going to go even further and we're going to be paying for doctors to make phone calls with their patients and provide care over the phone. And we're getting rid of longstanding barriers to telehealth in the Medicare program, allowing emergency rooms to use telehealth and eliminating requirements that some visits be provided face to face.

And I also want to mention that, on Saturday, the President directed CMS to offer advance payments for healthcare providers that are experiencing cash-flow problems. We know that many providers are complying with our recommendations to delay nonessential elective surgeries, and they shouldn't be penalized for doing the right thing.

Now, I've barely scratched the surface of all the flexibilities that we are offering healthcare workers and healthcare systems. These flexibilities will provide a lot of flexibility from regulations that are ill suited to the unprecedented needs of this emergency. And doctors and nurses and other healthcare professionals that are working long hours and sacrificing times with their families and risking their lives will have the flexibility that they need to confront the needs of the coronavirus pandemic.

And there are many heroes in this war, but I want to take an opportunity to thank the team at CMS. These folks have worked day and night. The flexibilities that are in this regulation — in any regulation — usually take CMS a year, but we did this in two weeks, and I couldn't be more honored and privileged to serve alongside these dedicated public servants.

Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Seema. Fantastic job. And you're doing a great job.

So, we are in the midst of something that is very difficult, but we are going to win; it's just a question of when. We want to do it as quickly as possible. We want to have as few deaths as possible.

And we will meet again tomorrow for some statistics, and some updates as to where we are, where we think we're going, and timing. I think timing is going to be very important because we have to get our country back. We have to get our country back to where it was and maybe beyond where it was because we've learned so much.

But we will have lost a lot of people. And in many ways, they're heroes. And if you look at what's happening with our medical professionals, it's a danger. They're — they're warriors. Men and women are doing a job that — the likes of which I don't think anyone's ever seen. I see them coming out of planes today, going into New York, going into the most dangerous locations, dangerous areas. And they go in there and they just want to do the job. And you see the numbers. You see the numbers like I see the numbers.

I have some friends that are unbelievably sick. We thought they were going in for a mild stay. And, in one case, he's unconscious — in a coma. And you say, "How did that happen?"

So I just want to thank all of the great professionals: men and women — doctors and nurses and paramedics and first responders and law enforcement. By the way, if you look at New York and you see how — the effect that this had on law enforcement, it's been incredible. These are great people — firefighters. Great people. They're helping in so many different ways.

So, thank you very much. And if you'd like, we'll take a few questions. John, please.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. Yesterday, you said that you would be extending the guidelines through the end of April and that you'd be giving us specifics tomorrow.

THE PRESIDENT: Right.

Q Do you expect that the guidelines will just carry on — the guidelines that have been in place now for 15 days? Could there potentially be some modification?

Also you have some travel restrictions that come up for reconsideration.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah.

Q The one from the EU on April 13th —

THE PRESIDENT: Right.

Q Canada-U.S.-Mexico border on —

THE PRESIDENT: Sure. They'll be staying.

Q — April the 21st.

THE PRESIDENT: They'll be staying.

Q Will — what will be happening with all that?

THE PRESIDENT: They'll be staying and we may add a few more, but the guidelines will be very much as they are. Maybe even toughened up a little bit. But they're having a big impact. They're having a tremendous impact and we're starting to see it. And that's the key: We're starting to see the impact that they're having.

Q And if I could ask you, too. You talked about Ford now ramping up production —

THE PRESIDENT: Yep.

Q — of ventilators. The government is sending —

THE PRESIDENT: Right.

Q — thousands of ventilators across the country. Clearly, the supply is increasing. But when you look at the production curve against the hospitalization curve, can you guarantee that everyone who needs a ventilator in the next few weeks will be able to get one?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think that some are ramping up to a level that they're not going to have to, John, and I think that we also have kept in reserve — we have almost 10,000 ventilators in our line. We have them. We've held back just because we did the stockpile. We didn't want to give them because we don't know where the emergency — this hits — it hits, like, so fast. It comes so quickly. And we have 10,000 — we're probably going to send some of them now.

We've been sending a lot to Michigan and various other states. We'll probably send some additional ones to Michigan. New York has been doing very well, but we can add some more to New York. We're adding them to the areas that are having a problem. Even Alabama, all of a sudden, flared up a little bit, as you saw the last couple of days, and we'll send them down to Alabama. So, we have 10,000; we kept them for this very specific purpose.

It sounds like a lot, but it's not when you think about it. But we're making a lot and when you see — they're talking about hundreds of thousands being made in a very short period of time because if you look at what just — so, we have now 10 companies, at least, making the ventilators. And we say, "Go ahead." Because, honestly, other countries really — they'll never be able to do it. It's a very complex piece of equipment and it's — it's big and expensive.

Q So do you believe, as we approach this peak in a couple of weeks, that there will be enough for the American populace?

THE PRESIDENT: I do think so. Yes, I do think so. I think we're going to be in very good shape. And we had a great call today with a governors. And they were — I actually said, I hope that the media is listening to this call because it was a really good call. And that was randomly selected — largely Democrats and Republicans in there. I think, for the most part, they were saying thank you for doing a great job. And we discussed that at the end of the call. So it really — people are very happy with what we're doing.

Now, the circumstances are so terrible because of what's going on, but I think they're very impressed by the federal government. I watched that beautiful ship floating in today into — you know, weeks ahead of schedule; almost four weeks ahead of schedule — into New York Harbor. The

Comfort. And I watched the Mercy floating into Los Angeles a week ago — almost a week ago. And they are stocked. They are really ready to go. They are stocked with both talent and tremendous amounts of equipment. And the Navy and everybody else involved — they got it ready so fast. It's just incredible what they can do. They've geared up.

That's why, I mean, I am so impressed by the people involved. Mike and I were talking about it before: the level of genius to put it all together so quickly. This wasn't — a month ago, nobody ever heard of this. Nobody had any idea. The Mercy was being maintained. It was in maintenance for a month. And when they heard we needed it — and I was surprised — they said, "Sir, we're ready to go." I said, "What do you mean? You're not going to be ready for three weeks." "No, sir, we're all ready to go." It was incredible. So — and we've had many instances like this.

I think the building of the hospital — 2,900 beds — in a matter of days — a few days — is just incredible. Governor Cuomo was impressed and Gavin Newsom was impressed by what we've been doing with Gavin in California and the Los Angeles area in particular, but really San Francisco. All over. All over California.

When you look at what we're doing with Michigan, we're getting along very well with Michigan. It's a great, great place. We're sending a lot of things to Michigan because that's becoming a hotbed, especially in a specific area, as you know. It's become very hot. It's become — I don't know, could even, at some point, supersede. But it's — it's got to be taken care of.

So, we're — the relationship we have with the governors, I just wish you could — because we took a lot of calls from a lot of different states and I wish you could have heard. Even a thing where, like, the governor of Ohio calls, where he has a company that does the sterilization, but they have a problem because it's not going quickly at the FDA. And I call up Steve. And Steve comes in and he said, "We'll get it done." And they checked it, and they got it done almost immediately. And originally, they were approving it for 10,000 masks. And then it was supposed to be for 80 [thousand] and they ultimately approved it for 120,000. I mean, that's a tremendous number.

And I kept wondering, why aren't they sterilizing these masks? And I assumed maybe you couldn't do it. But then I'd look at them and they'd look like, you know, it's not cloth. It's something that looks like it could be sterilized and that's what they've done. And that's the machine that is over there actually. They have a piece of the machine over there. I won't bother showing it to you. And this is incredible — when you talk about 5 minutes, 15 minutes — and highly accurate and not

nearly as disturbing to do as the other tests. So, we've just gotten better. We're doing things that nobody else ever thought of.

Please.

Q The DMV has issued stay-at-home orders, but Governor Ralph Northam of Virginia took it pretty far. He issued a 70-day stay-at-home order. Is that constitutional, first off? And secondly, do you think it's warranted to go ahead and issue a 70-day guidance at this point?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we're letting the governors do in their states pretty much what they want with our supervision, and they consult with us in all cases. Some go further than others, as you know. I mean, I could give you plenty of examples, but I'm not going to do that because we never want to be controversial. But some of the governors have taken it a step further.

Q Did he consult with you at all?

THE PRESIDENT: And people are questioning — people are questioning that. But, look, staying at home, with respect to what we're talking about, doesn't bother me at all. People should be staying at home. That's what we want.

OAN, please. OAN.

Q Two thousand four hundred and five Americans have died from coronavirus in the last sixty days.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah.

Q Meanwhile, you have 2,369 children who are killed by their mothers through elective abortions each day. That's 16 and a half thousand children killed every week.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah.

Q Two states have suspended elective abortion to make more resources available for coronavirus cases. That's Texas and Ohio. Do you agree with states who are placing coronavirus victims above elective abortions? And should more states be doing the same?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think what we're doing is we're trying to, as a group, governors — and that's Republicans and Democrats — you know, we're just working together to solve this problem. That's been a — what you're mentioning has been going on for a long time, and it's a sad event. A lot of sad events in this country. But what we're doing is now we're working on the virus. We're working on that hidden enemy, and I think we're doing a great job on — as good a job as you can possibly do.

When Tony and Deborah came up with numbers yesterday to say that, if we did nothing, you could lose 2.2 — up to two point — and maybe beyond, I don't know. Maybe beyond. But 2.2 million people if we did nothing. And I can't tell you what the unfortunate final toll is going to be, but it's going to be a very small fraction of that. So we're doing an awfully good job, I think, with what we're doing.

Q Do you support Texas and Ohio?

THE PRESIDENT: Please go ahead. Please.

Q Are you considering at all a nationwide stay-at-home order? I know there's a lot of states that have put them in place, but some haven't. I'm just wondering if you were considering some sort of broad stay-at-home order. And then I have a question for Dr. Birx, too, if you don't mind.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah. Well, we've talked about it. We — you know, there are — obviously, there are some parts of the country that are in far deeper trouble than others. There are other parts that, frankly, are not in trouble at all. So, hopefully, we're going to be able to keep it that way by doing what we're doing.

So we talked about quarantine, as you know, the other day. A group came to me and they wanted to do the quarantine. And I said, "Let's think about it." And we did. And we studied it. And by the time the evening came, it just was something that was very unwieldy, very tough to enforce, and something we didn't want to do. But we did an advisory and I think that's doing well. I mean, I see — I look at the streets. You look at New York, where there's — I looked down Fifth Avenue today. They were showing a shot of Fifth Avenue in, sort of, prime time, and there was almost nobody on Fifth Avenue. I've never seen that before. There was no car. There was no anything. So I think the people of this country have done an incredible job.

If we do that, we will let you know, but it's pretty unlikely, I would think, at this time.

Q And can I ask a quick question for Dr. Birx also?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q So, Dr. Birx, if you don't mind, you had mentioned today that this model that predicts 100,000 deaths is if we do things almost perfectly. So I wanted to know, are we currently doing things almost perfectly or are there more things we need to be doing to cap — you know, to not exceed that 100,000, 200,000 model?

THE PRESIDENT: Please. Come.

DR. BIRX: Thank you. I think that's a really great question, and tomorrow we'll go through all of the graphs and all the information that we took to the President for the decision. But when you — and I just want to thank the data team that's working day and night to get — I mean, I usually get my data about 2 a.m. from them and they assimilate all the data from all the states. And when you look at all of the states together, all of them are moving at exactly the same curves.

And so, that's why we really believe this needs to be federal guidance, so that every state understands that it may look like two cases today — that become 20, that become 200, that become 2,000. And that's what we're trying to prevent. And I think states still have that opportunity, but they're going to have to do all of these recommended — I mean, these recommendations are recommendations that the globe is using. And so we really do recommend that every governor, every mayor looks very carefully and ensures that their communities are utilizing these guidance.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Thanks.

It is amazing. You look at Louisiana and for a long time it was just — it was just staying at nothing. And then all of a sudden, I look one day and I see a lot and a lot and a lot, and then it explodes. And now we're working very carefully and very powerfully with them. We're building hospitals and we're building a lot of different things for Louisiana. So it's very important.

Yeah, please. Go ahead.

Q Mr. President, Dr. Fauci has warned that this could be a seasonal, cyclical virus. So — and maybe both of you could comment on this, and Dr. Birx as well. Are you prepared for this to strike again, say, in the fall? All of the efforts that are taking place right now to contain this, to be proactive, and you —

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah. We're prepared. I hope it doesn't happen. Doctor, would you like to say something about that? I hope it doesn't happen, but we're certainly prepared.

DR. FAUCI: In fact, I would anticipate that that would actually happen because of the degree of transmissibility. However, if you come back in the fall, it will be a totally different ballgame of what happened when we first got hit with it in the beginning of this year. There'll be several things that'll be different. Our ability to go out and be able to test, identify, isolate, and contact trace will be orders of magnitude better than what it was just a couple of months ago.

In addition, we have a number of clinical trials that are looking at a variety of therapeutic interventions. We hope one or more of them will be available.

And importantly, as I mentioned to you many times at these briefings, is that we have a vaccine that's on track and multiple other candidates.

So I would anticipate that, you know, a year to a year and a half, we'd be able to do it under an emergency use. If we start seeing an efficacy signal, we may be able to even use a vaccine at the next season. So things are going to be very, very different.

What we're going through now is going to be more than just lessons learned; it's going to be things that we have available to us that we did not have before.

THE PRESIDENT: Okay. Please. Go ahead.

Q Mr. President, Scott — thank you. Scott Gottlieb, your former FDA Commissioner, wrote a roadmap for recovery after coronavirus.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah. Very interesting. I saw it.

Q He suggests — the roadmap suggests that everybody wear a mask in public. Is that something that the task force thinks is a good idea?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we haven't discussed it to that extent, but it's certainly something we could discuss. We're getting certainly the number of masks that you'd need. We are in the process of talking about things. I saw his suggestion on that. So we'll take a look at it. For a period of time, not forever. I mean, you know, we want our country back. We're not going to be wearing masks forever, but it could be for a short period of time.

After we get back into gear, people could — I could see something like that happening for a period of time, but I would hope it would be a very limited period of time. Doctors — they'll come back and say “for the rest of our lives, we have to wear masks.”

Q Is the — the roadmap also talks about doing GPS for social distancing, maybe following people's phones and hotels for isolation for people — giving them free hotel rooms. Are those ideas that you're looking at?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, the GPS — that's a very severe idea. I've been hearing about it — GPS. So what happens? A siren goes off if you get too close to somebody? That's pretty severe. But he's somebody — he was with me for a long time. He worked — he did a great job at FDA.

So — so we're going to — we're taking a look. I just — I just received it a little while ago. He sent it over. So, very good.

Go ahead. Let's give it a shot.

Q Sir, what do you say to Americans who are upset with you over the way you —

THE PRESIDENT: Here we go.

Q — downplayed this crisis over the last couple of months? “We have it very much under control in this country. The coronavirus is very much under control in the USA. It's going to disappear. It's like a miracle. It will disappear.”

March 4th: “We have a very small number of people in this country infected.”

March 10th: “We’re prepared. We’re doing a great job with it. It will go away. Just stay calm. It will go away.”

THE PRESIDENT: Well, isn’t it true? It will go away.

Q What do you say to Americans who believe that you got this wrong?

THE PRESIDENT: And I do want them to stay calm. And we are doing a great job. If you look at those individual statements, they’re all true. Stay calm. It will go away. You know it — you know it is going away, and it will go away. And we’re going to have a great victory.

And it’s people like you and CNN that say things like that. That — it’s why people just don’t want to listen to CNN anymore. You could ask a normal question. The statements I made are: I want to keep the country calm. I don’t want to panic in the country. I could cause panic much better than even you. I could do much — I would make you look like a minor league player. But you know what? I don’t want to do that.

I want to have our country be calm and strong, and fight and win, and it will go away. And it is incredible the job that all of these people are doing — putting them all together — the job that they’re doing.

I am very proud of the job they’re doing, that Mike Pence is doing, that the task force has done, that Honeywell and Procter & Gamble and Mike, and all of these people have done. I’m very proud. It’s — it’s almost a miracle, and it is — the way it’s all come together.

And instead of asking a nasty, snarky question like that, you should ask a real question. And other than that, I’m going to go to somebody else.

Please, go ahead. Please.

Q You expressed some concern in the past that medical supplies were going out the back door —

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah.

Q — and that, perhaps, some hospitals were doing things worse than hoarding.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I expressed what was told to me by a tremendous power in the business. He said that, at a New York hospital, for a long period of time, he was giving 10,000, maybe maximum 20,000 masks over a short time. And all of a sudden, he's giving 300,000. And I said, "No matter how bad this is, could that be possible?" He said, "No." So there's only a couple of things that could happen. Is it going out the back door?

And I've reported it to the city and let the city take a look at it. But when you go from 10,000 masks to 300,000 masks, Mike, over the same period of time, there's something going on. Now, I'm not making any charges, but when everyone is looking for masks — and, by the way, that's another thing: We're making a lot of masks. And the sterilization process is going to save a lot of time and a lot of masks.

But when you have the biggest distributor of product that distributes to many of the big hospitals and hospital chains, and he brings up a statistic like that — and I know you're trying to make a big deal out of it, but you shouldn't be. You should actually go over to the hospital and find out why. You shouldn't be asking me. I'm just saying that's the way it is.

Q Are you —

THE PRESIDENT: You should go over there as a great reporter. I have no idea who you are, but that's okay. You should go over there, go to the hospital, and find out: How come you used to get 10,000 masks and you had a full hospital? New York City — always full. And how come now you have 300,000 masks? Despite the virus and all, you have three- — how do you go from 10 [thousand] to 300,000? And this is very serious stuff. I mean, I could see from 10 to 20, or from 10 to 40 or 50 or something. But how do you go from 10 [thousand] to 300,000 masks?

So what I think you should do as a — I'm sure you're a wonderful investigative reporter. You should go to the hospital and find out why.

Okay, yeah.

Q Are you asking your DOJ to look into it, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Steve, please.

Q You said there's challenging times ahead in the next 30 days. What's the U.S. economy going to look like when (inaudible) the other side?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, it's — it's so bad for the economy, but the economy is number two on my list. First, I want to save a lot of lives. We're going to get the economy back. I think the economy is going to come back very fast.

Steve is just asking about the economy, what's it like. We basically shut down our country, and we did that in order to keep people separated, keep people apart. They're not working in offices, they're not in airplanes together. You know, we really shut it down.

And, you know, 150, 151 other countries are pretty much shut down. But here, we're the — we had the greatest economy in the world. We had the greatest economy in the history of our country. And I had to go from doing a great job for three years to shutting it down. But you know what? We're going to build it up and we're going to build it up rapidly. And I think, in the end, we'll be stronger for it. We learned a lot. We learned a lot.

And I have to say, we've had great relationships with a lot of countries. China sent us some stuff, which was terrific. Russia sent us a very, very large planeload of things, medical equipment, which was very nice. Other countries sent us things that I was very surprised at, very happily surprised.

We learned a lot. We're learning a lot. And we're also learning that the concept of borders is very important, Steve. It's very important. Having borders is very, very important.

But we have done an incredible job. The economy is going to come back. My focus is saving lives. That's the only focus I can have. We're going to bring the economy back and we'll bring it back fast.

Yeah, please.

Q To follow up —

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead.

Q Mr. President —

THE PRESIDENT: Please.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. You said several times that the United States has ramped up testing. I'll just talk a little quicker — or a little louder.

Mr. President, you said several times that the United States has ramped up testing, but the United States is still not testing per capita as many people as other countries like South Korea. Why is that? And when do you think that that number will be on par with other countries?

And Dr. —

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, well, it's — it's very much on par.

Q Not per capita —

THE PRESIDENT: Look — look — per capita. We have areas of country that's very tight. I know South Korea better than anybody. It's a — very tight. Do you know how many people are in Seoul? Do you know how big the city of Seoul is?

Q But the question is about (inaudible).

THE PRESIDENT: Thirty-eight million people. That's bigger than anything we have. Thirty-eight million people all tightly wound together.

We have vast farmlands. We have vast areas where they don't have much of a problem. In some cases, they have no problem whatsoever. We have done more tests. What I didn't — I didn't talk about per capita. We have done more tests, by far, than any country in the world, by far.

Our testing is also better than any country in the world. And when you look at that, as simple as that looks, that's something that's a game changer, and every country wants that. Every country.

So rather than asking a question like that, you should congratulate the people that have done this testing, because we inherited — this administration inherited a broken system, a system that was obsolete, a system that didn't work. It was okay for a tiny, small group of people, but once you got beyond that, it didn't work.

We have built an incredible system to the fact, where we have now done more tests than any other country in the world. And now the technology is really booming.

I just spoke to — well, I spoke to a lot. I'm not going to even mention. I spoke to a number of different testing companies today, and the job that they've done and the job that they're doing is incredible.

But when Abbott comes out and does this so quickly, it's really unreal. In fact, one company, I have to say, that stands out in the job — and I think I can say this; I don't want to insult anybody else — but Roche. Roche has been incredible in the testing job they've done. And they're ramping it up exponentially. It's up, up, up, up. And you should be saying congratulations instead of asking a really snarky question, because I know exactly what you mean by that.

You should be saying congratulations to the men and women who have done this job, who have inherited a broken testing system, and who have made it great. And if you don't say it, I'll say it. I want to congratulate all of the people. You have done a fantastic job.

And we will see you all tomorrow. Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you.

END

6:09 P.M. EDT