



Office of Governor Christopher T. Sununu
Press Conference
Wednesday, June 3, 2020 at 3:00 p.m.

Governor Sununu:

Good afternoon. I'm turning my cellphone off. I apologize, don't ever know who's going to call. Great to see everybody. I thank everybody for joining us today. Before we jump into the public health update, I just want to talk about a few different issues.

First and foremost, we want to thank all the folks last night in Manchester who organized a very peaceful and I think a very successful candlelight vigil, recognizing a lot of the social injustices, the murder of George Floyd, and those surrounding issues. While it was not in New Hampshire, it's a national issue. It's something that has to be discussed. And as we've continued to say, it's not a one-day conversation, but a conversation that has to continue with real action behind it. And those organizers, I think, did a tremendous job handling that event, making sure it was peaceful, making sure it was of the right tone. And hundreds of folks showed up. And it really went off very, very well.

We had obviously heard that there were the potential for disruptive individuals that were going to come in and cause potential property damage or disruption to the community. We were prepared. We really were.

And I just also want to say a big thank you and hats off to the entire team. I think Chief Capano and the entire team of the Manchester Police Department, State Police was there. National Guard was there. Resources, folks out of Nashua Police Department, a lot of different Police Departments actually came just to be there, to make sure that some of the incidences that we've seen bear out across the country in a very negative way were not going to happen here in New Hampshire. And there was extremely minor damage, a handful of arrests, but, again, that went off very, very well. And my hat's off to Chief Capano and the entire team for working in a very seamless manner to make sure that individuals and property, and the communities were protected and safe. That was another actual good-news story of the night, I think.

We know that there could be more. There will be more events scheduled. I think there's one in Keene, maybe even today, and in Portsmouth, and some that will continue across the State over the next days and weeks. And we think that can be a very positive thing, to be sure.

We're going to be ready in each of those instances with, again, that combined team and combined force to make sure that those protests and that voice is heard in a very positive and constructive way. But if there are going to be additional elements that try to come in to create disruption, or wreck havoc on our community, again, as we did last night, we're going to continue to be prepared and protect our communities.

I guess, with that, we will turn it over to public health.

Dr. Chan:

Thank you, Governor. And good afternoon. Just a very brief update on the public health numbers for today around COVID-19, there are now more than 6.4 million cases of COVID-19 globally, including more than 1.8 million cases within the United States.

We will be announcing an additional 47 confirmed COVID-19 cases here in New Hampshire, bringing the total of 4,795 residents of New Hampshire that have been confirmed and diagnosed with COVID-19 in the State to-date. There are an additional six people who have required hospitalization for their illness, bringing the total to 468 individuals. That's about 10% of the total number of people that have become infected that have required hospitalization at some point during their illness.

And there are sadly nine new deaths related to COVID-19 that we are reporting today, bringing the total to 265 people who have died. Six out of these nine individuals are associated with long-term care facilities. And again, I think these numbers highlight the burden that COVID-19 is having on our more vulnerable populations, specifically our long-term care facility residents.

Out of the 265 total individuals that have died from COVID-19, close to 80% of those have been residents of long-term care, or congregate, living facilities. And so, that continues to be an active area of work to try and control those outbreaks, and protect those more vulnerable individuals.

Regarding some testing numbers, we have tested approximately 76,000 people for active COVID-19 infection. That's the PCR-based test, the nasal swab, if you will. That is the appropriate test for diagnosing someone with active COVID-19 infection.

We continue to average around 1,700 tests per day. Currently, there's over 1600 people undergoing testing in our Public Health Laboratory. We have continued to try and make testing available to the extent possible, so that we can rapidly identify and isolate people who are infected, and do our public health contact tracing to try and control spread of COVID-19 within our communities.

COVID-19 is still out there, so please continue to take the appropriate precautions, when people are out and about within our communities. And we will continue to very closely follow the numbers, and take steps to protect not only the vulnerable people within our communities, but everybody from COVID-19. Thank you. I'm going to hand things over to Commissioner Shibinette.

Commissioner Shibinette:

Thank you. I have a couple of brief updates. Under long-term care, I have no new outbreaks to report today. We will be releasing our COVID-19 resident and staff sentinel surveillance protocol today. We discussed it with our long-term care partners by teleconference today. So this is our transitional week where our baseline testing pretty much ended last week into last weekend. So our serial testing starts this week.

So, our new lab partner will take over tomorrow. But we've done a host of tests in the last three days with our long-term care facility, as a surveillance protocol. But starting tomorrow, Mako Medical Laboratories out of North Carolina will be taking over our surveillance testing program. We will be organizing and indicating what facilities are to be tested and at what timeframes.

But they will be sending assessments to the facilities. The facilities will be swabbing both residents and staff, couriering. The Mako Medical Laboratories will arrange for a courier to bring the specimens back to their facility. And then, they will be reporting out results.

This is going to take a huge weight off of the shoulders of our Public Health Lab that's processing probably greater than 1,000 tests. I know on Sunday/Monday, we received between 1500 and 2,000 specimens just in those two days. So, it'll shorten our turnaround time. And the long-term care facilities can expect a shorter turnaround time with that contract, too.

When we talk about testing, I'm just announcing expanded testing capability in the North Country. We have ClearChoice and Littleton Regional Hospital that partnered to stand up a new testing site on the campus of Littleton Regional Hospital. They have the capacity to do over 125 tests per day, both the PCR test and the antibody test. They prefer you make an appointment. But you do not need one. You do not need a Doctor's referral. And they are open Monday through Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. So you can swing by there, if you're in the North Country, Littleton Regional Hospital. Swing by there and get either test. And if you want more information on that, ClearChoice website has all the details and a phone number to call. Thank you.

Governor Sununu:

Great, well, thank you very much, Commissioner. And again, just to reiterate, we want folk to go get a test. It's opened up. If you want a test, you can get a test. We really encourage folks to do that, even if you are asymptomatic. Having that information about those folks that may be asymptomatic, knowing that there are a lot of individuals out there who test positive that are asymptomatic, and making sure that, if folks are positive, that they're not unknowing carriers to either loved ones or other folks in their community.

It's very, very important. So we're really encouraging everyone, step up. Get a test, and, again, now that we have that resource at our fingertips, there's absolutely no reason not to push the limit a little bit and utilize the tools that we do have.

I want to take a minute, too, and go through some data. We talk a lot about data, when we do these press conferences. And so, what I thought we might do is kind of go through a summary of some of the key questions that we get, just so people can see trends. I'm a visual person, myself. I like my charts and my graphs, as a mathematics guy.

So, every day we give those data points, but now just to be able to step back every couple weeks and see where some of these trends are going, and what we feel are some of those key data points, some of the metrics that we continue to look at as we both flex open and try to get a better assessment of those areas that could be hotspots, that could be kind of super cluster-type events, whatever it might be, so people understand what we're looking at. We always want to be very transparent. What we see, we want other folk to see and hopefully understand.

So, I'm going to do my best to go through this. So what we have here is probably the most common data point that we look at, which is the percent positive of tests in New Hampshire. And you'll see, early on here, this is when we were doing very few tests. So the numbers would actually move very, very wildly, if you will. We were only doing 100 or 150 tests a day. It would just take a few extra positives to really swing those results.

But as we started to increase testing capacity, you can see that our trends kind of follow that typical spike up high, and then now we're clearly on the backend of things. Again, this is, I think, one of the best tools and resources that we really have.

Over the past few weeks, you'll see here, in that area there, we are continually below the 5% range, 5% positive. It spikes up-and-down a little bit. Could this move back up? Absolutely, it could. And

I imagine it will, at some point, for any variety of potential reasons. But, we will be constantly using that data. It's really more about the data as opposed to models at this point.

We like to look at other States' data, as well. And we try to match the types of data that we're looking at with other States, in terms of percent positives, or hospitalization, whatever it is, to see where we are.

As Dr. Chan mentioned, we still are in the northeast. I believe Massachusetts had one of the highest numbers in the country yesterday of positive results. They're definitely on the downswing. It's a very good thing. But they still have a lot of high results, as well. And so, we just have to be very cognizant that we have so many folks that either cross over the border on a daily basis, work in Massachusetts, or have family in Massachusetts. We're very tied to that, so you can't ignore it.

But, I see these are very good results. And as the original guidance document that was put out by the CDC and the President said that when you get about two good weeks of a positive trend, or no trend up, then you take that next gaiting step to open something up. And then, you look at data for a couple more weeks, and then you can open things up. And that's exactly what we're doing here in New Hampshire.

You can see we've had these couple strings here of a couple good weeks that kind of come at a time. My sense is, and this is, I mean, just looking at what you're seeing in other States, we're going to be bouncing around here be 2%, 3%, 4%, 5%, 6% of positive tests for a while, because we know that there's just so many folks that are asymptomatic that will likely come up positive.

I mean, we'd like to see it at zero. But it doesn't mean it's essentially going to spike up. And so, whilst we open some of these things are part of our economy, as we flex open different parts of our economy, this is what we're going to be looking at and making sure that whatever the numbers are, they're manageable, and they're managed in terms of the healthcare standpoint.

This is the antibody test. So, again, just a few weeks ago, starting in early-May -- I guess that's, what, four, five weeks ago now, we were able to take our first rounds of antibody tests on any given day. The blue is what you're seeing there of the whole number of negative tests that you'll see on any given day for that specific day of antibody testing.

The little white on the top is the number of positive tests. And really, what we look at here is the orange-and-yellow line, which really consistently at about 5%. And as we've been reporting here, it's consistently around 5% of positive for folk that are getting that antibody test. And the vast majority of those individuals are individuals who may have had symptoms but couldn't get a test early on, or maybe have been asymptomatic but want to see if they had the COVID antibodies within their bloodstream, meaning that they had it asymptotically and they never knew. And that's consistently about 5%. And we will continue to, again, use this as we go forward to see if that number's moving up or down, making sure that those tests are available for those who might need them.

This, I believe, is one of the most important charts, actually. This is the hospitalization, right? The number of individuals that are using our hospital beds, specifically for COVID, or for non-COVID instances.

So these are individual days here at the bottom. And the green line you have here is the number of individuals that are using hospital beds that are not COVID-related. So even while we've been going through this COVID crisis, approximately a little under half of the available beds, maybe about 40%-or-so of the available beds in the State were being used, at any given time, for non-COVID-related items.

The blue line up here is our capacity for hospital beds in the State. So you can see back here and all the way even up until now, which is on the other side of the graph there, there's a lot of capacity.

There's a lot of bed capacity here, which means, again, if we were to have a surge, if our numbers were to spike, as long as it wasn't anything too long and too sustained, and we were able to get control of it, we do have the capacity to manage via our healthcare system, whether it's the need to hospitalize someone, ventilators, ICUs, availability, whatever it might be.

And then, this yellow line at the bottom here, that's the real number of COVID. That's the average number of individuals that are using a COVID bed at any given time. And our census has continually been around about 100 folks-or-so, give-or-take 10 or 20 at any given day, very consistent use of the hospital beds, which is obviously very interesting, given that our spike that we saw in our percent-positive cases, and the real kind of surge that we had with COVID hit right around here, right in kind of the mid-to-late April range, right?

But even then, the number of individuals that needed hospitalization was fairly consistent, which is quite interesting, actually, again indicating a lot of folk that had COVID or tested positive, either were asymptomatic or had mild symptoms, or symptoms that could be managed at home. And again, that's a good sign. That's a sign that the vast majority of people, if they were to test positive for COVID and obtain those symptoms, the vast majority of the people can manage it through something at home and through quarantining. And those that do need additional hospitalization or more severe support services, we have the capacity.

So this is something we monitor very, very closely. For me, this is where it fell apart with China. This is where it fell apart with Italy, some of the countries we saw in Europe, where the systems were completely overrun.

If you remember, to take a step back in March, that's exactly why we started all of this. That's exactly why we started putting a lot of restrictions on our economy and in our communities so that what we were seeing very actively on a day-to-day basis in other parts of the world that had gone through the COVID epidemic before we had, we wanted to make sure that didn't happen here. And it didn't.

Our hats off to the system and hats off the people in New Hampshire, frankly, for making sure that we're able to take those restrictions seriously, really bend the curve, flatten the curve, as we say, and allow something that was manageable. I have friends that live in Italy and they were telling some pretty horrific stories of individuals that were simply getting COVID and dying at home, not even a chance of getting into a hospital or healthcare facility. It was really tragic situation, which is why we had to take such, I think, dire measures.

But we've been able to maintain good management of our system, be consistent about it. And now, I think we have a lot of confidence that we can take some manageable, sensible steps forward to start flexing open.

So, this is similar to that last graph. But this is the new hospitalizations on any given day. So, for example, on March 21st, there are about six hospitalizations. So you can kind of see, over time, especially over the last week-or-so here, the number of hospitalizations has been much lower.

We know the fatality rate is still very unacceptable. We know that one is too many. And over the past few days, we've had nine, 11, in the 10-range on fatalities. We're also learning more about the virus and that the length of stay for individuals in the hospital, I think it's longer than I had originally anticipated. It can be weeks and weeks, and weeks, sometimes over a month someone may be in a hospital, before they recover.

And obviously the most affected demographics, if you will, are those that are elderly, over 60, 70 years old, those with underlying health conditions. Unfortunately, those are the ones that get most severely taken by the symptoms and, again, need that hospitalization and healthcare capacity. But the

good news is that, at least over the past week-or-so, we've seen some pretty low numbers, in terms of the number of initial hospitalizations. And hopefully, we can stay on that path.

So, these graphs, Commissioner Shibinette has been great about providing some information on long-term care facilities. So the next two graphs, she's been giving a lot of the individual data points. But we wanted to kind of visualize a lot of that information that the Commissioner's been giving.

So, this is the percent of long-term care facilities with COVID in them, in any form, not just outbreaks, but percent of facilities that currently have COVID. Unfortunately, as you can see in Massachusetts, there were over 50%. Over 50% of those facilities have COVID in some form. New York at 38%; Rhode Island at 36%; and New Hampshire at 29%, so, again, we'd love to see that number at zero here in New Hampshire. We're not the worst. We're not the best.

It's not about comparing ourselves to others. It's really about making sure that we've providing every resource and every tool that we have in the toolbox to those facilities, understanding where those hotspots are, allowing the staff to have flexibility, and making sure the patients are just getting the best care that we can possibly provide, while keeping them safe and hopefully avoiding not just a single case, but an outbreak, which we can see can happen very, very quickly.

And unfortunately, this is the long-term care fatality deaths, as a percentage of the number of beds. So, in other words, if you took all the long-term care facility beds in the State, or individuals that are currently using a bed in the State, what is the mortality rate of all those individuals across the board? And unfortunately, places like Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, all of them well-above 6%; New York at 3.5% death rate in their long-term care facilities; Maine down at 0.4%; and New Hampshire at about 1.5%.

So, again, given our proximity to places like Rhode Island and Connecticut, and Massachusetts, I think we've been able to manage the situation very, very well in our long-term care facilities. But we know that between now and the time we get a vaccine for now, and for quite a long time, this is going to be an area where we continue to focus our efforts, our tools, and our resources. But, again, it's 1.5% of our folks in long-term care, we've lost to COVID-19. That's a tragic number, to be sure, and something we're going to keep an eye on and keep managing, too.

So, I added a couple charts here. People are asking about economic data. And this is kind of an interesting one, I thought. It was more of an interesting one. You can kind of read this in a couple different ways.

This is the traffic count on I-93. So, how many cars are actually on the road on any given day? This comes from the Department of Transportation. And this is the difference of this year versus last year.

So, for example, back on February 10th, we were pretty much right at where we were last year in early-February. Right about here is where we hit the first signs of the COVID epidemic. Right about here is where we put the Stay-at-Home Order in place. And you can see, over the next few days and couple weeks, the percent of cars on the road started dropping very precipitously to the point where we only had about half the number of cars on the road.

And this is interesting, because it's a sign of not just cars that might be coming into the State for tourism, individuals that might be driving to work, either within the State or out-of-state. I-93 is kind of that very high-traffic corridor we have in New Hampshire. And I've been using it as a pretty good metric, if you will, as to kind of where we are.

Now, slowly, as we kind of start opening things up around this point here, we start coming back. In this area here, those first couple weeks after we really bottomed out at about half the number of cars

on the road, even beyond that I think people were very much in a hold mode. The Stay-at-Home Order was very much in full effect.

Slowly, I think folks started either coming back to work, feeling a little more comfortable. Looking at, as we allowed certain essential businesses to stay open, some of them flexed themselves open a little bit. And then, right into this timeframe range here, we start flexing things open a little bit more, in terms of the economy.

My guess is, it looks like, based on license plates -- and that's one of the few ways we can track it -- we have had a few more folks on the weekends come up from out-of-state. And that's why, when we talk about tourism, when we talk about lodging, when we talk about these things that can directly or indirectly draw people out of Massachusetts, or out-of-state, or anywhere that is from a location that might have a higher impact of COVID than we do here, we're very concerned about that.

We always say folks in Massachusetts, maintain your Stay-at-Home Order in Massachusetts. We have one here. You have one there. We want you to come up to New Hampshire eventually, but not right now.

But there is more traffic on the roads, which I think is a sign of things slowly getting back. It's not spiking up too fast. It's coming up nice and gradually. So people are slowly feeling a little more comfortable about getting back on the road for one reason or another, back into the workforce.

And this is the workforce. This is our labor force. So, as a lot of folks know, when it comes to unemployment, New Hampshire, even before the CARES Act did it, we expanded our unemployment benefits. We were very aggressive about it. We provide additional unemployment opportunities, just trying to be ahead of the game and knowing that there were going to be a lot of individuals, for reasons that were well out of their control and even out of the business' control, that were going to ultimately at least temporarily be put out of work. And our numbers spiked really, really high, because we were just much more ahead of the game than most folks.

This is where we are, compared to all the other States in the country. So you'll see the ones in orange over there are the New England States. I'm not sure where New York is. I think New Jersey's here.

But this is our unemployment, essentially our continuing claims week-over-week. So what this really is, is the percent of labor force. So we have, at any given time, 700,000, 750,000 people in our labor force that are actively in the workplace, week-over-week. This is the number of people that are continuing their claims. So right now, it's at just under 15%. I think this past week, it was just over 100,000 people. I think we've peaked out -- I'm doing this off of memory -- 116,000 individuals in a continuing claim week. That was about three weeks ago.

And we've steadily gone. We keep trickling down. We're still at a little over 100,000, I think, We're not sure, whether the end of this week, maybe we will come in just under 100,000. But the number of unemployment claims week-over-week is continuing to drop. We've become one of the lowest in New England, which is a good sign that the economy's coming back.

But we don't necessarily want to jump right here immediately because that probably means we're opening up a little too hard, a little too fast. And even, for example, when we opened retail, if you've been to one of the malls, Simon's Mall stayed open. And we did flex retail open. Retail stores can open. But if you've been to the mall, only about half of the stores have chosen to open.

So, even as we flex things open, there's still the ability for businesses that might say, we're not ready yet, for a verity of different reasons. So, even if you were to open everything back up, we know it is

going to take time to really get back to the strength of the economy that we had. We had, as many folks know, one of the strongest economies in the country, which is something to be very proud of.

We still have great fundamentals. We have great liquidity. We have, not just at the State level, but within our economy and our banks, they're strong. They're viable, which I think gives us a lot of confidence that, as we flex things open, we will be in a prime position to come back with our economy stronger than most States will.

But people always ask about the unemployment numbers. And I just want to show them both relative to where we are today, just under about 15% of what we call our continuing claims, and where we are relative to New England, which is, again -- and let me take a moment here and I'll just say -- you've heard me say it before -- hats off to the folks at Unemployment.

The Department of Employment Security has gone so far above and beyond. If you look at how we're processing our claims, I challenged them. I said, you got to be faster than other States. We got to expand our opportunities for employment more than other States. We got to simplify the process for individuals better than anybody else. And we have.

We've simply processed claims at a higher rate, faster, and better than anyone else. And we know there's always some issues here-and-there. Doesn't mean every claim is processed immediately; doesn't mean everyone doesn't need a little more personal attention. The fact that we have that call center with over 200 people, they've done tremendous job. And we have Governors calling me and asking me how we're doing it so well.

The fraud within the system, that's been an issue nationally lately. Right now, of the hundreds of thousands of claims that we've processed in total, since this all started, over 100,000 per week for the past couple months, we might have upwards of between five and 10 cases of fraud that we know of. You have States like Washington that paid \$300 million to Nigeria. I mean, that's just a fact, because that's how they just weren't ready. They weren't prepared. They didn't have individuals in the frontlines that we have here in this State.

So hats off to the folks at Employment Security. They've done an awesome job. We have 200 people in our call centers. It doesn't work perfect. We get it. But by gosh, it really does work better than most. And other States are calling us. I won't say which States, exactly. Maybe I shouldn't do that. But there have been a couple States saying, look, they're 100,000 claims behind, 250,000 claims behind. I think right now we've processed all but about 3,000 or 4,000 claims, which is about average, because some of them just take a little extra time, a little more one-on-one understanding, because of the complexities of people's work environment.

So, anyways, we're in good shape. And I don't mean to go on too much, but really hats off to them. The people in New Hampshire, you should be proud. We have such a great system. That's it. I'm a data guy. I could go on all day.

So I just wanted to give folks a little taste of some of the metrics that we look at over time. And we will keep updating folks, as we go on with this, so people can see where we are with our trends, not just our daily data points that we like to give, just so we try to be as transparent as possible. What we know, we want you to know, and, again, share in that process with us. It is going to be a process. We still have definitely a ways to go.

With that, I guess we can open up for questions, if any.

Q&A Session

So what's the data that shows that people who are gathering 1,000 at a time outdoor for a political event aren't having some different impact, when it comes to the risk of COVID, than people gathering for high school graduation or any other event? What's the data that makes the gatherings that we're watching right now less risky and therefore not in violation of what you've been trying to accomplish with this shutdown for the past 10 weeks.

Governor Sununu:

Well, again, two things, what you're talking about is events that have been taking place over the past few days. So I don't think there's any data to show those specific events versus other events.

So, is there any reason to believe that they're not risky, and that's why you shut them down to begin with, for the past 10 week, no gatherings more than 10, limiting people? You can't gather like that. That's the whole point of the shutdown. We've had three gatherings. We're having more coming. You're praising them. So what's the data that shows that they're not creating a risk of spreading the virus we've been fighting for the past 10 weeks.

Governor Sununu:

Sure, so, again, it's not about looking at individual data points. That, right now, can't be assessed. There is no data. There's no way to assess that. So you're asking me to assess a data point that doesn't exist and cannot be assessed accurately.

Again, you're going to that place where you're trying to compare the ability for folks to gather, have a protest, have a voice on a very critical issue, something that we have not stopped from the beginning. There were protests from the very beginning, and constantly, on a variety of different issues. We have not stopped them, and rightly so, because when you're talking about assembly for the point of making that protest, making your voices heard, I firmly believe, and I think most people understand, that's a very different issue when you're talking about creating kind of a systematic change that has to happen to ensure that we're mitigating viral spread.

So those one-off events that have been happening, one a night here, one a night there, they've been happening around the State and around the country for many, many months in many, many ways. I've always said, we're not going to stop them.

There were 300 people protesting at the State House last month. They were there. Most of them were without masks and doing whatever they were doing. We let that go. That was okay. We understood it was a one-time event.

And we're likely to see potentially more of that. And I think that's okay. I think that, again, you can't start comparing the value of having those voices being heard in the one-time basis versus the overall leveled message, if you will, of public safety, of gathering in large gatherings, making sure the Stay-at-Home Order is adhered to. And again, hopefully we will keep seeing that data, as we see a lot of these positive data trends, transpire that will allow us to flex out of the Stay-at-Home Order, that allow us to look at the data to maybe allow more flexibility in restaurants, or lodging, or whatever the next steps are going to be.

Well, as a follow-up, a lot of several national Health Professionals have said in both the New York Times, on CNN, that they believe that these large gatherings can lead to a spike, as they say, in COVID.

Governor Sununu:

I'm sure they can.

If there's a spike in two or three weeks, will you accept any responsibility for that occurring?

Governor Sununu:

If there's a spike because of those large gatherings?

If you see a spike in two or three weeks that matches the timeline for these large gatherings of 1,000 people...

Governor Sununu:

I don't think we're going to be able to, if we see spikes in two or three weeks, given that we're looking at all these other aspects of our economy. Now, we will do contact tracing for any of those individuals, of course. And again, my sense, as I've always said, there's likely going to be spikes. These numbers are going to go up. I'd be shocked if we didn't see a second surge at some point, whether it's in two or three weeks, two days, or in October. I don't know when it's going to be.

So, if we have to make assessments on individual, whether it's restaurants or lodging, or opening this type of venue, or that type of venue, we can make those assessments. And I've always said that we can pull back. I've always said that.

Governor, what about civil disobedience events? There's one planned upcoming to storm the beaches. The group is comparing itself to the groups who stormed Normandy Beach on D-Day. They're going to apparently go and sit out on Hampton Beach, I think, to specifically try to raise awareness for what they feel is a infringement upon their rights. So what about those protesters?

Governor Sununu:

It's the exact same group that was at the State House a month ago. We let them protest there. They came a couple different times. Now, they're going to go and protest at the beach. It's fine. It's a one-time event. There's a voice of assembly there. And we've always respected it, through this entire process.

Governor, with regard to activities that you've limited to New Hampshire residents, whether it's golf, when you think about reopening those activities to out-of-staters, what's the metrics for that? Now, for example, does the Stay-at-Home Order that exists in these other States make you not want to open activities to out-of-staters?

Governor Sununu:

Yeah, it's a good question. It's not the Stay-at-Home Order that I'm looking at. And I don't want to speak for Dr. Chan and Public Health. But, seeing that they're on a downward trend, too, right, the fact that Massachusetts on a very aggressive downward trend from their height, they still have high numbers, to be sure. But they are still on a downward trend, which is, I think, a very positive sign.

And it's not just Massachusetts. It's some of the surrounding States that likely would be coming in. Maine, Vermont, as well, I mean, there's virtually no cases in Vermont. I think they've done a tremendous job there. Maine, there's very few, which makes sense, given their proximity away from Boston and some of the harder hit areas.

But, that's typically what we'd look at. If Massachusetts was still spiking incredibly high and out-of-control on a long-term trend of still going up-and-up, that would be maybe a very different story in terms of our ability to flex open.

Now, we haven't done that yet, in terms of flexing open. And we're trying not to encourage that too much. I think the fact that the beaches in Massachusetts are open, the golf courses there are open. Again, I always go back to that analogy of the tube of toothpaste, right? If something is really clamped down and you open up your end, everything's going to come rushing into that end.

The fact that those types of venues, whatever venue we might be talking about, if it's beaches or golf or whatever, the fact that those are flexing open in Massachusetts already, I think, gives us a little more confidence, as well, that there won't be a need for folks, someone from Tewksbury to come up to Concord to go golf, or somebody from Ipswich to come up to Hampton to go to the beach. They have plenty of beaches in Massachusetts to go to now. So it allows us to, I think, have a little more confidence with the long-term management of the flexibilities that we provide.

Governor, for those who've been very conscientiously following the rules, and then watch some of what's been going on over the last days, for whatever reason they see that and they're like, well, heck, all these people are out. I'm going to go live my life now. Do you worry that people moving forward might be a little less concerned about being out and about, wearing masks, things like that, just based on other things that have happened outside?

Governor Sununu:

And things they're seeing, right? We're seeing it every day, people out and about doing the protests, whatever it is. So, the question is really about the concern that we may have, given that there are so many events, whether it's here, locally, or even nationally, where folks are out and about.

I have to say, I mean, a lot of the protesters wear mask. They're wearing their medical masks or whatever it might be. So, I appreciate them trying to be conscientious about the spread of COVID. But, obviously there is just a consistent message that is there that I think gets into the psyche, if you will, of folks.

And so, the fear is that people are going to see more and more of this happening, not just with the protests but other events might be happening. And you don't want them to think that we're not taking it very seriously, which we are. We still are.

Now, if we can get to a point where we're flexing open that Stay-at-Home Order, where we're flexing open beyond a limit of 10 -- and hopefully sooner than later -- that's good. I go back to what I said

maybe a month, two months ago. The hardest decisions that any Governor can ever imagine making are restricting your economy, restricting freedoms and being able to gather, and all of that.

But the hardest decisions are yet to come. And we're smack in that middle of what I have always anticipated to be the hardest things to do, which is, how do you open up, maintain balance, watch public safety, get the right message, the right balance of that message, knowing that you're going to get some gray area on both sides? You just are. These are uncharted waters. None of this is black-and-white. It's just not.

When people say, well, how can you do this for a campground and that for a golf course, and that for a beach, and that for a retail? There's no direct apples-to-apples comparisons. I think we're doing a really good job looking at it from a micro standpoint, each individual business or aspect of our economy: how they work; how they interact with is; what happens when folks might gather; what are the mitigation processes; how do you enforce it.

All of these different puzzle pieces go into the guidance documents that we've put together. And ultimately, that is the backbone, the pillars, of the message that we're there. We're still in a heightened level of alert. We're still in a heightened level of a Stay-at-Home Order, which is very serious, and we want people to take that seriously.

Given that we have the protests that are happening, whether it's because of George Floyd, or because of whatever the issue of the day may be, we've seen other issues that people have protested. I'm not going to be the judge and jury on the importance of one issue over another.

I'll tell you that the George Floyd issue is incredibly important. It's a nationally important issue. It's an issue that I think has to have a very critical message, not just for today, but for the next 20 years. It's something that we started seeing back in 2014, 2015, 2016. It didn't get "repaired". I don't think anyone thought it would get repaired. But there was an elevated national discussion. I thought that was very positive.

And when these incidences happen, the entire discussion gets raised again. And it has to be raised again. I think it's very important that it gets raised again, and something that we should keep not just discussing but real follow-up action items, and not just today, or next month, but for frankly decades to come. We got to keep that message elevated.

I'm not here to be judge and jury over one message or another. But I can tell you the George Floyd issue, in particular, hits home with me, and I think it hits home with a lot of people. And if people want to protest this-or-that, by all means. I don't encourage it, but I understand it. And we're not going to send the troops in to take people off the beach, or to kick people off the grass at the State House, or to tell people to go home at a candlelight vigil. That's crazy.

So, then, what will you enforce now? What's an event that someone could do that would cause you -- for example, just last week, you shut down...

Governor Sununu:

I'm not going to start making up events for you to write an article. I'm going to tell you, if there are specific events...

Just last week, you told an outdoor racetrack driver who had maybe 150 people all spread out, outdoors, that he had to shut down. And you used the force of the State to shut him down. Then, you allowed 1,000 people to gather on the street. Can he open his racetrack?

Governor Sununu:

That racetrack was not a one-time event. That racetrack was not done in protest.

But for the COVID risk, there's no difference in the COVID risk. You acknowledge that.

Governor Sununu:

I'm sorry. Say...

There's no difference in the COVID risk. No one's more or less likely to...

Governor Sununu:

In terms of the gathering, no. Yeah, likely not. Yeah. But they are two very separate events.

I'm just curious.

Governor Sununu:

If you're only connecting the events because of the risk of COVID, then, again, I'll tell you exactly what I told you yesterday. You're missing the picture. You're missing the importance of this message. You're missing the picture. And you're really demeaning what has to be elevated, right? You're basically saying this George Floyd issue and the protests over here, that doesn't really matter. Let's just go back to talking about COVID. This does matter. And this is critically important, to be sure. It's a very different issue. But it is critically important. Don't demean it.

No, but I'm just saying, so now we're not making healthcare-based decisions. We're now making decisions based on something other than trying to stop COVID. We're now in a different arena.

Governor Sununu:

We have never said that. We have always said that healthcare is a preeminent variable that comes into play. I was talking about all the puzzle pieces that have to come in. If we were going to make issues solely on healthcare, then we'd probably tell everyone to shelter in place. We'd put the National Guard on the street. We wouldn't let you come out. We wouldn't let you interact with anybody for the next five months.

But that's not practical, and nor should it be done. So we've never said that that was going to be the pathway. And I think the pathway that we've taken has been very sensible, very reasonable, with very positive results, given, again, the tragedy you're seeing in New York and Massachusetts. That plays

in. People tell me all the time, oh, well, why do you care what happens in Massachusetts? Because so many of our lives and our businesses, and our communities attach to them.

They're all variables that come into play, in terms of making these decisions based on COVID. But, again, if you're going to try to connect what's happening with the murder of an individual by a Police Officer and the racial injustices that surround that, the social message that has to be discussed and elevated, to only what's happening over here with COVID, these are two tragic issues. But they are separate. They really are.

Governor, since we're talking about George Floyd, we just heard a few moments ago that the other three Officers have now been charged in the case, and they've also elevated the charges against Officer Chauvin. What is your reaction to that?

Governor Sununu:

Good, about time.

And what message do you want that to send, if any, to Police Officers here in New Hampshire?

Governor Sununu:

Well, again, I don't know if it is a message that has to be sent to just Police Officers. I think it's a message that has to be sent to all of society. We all have a massive responsibility. We're talking about the heightened of a very critical issue, when you talk about race relations and social injustice, and Police brutality. And that's what we're talking about.

But, it goes back to something we say all the time. If you see something, say something. If you see something wrong, you have an obligation and a right, whether you are a citizen in your home, you're walking to work, or you're a Police Officer standing right there watching one of your other Officers murder an individual. That is tragic, and we all have a responsibility.

Yes, an elevated message to our law enforcement community, of course; an elevated message to all of us. I don't think any of us have the ability to say, well, yeah, I hope the Police get the message. We all need to get the message.

And I'm going to take a second and go back. That's why I created the Diversity and Inclusion Council, so they could go community-to-community. They could talk about implicit bias. They could talk about issues of race and discrimination in our schools, or our workplace, or in law enforcement, or in our community centers, or wherever, because it's everywhere that we all have an obligation to really take that as a very heightened message, which is why I continually -- not to push back on Michael too hard -- but I'm always going to tell you they're two very separate issues.

Could I ask a crass political question?

Governor Sununu:

You, crass, Michael? Never, are you kidding?

I know, shocking. Believe it or not, the Legislature is having trouble, despite the COVID, getting together, and it appears that they're not going to act on the budget. But, as you know, as a trigger, that could cause tax hikes to kick in. I have a comment about this impasse. But also, is it going to play into your thinking about when you might start opening up businesses, knowing that, if nothing changes, they're going to have this tax hike waiting for them? And so, hey, the sooner they get back to business, they could make some money that covers these higher taxes.

Governor Sununu:

Yeah, so, obviously, I've been very vocal and specifically the Republicans have been very vocal, writing a letter saying, look, there's a business tax hike that was negotiated into the budget. As much as a lot of us, myself included, did not like that, it was negotiated into the budget. But it was set with a trigger so that, again, only if we had a massive economic collapse would it ever be hit.

We have a massive economic collapse. But obviously the worst time to kick someone when they're down, when their business is struggling, when they can't pay the bills, the worst thing you can do is increase taxes on them. It shows a complete callous and ignorant attitude to what drives a strong economy, what drives everything from someone's health to their economic stability.

What drives the success of the State is our economy and our small businesses. And the fact that the Democrats in the Legislature don't even want to discuss taking away that tax hike that is going to come is amazing to me, frankly, because those businesses are going to have just one more economic burden that they have to suffer through.

And the fact that the Democrats in the Legislature don't even want to talk about it, that type of economic prosperity, not just for those businesses but for all those employees, so they can get back to work and give back, I think is terrible. It's a terrible approach, and it's just another sign that unfortunately, in many ways, they just have not wanted to work across the aisle.

I mean, very early on, they sue me, right off the bat, over how we're going to spend funds to try to slow the process down and create all this bureaucracy. We say, hey, we have this tax increase coming on businesses, last thing you want to do. It should be obvious. I think it's obvious to most of the folks watching today. No, we're not even going to talk about it. That tax increase is coming and it's going to be stuck.

Now, does it affect how we're going to open businesses, or how fast we open businesses or not? No, not really, I think it's whether we open this week, or next week, or the week after, whatever it might be, moving the dial that much, those business taxes are going to hurt those businesses one way or the other. It's very hard to lessen the pain of that, frankly.

We will keep fighting for it. We will keep fighting to do whatever we can to hopefully get the revenues where they need to be to stimulate the economy as best we can, within the pathway that we're going to go down, based on public health and safety.

But do you feel, Governor, that -- you've talked about thinking there probably might be a surge in this virus. But, economically, do you think we've already hit bottom? Are we coming off the bottom? Do you see what's happening in May, we're going to be able to tax off 55% from the same month a year ago?

Governor Sununu:

Yes, I mean, I hate to use the term "we've hit bottom", but I think we have. By some of those graphs you see, more people are clearly getting back to work. There's more people on the roads. We are able to flex our economy open. We're not as constrained as we are.

But while we're still able to maintain a very manageable level of COVID, and we know how the virus moves more. We know how it impacts in long-term care facilities more. We can put the tools and resources where they need to be. Those are all very powerful tools to allows to allow things to flex open and make sure that we're on the upswing, and hopefully a continual upswing.

I think the fact that when the Federal Government came in with all the additional unemployment insurance, it has been a huge boost, in terms of making sure that we don't see the potential of defaults or delinquencies on rent. While we have put a moratorium on folk that can be, for financial reasons, either defaulted on their mortgage, or financial reasons evicted, we still look at that data. Maybe I should have brought a chart on that.

But the liquidity that's out there has clearly created a lot of opportunity. One thing that we assessed with our Landlords was approximately what percentage year-over-year, last year to this year, do you find you have delinquent payments in your rent? Last year was about 7.2%. This year it's about just under 10%. So I thought it was going to be two or three times. Even though they can't be evicted, they're still a potential delinquency. So it's higher, which is expected.

But that clearly tells me a lot of folks are trying to work out payment plans. A lot of folks understand that this moratorium won't last forever. They don't want to be evicted on the backend. They have unemployment insurance coming in.

Same with potential defaults on your mortgage, what a lot of banks are doing now is putting people into forbearance. They're saying, your three or four months, five, six months of mortgage payments today, we're going to put it on the backend of the loan. And by doing that, it gives a little more flexibility to individuals.

Nationally, I believe the latest data I saw was about 9% of homeowners have some type of forbearance going in. In this State, it's about 2%, 2.5%. So we're still only a fraction of the national average of the forbearances, which is a good sign that, again, there's liquidity out there. People in New Hampshire are kind of managing their financial responsibilities, keeping up with those payments.

We know, on the backend, everybody there'll be foreclosures. There'll be evictions. That is likely going to happen in down economic times. We can't keep that moratorium on forever. It is in place indefinitely for now.

But clearly, in New Hampshire, we're hoping that we're going to be less affected than most, and, again, gives some strength to our economy. All this money we're putting in with the CARES Act, you have billions that have gone in through the PPP Program. We have, just for businesses, the additional \$400 million in the Main Street Relief Fund will be released in the next few weeks, which is going to be great.

A lot of cash getting out there, not just sitting in people's pockets, but allowing them to pay their bills, their property taxes, their utility bills. All that money gets reinvested into the economy, right, which

is, again, a good thing. It keeps things churning at a decent rate, until we really start coming out of this, which I still believe won't be until -- you'll see a pretty good surge in the economy, I think, this fall, in September/October, and then potentially another surge after we get a vaccine.

But I think we're still going to be in a bit of a malaise here, if you will, economically, no matter how much we open things, a bit of malaise until you hit fall, September/October. Kids go back to school. Universities start to open. We get back into more of a norm, if you will, as I've always talked about and I'll continue to talk about. But my sense is the fall you'll see a pretty decent surge.

Okay. Sure. Yeah, I'm sorry. So, I'm sorry my answers are so long, good questions. Michael showed up today, so want to give him the best answer I can.

Holly Ramer with the Associated Press:

Hi, thanks. My question is about lodging. Can you talk a little bit about the system set up here requiring out-of-staters to quarantine in their home States before coming up here? Maine and Vermont are taking the opposite approach saying that you would have to quarantine in their States, although there's talk in both of those States of relaxing those requirements. So just talk a little bit about your thinking on folks coming from out-of-state.

Governor Sununu:

Sure, so we've opened up our lodging primarily for in-staters right now, as a first step in our first phase. If someone does want to come from out-of-state, we ask that they quarantine. The difference, I believe the other States -- and I don't mean to be critical of the other States. But I think some of the issues I had with the other States' approach that you'd have to be in those States quarantined for 14 days, and then go to the hotel, I don't know how practical that seemed to me.

If someone wants to come up here, if they're going to go to a hotel, where are they going to go to quarantine for two weeks before they go to a hotel? So, if you understand that that didn't seem very practical, so I think I join in Public Health and others that say, look, a concept of quarantining for a couple weeks before you go from state-to-state, or as you travel across, from distances, or on an airplane, a lot of us agree with that. And again, allowing them to at least quarantine at home, be isolated, make sure that they're not symptomatic before they come up here, and do it in their home State just made the most logical sense from a practical implementation standpoint.

Tony Schinella with Patch:

Oh, thank you so much. Governor, two things; first, can you speak about the status of evictions in the course of where we are with Stay-at-Home 2.0 and what the future might hold? Right now, there are close to about 150 filings around the State, but only 20 people and/or families have been evicted for nonpayment. I've been hearing some horror stories from Landlords who believe that they aren't being treated fairly by the Courts and are being taken advantage of by Tenants, and have no recourse. You don't control the Courts. But the Courts are making decisions based on your Order. If you could just talk about what the future holds with that? And a slightly more philosophical thing, and I'd like to revisit the beach issue and your discussion today with Mr. Graham and alter it slightly. And I can say I can appreciate where you are coming down on some of these issues, and that you think that they're important. But when we see some of the recent vigils and protests with many people not wearing masks, we have a public health issue going on throughout the State, and it's great. People are protesting, whether it's the Reopen New Hampshire people or the Black

Lives Matter people. And they're doing what they are doing as individuals. But, the same can be said for a person who wants to go to the beach for 90 minutes, or two hours, and sit and listen to the waves, after being locked in their homes for three months. And that, too, is about an individual's right to decide what they want to do with their time. And I'm just not understanding the correlation between allowing people to do something temporarily for two hours in large, hundreds of segments of people, and not allowing a regulated or even timed visit to some of our beaches, which is less dangerous and fewer people, if regulated, than some of these rallies and protests have been. Thank you.

Governor Sununu:

Sure, so I'll take the first question. It has to do with the evictions. So, again, the State Courts have their own State of Emergency Order. That doesn't follow mine. And so, they've created their own flexibilities in terms of how often they're going to meet, or what cases they're going look at and adjudicate, as well as the priority they're going to place on them. And they have complete discretion over that.

One of the reasons why I'm hesitant to lift the moratorium is just to the point of your question, we know that these evictions just won't take very high priority in many of their cases. Their caseloads are very high. There's a huge backlog within the courts. They're going to have to sift through a lot of that. And so, the practical eviction of individuals is extremely difficult, except in rare cases right now, because it has to go through a court process.

So, I can't tell you why certain Courts or certain Judges are making certain decisions at the rate they are. Not to be rude, but you'd really have to ask them, to be honest, how those cases are being adjudicated, how they're prioritizing, and what the variables that they're looking at when they make those decisions.

In terms of the beach issue, again not to be overly repetitive, but I really believe that they are two very separate issues. We're going to have a couple weeks of folk that might want to protest, whether it's at the beach or at the State House. They're individual, singular events. There's a few that have happened around the State and likely will continue to happen in some facet, as opposed to a long-term permanent order that allows everyone just to come and sit at the beach, potentially by the thousands and thousands, every single day, day-in and day-out, with no guidepost put on it.

Ultimately, can we get there? Sure, I think we can. But I think, as we've said in this State, as the CDC has recommended, as even the President's plan has recommended, you got to take things in phases. Because of the civil unrest and the issues around the protests, and whatever it might be, that is a point in time that has come in very separate than the COVID issue. It's something that we're trying to respect. We've respected it all along, when folks want to protest. We're going to maintain that.

But because of that, that doesn't mean, under that logic, if I may, that means that we should just throw up and just open everything up, and open up full capacity on everything, whether it's social gatherings, or amusement parks, or restaurants, or whatever it is, or beaches, right? No, we're going to keep the rules that we've designed, the pathway and strategies that we've designed around the COVID crisis in place, because, if we were to change that pathway, because of the protests that are happening right now, then you might as well throw all the rules out the window. And I think most people understand, that wouldn't be a responsible thing to do now.

Hopefully, we get there at some point, where we don't have a lot of these restrictions on us. But you can't throw everything out because of the importance of what we're seeing with these individualized events that have been going on for a week, may go on for a couple more weeks. And we will see.

Donna Jordan with the Colebrook Chronicle:

Yes, good afternoon. Thank you, today, for all those charts and information. My downside in life is that I have a big appreciation for data. To start with, I just want to say upfront, on a personal level, I've lost family in Italy and in Massachusetts from this virus. So it has hit me very personally in my life. The day you announced the State of Emergency, I moved my 90-year-old mother into my house with me, and I'm not going to let her go. And I appreciate the guidance that you have given to us over these last few months. It's been very helpful and very much needed. I suspect, at times, you've had some uphill battles. I'd also like to add the racetrack owner in Groveton has worked very closely these last two weeks with his Town Officials and the New Hampshire Attorney General, and is moving forward with having safe races at his track with no spectators. And he's doing it in a way that they have approved of. And I think he should be commended for his close work with the State on what he's done. My question today for you basically is, you probably aren't using a magic crystal ball for your answers. I'm sure. What is your magic moment for the steps that you need to take that will allow gatherings of up to 50 people, up to 100 people, up to an unlimited audience? Are we still looking at weeks or months away from being able to raise those numbers, considering all of the large-scale activities we've lost: 4th of July; Old Home Day; Motorcycle Blessing? And we now have, coming up at the end of August, a very big Moose Festival which brings in thousands of people from all over the country. When do you think that we could be faced with being told, have at it, people, bring in as many as you think you need to bring in? Thank you.

Governor Sununu:

Sure, a great question revolves around really the social gatherings. And I think that was the bulk of the question. So, couple things, let's go back to the Stay-at-Home Orders. The Stay-at-Home Order, again, my hope is to move beyond that into some type of either Stay-at-Home Advisory or something like that on June 15th. We've always said that that's kind of target. It's not a promise, by any means. But that's one of our targets.

And if there's something to be done in conjunction with that, with the gatherings of individuals of 10, or 25, or 50, we will look at that. And obviously, we will always be willing to work with Public Health and take their suggestions and their advice, because they're the real experts here. We will look at what the CDC advises. We will look at what other States are doing. If other States have already flexed open larger gatherings, we will take a look at what that means.

To take a step back, but it's still related, on the Groveton issue, and I think that you're right. The owner of the racetrack in Groveton, which we did have an issue with early on, but he has been, I think, very good to work with. We've kind of settled and have, I think, an understanding of how to go forward.

But all that is related to your question, which is the gatherings and these larger groups. So if it's an event that requires a venue or stands, or things like that, are there guidance that we can put in to allow folk to come in, in larger numbers, but still keep them somewhat segregated with physical distancing and all those things that we've been talking about, and allow that to go forward?

Something we're constantly looking at, because he's not the only racetrack, right? Or amateur sports, or youth sports, something like that, can we get to the point where we're having the baseball games and allowing people to come sit in the stands, but with certain guidance and guidelines there?

My sense is a lot of that would revolve around an expansion, if and when we get there, of going beyond 10 to a larger number. So it isn't an exact piece of data or an exact metric. It's kind of making sure that we can maintain what we saw today, which was that manageable level of COVID, and mitigate the spread, increase the testing, isolate individuals.

As long as we still have the ability to have those tools and we're not seeing huge spikes, whether it's here or similar models you might see across the country, I think we can get there. There's no promise there. But I'd love it if it were weeks and not months away. But it's really hard to say at this point.

Nancy West with InDepth:

Yes, good afternoon, Governor. Thanks for taking my questions. I have two for you today. Now, you said the State's doing a good job managing the virus in long-term care facilities. And yet, 80%-plus of all the deaths in the State have been related to nursing homes. Was it a lack of testing early on that limited the State's ability to get started with keeping the virus at the door? And it's my understanding now is centennial [sic] testing just going to start this week. Now, my second question is, the New Hampshire Science and Public Health Task Force has been waiting for weeks for a response to their Right to Know Request. And I just wanted to know, is the Right to Know Law in effect during the State of Emergency? And will you make all records public from your office? Or will you claim Executive Privilege, as you have done in the past, to keep those records confidential? And thank you.

Governor Sununu:

Yeah, so I'll take the first question. The percentage of fatalities we have seen, the vast majority, 85%-plus percent, have come out of long-term healthcare facilities in New Hampshire. One of the reasons that it's such a high percentage relative to the rest of the State is because, the rest of the State, the fatalities are so low.

And a percentage is a ratio. So the ratio of inside long-term care to outside long-term care is about 4:1 right now in terms of the fatalities. If you looked at the graph that we put up today, you'll see that, compared to other States, the percentage of individuals with COVID within those facilities, and frankly even in the fatality rate of individuals in those facilities, is still drastically lower than many other States, specifically the ones that surround us. So, a percentage is a ratio. So, what it really is, is a sign that we're doing a very good job of keeping the mortality rate outside those facilities extremely low.

If you look to the facilities just south of our border, sometimes just a mile south of our border, you're looking at an incident rate of 50% or more. And you're looking at a mortality rate three times or more of what you see in New Hampshire.

So, again, I don't mean to pick on other States that have these massive outbreaks. But relatively speaking, we're doing an excellent job, frankly. So, again, you have to understand that, just because it says 80% of the mortalities are in long-term care, that is just a ratio of inside long-term care to the community-based transmission that leads to the mortalities outside of long-term care.

The second issues has to do with, is the Right to Know Law in place? Absolutely, the Right to Know Law is in place. I don't know of the specific requests that you speak of. To be honest, my office gets numerous Right to Know Requests all the time on a variety of different issues. So I apologize. I don't

know that group that you're specifically speaking of. And when things, again, fall under the Right to Know Law, we make them available.

But there are certain discussions that have happened in the past that are protected by Executive Privilege, not just within my office by all the Governors' Offices across the country and otherwise. But, again, it really depends on the information that's being sought as to whether that information is available and accessible by the Right to Know Law. But it is in place. And it's consistent with my Administration, as it was with others. I believe it was the former Attorney General Joe Foster that made that determination, under Maggie Hassan.

Are the Right to Know Laws also still in place at the municipal level, too? Or does the emergency let the cities and towns off?

Governor Sununu:

That's a great question. I believe it is. No one's asked. I can imagine if a town were to come and say, gee, we're not working in the office. We need more time and flexibility to respond. I don't know if we, or the Attorney General, have had any requests to that. No, we haven't made any specific exemptions of the Right to Know Law, specific with municipalities. I don't think so.

Ethan DeWitt with the Concord Monitor:

I'm sorry about that. Hi, Governor. I just wanted to ask about the -- I'm not usually quiet for long. I wanted to ask about the George Floyd protests. Today and on Monday, you've talked about the conversations around racial discrimination and Police conduct. And you've used the phrase "real action items" as in these protests around the country and in New Hampshire should lead to real action items. So I have a three-part question for you. The first part is open-ended. What specific action items are you considering in New Hampshire, when it comes to Police conduct? Is there anything that's under review right now? Second part...

Governor Sununu:

Ethan, I'm going to forget all three. If you give me all three questions, I'm going to forget. So can I answer that one, and then we will go to the next? Is that okay?

Ethan DeWitt with the Concord Monitor:

That's fine. Yes.

Governor Sununu:

Great, so that way I can be a little more coherent. The question is what action items are we really talking about and looking at, when we talk about some of raising that discussion and having true follow-on actions. One thing they say, talk is cheap. It's important. But it can be cheap and easy. Anyone can do it. But what are you really going to do to follow that up?

So, a couple of the idea we're already batting around and working with the Diversity Inclusion Council has already come with a variety of ideas for us over the past year to talk about issues

surrounding not just the discrimination based on race, but on gender, based on sexual identity, all of these things that really have been elevated topics of discussions. And we've been able to take some of those actions, legislatively, as you know, and otherwise.

I still think that making sure that we go out not just to a couple but really to every single community that we can and that will allow us to come and talk to their schools, have community leaders, not the Governor, per se, and not just folks that work in Concord, but real community leaders talk at a very grassroots and real level to their schools, to their community centers, whether it's in or outside of the faith-based community, I think is a very powerful aspect to that.

When you look at the training that we give law enforcement, we're very fortunate in this State. We're one of the States that have basically one centralized law enforcement training facility, whether you're in the Department of Corrections or State Police, or local Police. Everyone gets that same base training at our Police Standard and Training Council Department.

And that's a great tool, because that means that you could implement new, more updated models of training, race relations, how to deal with certain situations, at a very consistent level across the State, fairly seamlessly. So I think that's a huge opportunity.

They already do it in some respects. And I think they do it very well. Don't get me wrong. But it's one of those things where you can always keep talking about it. You can always do it a little bit better. You can bring in different perspectives or different points of view. So I think working with our Police Standards and Training to making sure we have updated and more accurate training across the board is something that would be very, very powerful.

I think having not just individual advocates or advocacy groups, or just this group or that group fighting for their singular issue, which can be very important at the legislative level within the State House, but making sure that we're hearing, again, from those community leaders. It's one thing to have an advocate and paid advocates that do this as a living. They do a fine job.

But I still think there's a huge value in having the Senate, or the House, or the Executive Council, or the Governor, or whoever it might be, individual leaders in our communities really have stronger discussions with individuals about what's happening, because what's happening in Concord might be very different than Manchester, or might be very different than Plaistow, might be very different than North Conway.

Every community is different. But those leaders in those communities really have to engage in a very one-on-one level, I think, to take a look at themselves, what's happening in their communities. Understand what we mean, when we talk about implicit bias; what we mean, when we talk about social injustice or racial injustices, or Police brutality.

I think we all have a sense of what that is, right, at an ethereal and a gut level. But what does it really mean from a practical sense? What types of practices do we have in our communities that are addressing these issues? Or are we just kind of doing it the same way we've always done it? We've never had an issue before and we're kind of hoping we don't have an issue again.

That's not good enough. You got to, again, elevate not just that discussion, but challenge yourself to see, what aren't we doing? How do we take off the blinders of doing it the same old way? Challenge ourselves to really think outside the box.

Some communities do it very well. Some communities might not. But really making sure that everybody, 220 cities and towns, are on the frontlines of this. I don't think you can just stop at Concord and Manchester, and Nashua, and Salem, and Portsmouth, in the higher-population areas. I think every

city and town has the obligation. Every school has an obligation to really talk to this issue at an elevated level. Sorry, I know you have two more questions. I apologize for the long answer.

Ethan DeWitt with the Concord Monitor:

No worries. Thanks for that. My next question is about the Laurie List. So, with the George Floyd killing, at least two of the Officers involved had extensive disciplinary records. It's emerged, including the main Officer, Derek Chauvin, who's been charged now with second-degree murder. In New Hampshire, the New Hampshire Attorney General's Office keeps a list of Officers who have disciplinary records that could affect their credibility in court, but exempts that list from public disclosure. And there's been efforts through the years in both the legislature and in the courts to try to make that list public. Why is that list not public? And why have you not instructed, especially given what we've seen in the last few days with questions of Police conduct and with the George Floyd case, why have you not instructed your Attorney General's Office to release the Laurie List? And will you keep fighting to keep it not disclosed in court?

Governor Sununu:

So I'll answer my side. But obviously I would probably also refer you to the Attorney General to talk about the legalities around that, as well. So the Laurie List, there is a list that is out there. The main reason why I think it is appropriate, in many instances, to not just disclose every name on that list is about due process. You want to make sure all the individuals that have been placed on that list have had the ability to go through a due process channel. They're not just place on the list without the ability to kind of have their say on their side, or whatever it might be. And that's been a decade-long discussion, not just here, but there are similar types of lists held all across the country.

I haven't been asked the question in how it relates to the latest issues around George Floyd. I suppose it's something that we can -- I'm always happy to revisit. You want to make sure that, again, whatever the process is, you want to be transparent. But, at the same time, if there were individuals placed on that list inappropriately that have never had the ability, or right, to defend themselves for whatever reason, or the severity of the infraction, or whatever it might be, you got to make sure that you're not inadvertently releasing a name for someone that didn't need to be on the list in the first place.

So, that's my sense is that the majority of the issues revolve around those individuals. And you want to make sure that they have due process. And those that need to be on that list should be on that list, absolutely. And those that have been put on that list for one reason or another, everybody should have the chance to at least go through some sense of due process on it.

Ethan DeWitt with the Concord Monitor:

Okay. Thank you. And I would just note that the concern is that no Officers on that list have been made public. And so, it's very hard to determine whether people should be on the list or not on the list, when we don't even know who's on it. The third question I had and final question is about body cameras for State Police. Currently, New Hampshire State Police does not use body cameras. And also individual Police Departments across the State, if they want to use body cameras, they must finance that, themselves, which is obviously much easier to do for a city than for a town. Should New Hampshire revisit that? Or are you comfortable with the policy right now of not having widespread use of body cameras?

Governor Sununu:

Yeah, so two issues; the use of body cameras has come up numerous times at the State level. There could be a couple different reasons why they haven't been put into place, whether it's at the local or State level. It could be the funds, to make sure we have the funds to put those into place.

A lot of them are, for example, there were a lot of cars that didn't even have dashboard cams. So a lot of the local Police Departments and the State Police made sure, at least, we started with dashboard cams.

Some local Police Departments have gone to bodycams. When it comes to the use and requirement of those, and the pros and cons, I really defer to State Police or local law enforcement, frankly, in terms of their ability. I believe that cameras protect both the civilian as well as the Law Enforcement Officer. I see it as very much a two-way street of protection. But, we've deferred to them for the most part, in terms of where to go and how fast to go, and work with the Legislature, obviously, to get the funding that it would need to move forward. But I think it's always something that we should be discussing and pushing the envelope on, to be sure. Great, I think that was three.

Paul Hayes with The Caledonian-Record:

Well, I think the top five questions I had have already been asked. Okay. So, sports betting's legal in New Hampshire, right?

Governor Sununu:

Sports betting is legal in New Hampshire. Yes, it is.

Paul Hayes with The Caledonian-Record:

Okay. So what would you bet that fall sports in high school -- so football, soccer, field hockey, golf, cross country, would you bet those sports are coming back in the fall in high school?

Governor Sununu:

That's a good question. So, what are the odds, or what would I bet that high school fall sports come back? 50/50, and I say that for a couple reasons. It's not just whether the Governor wants to do it or not. I think I've already heard from certain communities that say they're very hesitant. They're looking to bring their students back into school, but they're very hesitant about the pros and cons, and the safety issues surrounding certain sports, specifically indoor sports, specifically sports that typically have crowded locker rooms and things of that nature that aren't outdoors in the fresh air, noncontact sports that are just inherently -- I think a lot of folk would agree -- are probably a little less risky, to be sure, in terms of passing COVID.

So whether we do it here at the State level, it's a whole different issue whether the local communities would allow it, whether the local schools would allow it. So, there's a variety of different pathways, gates, if you will, that have to be open for allowing it to go forward.

I definitely see a possibility for at least a lot of the noncontact sports, if you will, maybe baseball, or even soccer, something like that. I don't want to pick on one sport or the other at this press conference. I really haven't looked into it specifically, other than to say we're taking steps already this

summer to allow practices. Hopefully, we will get to the point where we can allow some games and flex a little bit with venues.

You have to appreciate that when kids in high school, or any sports, are playing, parents want to be involved. So, it's very hard to allow the sport to happen, but have no one come and watch, right? So, it's not just the sport, itself, but it's also the management of the crowd and all that kind of goes back to a few of the previous, a few callers ago, asking about venues where you'd sit in the stands. You can't cut parents out of the equation, especially for some of the younger kids.

So, a lot of variables in there; we'd love to get there. We really would. I think a lot of folks understand the value of it. I mean, there is a mental-health value, right? There's the value of kids really knowing that the sports are there. The extracurricular activities are there.

What are the odds that the chess club comes back? I know that sounds very different than football, but it's an extracurricular activity where a lot of kids could be together in close contact. I think all of it has to be really assessed and we'd love all of it to come back, because a lot of kids look forward to those extracurricular activities. It's what keeps them going through a tough school day, so to say.

You need to have that break. You need to be able to do some of the things that really challenge yourself in your interests, and disciplines, whether it's sports or other activities. And so, it's a big part of, I think, a child's success at school, a big part of their mental health, if you will. And all those variables and all those puzzle pieces will come into play, as we make those decisions.

Great, that's in on the phone. What else we got in here? Yeah.

Governor, if contact tracing reveals that any of these protests were super spreader events, will you make that public?

Governor Sununu:

If contact tracing reveals that, will we make it -- oh, of course. Yeah. No, if some of these larger gatherings turn out to be massive super spreader events, of course we will make it public. Yeah, to be sure.

You got a letter from the Republican National Committeeman, Chris Ager, asking you to pull off the burden, and speaking of small businesses, the base of the Party. Two Chairmen of your Party at the county levels have said, they agree with him, lot of Republicans grumbling. What's your message to your fellow Republicans?

Governor Sununu:

You mean to open up the economy more?

Yeah, they want you to move. Well, you read the letter from Mr. Ager. So did you have a response to him? And what's your response?

Governor Sununu:

Yeah, I've received a lot of letters from Republicans, a lot of letters from Democrats and Independents. Some people want us to open up faster. Some people want us to open up slower. I get it. I totally do.

As I was answering the question earlier, I'm in that position which I always knew would come, where pretty much everyone's going to be upset in some way with every decision. And I get that. And I'm willing to accept that.

It stinks. I'm not going to lie to you. It weighs on me a little bit. But it really is about making sure we're taking the right steps with Public Health, the right balance. Not everything can be compared apples-to-apples. Not everything is going to be perfect. A lot of things live in a gray area. I get it.

But we're really, I think, have a great team here, looking at a lot of different data variables. Everyone has their own expertise, if you will. And Public Health is incredible about understanding the epidemiological aspects of this, the viral spread, how it moves, the contagion levels. Those are the preeminent variables that we look at, coming in.

We have folks from the economic standpoint that look at how these businesses might flex open. We're looking at stakeholders. We're taking all these different pieces of input to make the best decisions we can.

I think we're walking a really good line. I really do. It's not about being -- well, you're on the fence. You're right. I am absolutely on the fence. I am walking in that balancing act every single day to try to make the best decisions to give as much flexibility as we can, making sure that that number doesn't spike up too high, which we've been able to do.

And I've always said I know it seems frustrating that, boy, another week here and another week there. Why can't I just open my business now? Why can't I take that next step now? By waiting one or two weeks sometimes and having that data gives me, and I think a lot of others, the confidence that, long-term, we're going to be in a good place. We're going to be in a good place.

No concern about prominent Republicans speaking out? No concern about Party unity?

Governor Sununu:

No, I don't. Look, have I put any politics in any decision I've made? No, none. I'm just not there. And I don't think, from a leadership position, you can be there. So, I mean, I listen to all of it. Don't get me wrong. I'm not immune. I hear it all. And I read the letters. And those voices are important, to be sure. I don't care what Party you're from.

But both sides of the aisle have important -- I mean, let me tell you. There were some very prominent Democrat business leaders that are begging me to open their businesses, right? And there are some very prominent Republican conservatives who are scared to death that we're opening too fast, because it's going to put their parents and their loved ones in danger, and people that have compromised immune conditions in their family in danger. They're nervous we're opening too fast.

So, I know there's a lot of politics on it at a national level. I can tell you it doesn't exist in the corner office, when we're making these decisions. They're hard. And like I said, I know I'm probably upsetting a lot of people out there. But I really believe we're doing the right thing. And if you look at the data, the data proves it. I think we're moving forward as best and as smart we can, given our very tough situation here in the northeast.

I think we're setting records today, guys. It's almost 4:25. My goodness, I apologize for the long answers. Now, how is it that Dr. Chan and Commissioner Shibinette didn't get a single question? I've been sitting here the whole time.

I don't know. It's 603 Day, right? Isn't that what they say, June 3rd, 603? So, happy 603 Day to everyone. Thanks for sticking it out with us on a slightly longer but I think some very important questions and very important discussions to be had.

We will be back on Friday hopefully with some more announcements that people can tune into, whether it's flexing more aspects of the economy, looking at some more of the data points as they come in. We just want everyone to be safe in all aspects of their lives. And summer's upon us, which is a good thing. But we're going to take it step-by-step. And we are going to get there. Thank you, guys.