



Office of Governor Christopher T. Sununu
Press Conference
Thursday, July 16, 2020 at 3:00 p.m.

Governor Sununu:

Great, well, good afternoon, everybody. Good to see everyone. Kind of a lighter crowd today, and I guess maybe the good weather. Maybe they're calling in.

Busy news day.

Governor Sununu:

Yeah, busy news day. They're out at Hampton Beach, calling in from Hampton Beach, I suppose. That's fine. We want to provide flexibility for everyone. Well, it is Thursday. We just want to welcome everyone for joining us today.

Before we get into our COVID-related updates and our Public Health update, I wanted to bring folks up-to-speed on a pretty significant piece of legislation that I signed earlier today, something I'm very proud of that I think, in a very bipartisan way, there was a lot of support for. I don't go down and advocate for Bills too, too often down in the Legislature. But this one early on in the legislative process that we're right on the frontlines with.

And it's called HB1280, but it's known as the Prescription Drug Bill, which lowers prescription costs for Granite Staters. It's a huge opportunity, something that has been discussed for a long time. And now we've actually made it a reality.

So the legislation injects transparency in drug pricing. We know that when things become transparent on the pricing side, that always helps to lower cost and increase competition. And it allows New Hampshire to import low-cost prescription drugs from Canada, and puts a price cap in insulin to ensure that no one should have to worry about being able to afford life-saving insulin. This Bill now makes the cost of insulin for New Hampshire citizens the lowest in the country. And that is an amazing achievement, frankly.

We are first in something that we have heard about for so long as such a driver of cost barriers for so many families and individuals. But the price of insulin now in New Hampshire is the lowest in the nation.

As I said, it was a bipartisan Bill with legislative support. Both sides of the aisles working hard to make sure we got it done, and just very proud that we were able to sign that bill this morning, and actually make it a reality for the citizens of New Hampshire. A big win for all of us. With that, I'm going to turn it over to Dr. Beth Daly, who's joining us today for our Public Health update. Dr. Daly?

Dr. Daly:

Thank you, Governor. Good afternoon, everyone. I'm going to provide you our Public Health update today. So there's now more than 13.5 million cases globally of COVID-19. And here, in the United States, we've had 3.5 million cases, with more than 137,000 people who have died.

Unfortunately, the numbers do continue to rise in the United States, with more than 65,000 cases identified each day. And most States outside of New England continue to experience increases. These numbers are now double over what we had experienced this past spring.

Fortunately, here, in New Hampshire, our case counts have remained fairly stable and we've only experienced approximately 25 new cases each day. Today, we will be reporting an additional 27 infections, which will bring our total case count here in New Hampshire to 6,139 people with COVID-19. I am not reporting any additional hospitalizations today. But unfortunately, I do have one new death to report in an adult who was a resident of a long-term care facility.

In terms of our outbreaks here New Hampshire, we have no new outbreaks to report. And we have been able to close two outbreaks in long-term care. These outbreak facilities that we're closing today are Bedford Hills and Holy Cross in Manchester. This leaves just three outbreaks that remain open. That's Birch Hill, Greenbriar, and Hillsborough County Nursing Home.

So we continue to watch what's going on in the rest of the country and continue to investigate our cases here in New Hampshire. And we just ask you to continue to do your part of maintaining your social distancing, avoiding large gatherings, wearing masks when you're out in public and you can't safely social distance, washing your hands, and then, of course, staying home if you do experience any symptoms, and seek testing. Thank you.

Governor Sununu:

Thank you. Great job. So, a variety of little -- I don't want to say little. They're all pretty significant. I'm going to move through three or four different items to talk about. And then, we will open it up for questions.

First, as we've been discussing, the SELF Fund, the Self-Employment Livelihood Fund program, which is an extension of the very successful Main Street Relief Program for businesses, but this one focuses on self-employed individuals in the State, that application process will close. It's been open for about two weeks now and will close tomorrow. So, again, if you're self-employed and interested in applying, a very simple application process, go to revenue.nh.gov, revenue.nh.gov.

So far, we have about 7,000 applications, maybe just shy of 7,000 applications into the system. But it will close out as of the end of day tomorrow. So you have through Friday to get your application in on that program.

So that is essentially the second. We have the Main Street Relief Fund. We have the Self-Employment Fund for businesses. And now there's a third fund that we opened up and discussed. The application process is going to go live. And that's the Business Finance Authority, what we call the Gap Fund Program. Again, it's an offshoot of Main Street Relief and the Self-Employment Fund.

And what it really is, is, by using our current Business Finance Authority here in New Hampshire, the real Experts, if you will, this is a \$30 million fund that allows them to use a lot of discretion in determining opportunities for other individuals, or businesses, that have kind of fallen through the cracks with the other programs. So, for example, if you're a nonprofit or a business that simply didn't meet the

eligibility requirements of either the Nonprofit Fund, or the Self-Employment Fund, or the Main Street Relief Fund, there's always another opportunity for you. And that's through the Business Finance Authority's Gap Fund.

Additional details will be available in the coming days. But the application process is going to be launched next Tuesday, July 21st, next Tuesday, and run through August 4th. So there'll be a couple weeks for folks to apply to that process. Again, I think they're trying to make it fairly simple. Might be a little more in-depth than what is currently available for the funds, just because they are looking to kind of use that discretion. Why did a business not qualify? Why were they left out? Maybe for certain reasons they were excluded, if they put their revenue in wrong, or they didn't test the right information the first time around. We always want to create a backstop and this is one of them.

Down the road, we may have other business funds available, as well. But the BFA Gap Fund will be available for anyone who did not receive funds in at least the first two rounds. Franchises, potentially, could apply through this, as well. New businesses, right, we didn't allow businesses that were too new, that had started within the last year, to apply through the Main Street. So they would potentially be available here.

So, again, this is kind of a catchall, if you will, process for those who didn't meet those initial eligibility requirements. And they can either go to the bfa.gov or the GOFERR website, of course, for that application process beginning next Tuesday.

Also today, on another note, if you remember a few weeks back, maybe about a month ago, we announced about \$10 million to the university system of Federal CARES Act funds, funding to allow for technology upgrades, as the university transferred to more of a remote learning opportunity for students in a variety of different ways. And they've made a lot of those investments. They're doing very well with getting those systems up-and-running.

And today, though, we're here to announce further additional funding for the university system simply to help students return to campus this fall. There's a lot of costs associated, COVID-related costs associated with students coming back to the university system, whether it be Keene State, Plymouth, Granite State College, or over at UNH.

And so, we're providing a \$19 million grant to help the university system so that they can account for many of the costs, whether it's testing or PPE, or supplies, the variety of different things. I think the university system, itself, has done a very good job outline and anticipating what these costs were. They came, worked with the Legislative Advisory Board as part of GOFERR. And they brought some of their requests to us. And we're announcing another \$19 million into our public university system.

And along those same lines is our community college system. One of the needs that we saw was that some of those families that traditionally would go, or are currently within the community college system, they've been affected by COVID, like anybody else, maybe losing a job or whatever it might be.

So today, we're committing \$6 million to the community college system for tuition support for students this fall. They could be existing students. They could be new students. But that's a lot of opportunity to help cover costs of any students that may have a loss of family income, or revenue, or whatever it might be, to themselves. Maybe, because of COVID, they're having trouble paying those costs. We really want to open up that opportunity for individuals within our community college.

As a reminder, we have simply one of the best community colleges. And that's just not the Governor touting what's in our home State. If you look at our metrics of our community college system compared to almost any other system on the east coast, we knock it out of the park. It's really phenomenal what goes on in that system. The connectivity that the community college has to the K-12

system, primarily in our high schools; the connectivity it has to UNH and the rest of the colleges within our university system.

And going through this flux, we realize it's actually an ideal time. There's a lot of folks that may look to either earn a different degree, or a credential, pivot to a new career, whatever it might be. And so, we just want to open up those opportunities for those families, not let cost be a barrier, if they've been infected [sic] by COVID. And we think that, again, this \$6 million in tuition and scholarship aid is going to go a long way for a lot of individuals within our system.

Two more things: one is -- this is a really good one. I'm very excited about this. We focused a lot on kids over the past two or three years here. We talk about DCYF, the Division of Children, Youth, and Families; being more proactive with our program and support services; the social-emotional learning in the classrooms; focus on early childhood education; fully funding kindergarten; and really looking at kids that, themselves, fall through the crack.

And that's often comes in the form of our foster care system. We had a foster care system that was struggling for a little while and has really made an incredible comeback over the last couple years. For the first time in a long time, we now have more kids that leave foster care than enter foster care. That's a really great statistic. And we want to encourage more folks to be part of those programs, more folks to be part of a system to help these kids that really do need that at least temporary support, sometimes long-term supports, as well.

So, today, we're launching a program to provide stipends of up to \$500 per child over the summer, to allow for foster and relative caregivers to afford additional opportunities for these children in foster care programs. So it could be for day camps or overnight camps, in-home childcare, in-state trips, recreational program, all these other things that have been hampered that can limit socialization and limit opportunities for so many families.

The CARES Act guidelines do allow us to really focus and create an opportunity especially around these kids and these families in foster care. And just give them some of the supports and some of the opportunities that they otherwise may not have had, and opportunities that a lot of other families across the State don't have.

So, the program is going to be administered by the New Hampshire Foster and Adoptive Parent Association, another great group we work very closely with here at the State. Details are going to be available early next week on how to apply. But the website to go to would be NHFAPA, that's nhfapa.org. Again, a great Association to provide these stipends, and just open up everyday opportunities for these kids going through some tough times.

So the program, itself, has really turned around in the State. And we can't thank everyone, not just at the Government level, but all of those families. And if you want to be part of the foster care program, if you want to be a foster family, if you want to get involved, again, you can go to NHFAPA and get more information on the pathway that might fit you. Again, the program really does run very, very well.

And then, finally, one last thing and then we will open it up for questions, earlier this week our office, the Governor's office, received the initial COVID-19 Equity Taskforce Report. And first and foremost, I want to thank the Taskforce Members. We had about five individuals, I believe, on that Taskforce. I spoke to a few of them. I wrote them letters and just said thank you so much.

They worked quickly. They handled a lot of data information; a very well-written Report, to be honest, with a lot of good action items at the backend. Very thoughtful, clearly we had the right people on the job.

So I've reviewed the draft recommendations and we will release the Report with our initial set of actions that we're going to take next week. So we've reviewed it once or twice. There's a lot of recommendations. And what we're really doing now is figuring out, where's that low-hanging fruit, stuff we can do in the immediacy. Where are things that are going to be more of a longer either challenge or might have to go through a legislative action, whatever it might be?

Now, some action items that we can implement almost immediately -- and that's the good news. I'm one for taking quick action when we can and where it is necessary. And like we said, others may require further thought.

Now, on a similar vein, a little bit different, that Equity group really was looking at a lot of the healthcare inequities potentially within our system. And we've known that they have existed. And COVID-19, because of the healthcare crisis, that it has been exacerbated. That then brought a lot of that to the forefront in terms of the potential inequities in those systems. And we can make some very, I think, positive strides there.

At the exact same time, we have the newly established Commission on Law Enforcement Accountability, Community and Transparency. And they're working diligently. And we're looking forward to their initial Report and their findings.

But earlier today, along that same path, I wanted folks to know I signed another Bill, another, I think, very important bill, comprehensive Bill, not the endgame by any means, but very comprehensive in what it aimed to do, which was HB1645. The HB, all the numbers, I know. They have their number system.

What is it? It's really the Comprehensive Criminal Justice Reform Bill. It has some immediate actions such as we've talked about prohibiting chokeholds, requiring Police Officers to report misconduct.

One big one for us was further reforming Bail Reform. Bail Reform was something that supported by Law Enforcement, a Bill I signed a couple years ago. But pretty early on, I think everyone realized that I wasn't right. We could have done a much better job. And we really tasked the Legislature to go back, work with stakeholders, and find better solutions. And a lot of those new reforms are in this Bill, as well.

So, Chief Capano has been a very strong advocate to fix Bail Reform. And we've been working with him very closely. We very much support those ideals. And we got not everything, but a lot of it in. And down the road, we may need to keep adjusting it again, to be sure. There's nothing wrong with always going back and constantly challenging yourself to make a better system.

But I just want to thank a lot of the folks in law enforcement and the Judges, the folks in the Jail System that worked with us, just to find a better way to do it. So we feel very confident that 1645 is definitely taking us in the right direction. And we want to thank everybody involved. And there's a lot in that Bill, to be honest. I don't want to bore everybody with all the details. But there's a lot of really good stuff in there.

I guess, with that, we can open it up for questions. Good afternoon, Paula. How are you?

Q&A Session

I'm well, how are you, Governor?

Governor Sununu:

I'm doing great.

Great.

Governor Sununu:

It's a great Thursday.

Speaking of that, the Taskforce met today, your Police Accountability Taskforce. And they're running up against a lot of a time pressure here with the end of the month. They're trying to limit testimony, but they really feel that they want to hear from people fully. Is it possible that you would allow them a longer extension than 45 days?

Governor Sununu:

Yeah, I heard the same concern. So, when it comes to getting important things done, I can be a little pushy. I'm pretty demanding on accountability and getting actions, because, too, if you don't demand results quickly in Government, it tends to languish on and on, and on. We've all heard that story locally and nationally on a variety of issues.

But I do appreciate they want to make sure all the testimony is in there, right? So, I think here's the balance. What I'm still going to do is ask them to give me an initial Report. I think there's some low-hanging fruit, some obvious things that can and should be addressed very quickly. And that can be done within 45 days. But that doesn't mean it ends.

Just like the Equity Taskforce Report is going to continue on. I'm just using a similar path here. That Equity Taskforce Report I received this week, we're going to be including the Commission on Diversity and Inclusion, getting them involved to really -- it's not a complete handoff, but working with that group hand-in-hand to find out, again, where that low-hanging fruit is, what other stakeholder input is going to be needed.

And so, along that same vein, with the Police Accountability and Law Enforcement Accountability group, if they need more than 45 days on certain aspects, absolutely. No, we don't want to leave any stone unturned. But there's definitely some low-hanging fruit.

So it's not just extending the 45 days. We're still going to be looking for some action items that can be achieved within the 45-day timeframe. And things that need longer, by all means, we want to encourage them to keep working strong and take care of some of those long-term issues. And to your point, especially making sure the stakeholders do have time to submit their testimony and it could be heard.

Governor, in terms of email and social media incoming to our newsroom, we're hearing from a lot of citizens who were hoping for more detail in the school guidance. So what's your reaction to some parents saying, gosh, we wish we would have seen from the State on it?

Governor Sununu:

Look, I think our education guidance document is fantastic, and for the main reason that it is done in the New Hampshire way. It doesn't create such rigidity that any one single mandate dooms it to failure. And that's exactly what you're likely going to see in other States.

Other States that created a statewide top-down mandate, this is the end-all, be-all for every city and town in their State, they're getting pushback in just the opposite direction. I've talked to Governors very directly that have said, we're getting pushback that says this isn't achievable in certain classrooms, that what you're asking at the State level isn't achievable in the hallways, or in the lunchroom, or in the cafeteria. For some areas, it might be. But, for some areas, it isn't.

So, we're a State of local control. That's why we have one of the best education systems in the country, because we have faith that our Teachers and parents, and local Administrators can work to find out the best solution for our students. I understand if folks out there don't have faith that it can happen at the local level, I couldn't disagree more, right?

So, there are certain mandates in there, of course. But we've tried to make it practical. And where you see some of the rigidity in these other States that mandate top-down, one size fits all for everyone, it isn't a practical solution.

So we want to give that flexibility of practicality. The funding is there for them to buy supplies, whether it's PPE. This was all written and designed by a survey of 50,000 people across the State. I don't know any other State that did that, that went out to Teachers and parents and said, what do you think? What would you like to see, right?

Most States, it was just a bureaucratic in the bubble-type process. We included everyone. And we included all the stakeholders, which is why not just myself, but I think folks across the State, have so much confidence that it was done the right way. It's a viable document, something that every District can work with. And it's exactly what was asked for: something that's practical and something that's flexible.

Governor, did the Taskforce on the reopening side for the schools, did they have a final look at the document before it came out? Or was it a they just provided a framework and then it went to you?

Governor Sununu:

I don't think so. No. So the document is primarily -- I mean, we took all the recommendations of the Taskforce. They created the framework. They created a lot of kind of that guidance framework. A lot of the content was put in by Dr. Chan or folks at the Department of Education.

With most guidance documents, I believe the final look probably was Dr. Chan, to be honest. We always want public health and safety as primary. And so, any changes that might have been made, you always want to make sure it's nothing that goes above and beyond what might be deemed safe and acceptable with Public Health. And we make sure that they really have the final say on it.

But I don't believe that after Dr. Chan it went back for a final review at the Taskforce. The Taskforce really created that framework, and then they took it from there and created the content, and the flexibility for the Districts.

And one more on the concerns, a lot of parents are wondering why there wasn't more specific guidance on masking. We know that obviously some parts of the State have more COVID-19 than others. But, with certain businesses being required to mask to reopen, why wasn't there a more forceful push to require at least masking at the levels of education, where...

Governor Sununu:

Yeah, because businesses are run by adults and children are in classrooms. I mean, there's a fundamental difference there. So, what we heard from Teachers was -- and I'll say Teachers both within New Hampshire as well as Teachers we talked to outside of this State that were very concerned with, again, I'm going to keep using that word "rigidity" of every student must wear a mask all day long in the classroom.

Teachers in other States that have that in their guidance, they don't know how they're going to manage that. And then, will they be liable, God forbid someone should get COVID and finds out that a student wasn't wearing a mask, or kids were playing with it, underlying health conditions that could be caused by that problem?

So, again, think of it this way. Should it just be the Governor sitting in Concord that dictates what happens in Mrs. Smith's 3rd Grade classroom over in Rochester? No, no, definitely not. No, it's the parents, and the Teachers, and the Administrators that know best how to manage that.

And this document was not designed to get kids into school on day 1. We want that to happen, of course. But it was designed to make sure that we can keep them in school long-term, and the system doesn't fail. The system for a classroom, or a school, or an entire District, right? And most people know we want kids back in those classrooms.

If a classroom wants to mandate masks, absolutely. If a Teacher can manage that, that's great, right? If a School Bus Driver thinks that they can manage masks on the school bus fulltime like other States are doing, that's the District's choice to do that. I think most School Bus Drivers would agree that that's a real challenge, because they got to be focusing on driving and safety, and all of that, as opposed to stopping the school bus all the time and making sure the kids aren't throwing the masks around, or playing with them, or whatever. I went on a school bus to North Salem Elementary School and Woodbury Junior High School, and lot of whacky things happen on those school buses. The Bus Drivers have so much to deal with already.

So, it has to be practical. It has to be something that is manageable, so that we can be successful in the long-term. And by more specificity, people are saying, well, you should have just mandated everyone wears a mask all day long.

That's not appreciating that Districts are so different in size, in the amount of COVID, in the underlying healthcare conditions of those students, how the schools are traditionally managed, how food service is prepared, how drop-off is done and transportation is done. It's so different all across the State. And that was the benefit of having all the stakeholders to come in. I think everyone quickly realized, wow, there is so much variation in our system. It's a good thing. It's a really good thing.

Because there's variation and flexibility at the local level is why we can be so successful, why our schools are traditionally ranked some of the best in the country, right, because we just allow those on the frontlines to make a lot of those decisions. And in this situation, it shouldn't be any different.

Now, there are still mandates there. If you're a stranger or -- I shouldn't say a stranger, but an adult coming into a school, you're mandated to wear a mask, right? There are certain mandates that we did put in there that are easily manageable, that don't impact what's going on in the classroom and the education that that child could be provided.

And the last thing I'll throw in, not to go on too long, but it's an important issue, when people said, is it everyone in class, or is it remote learning, or is it a hybrid? What happens on day 1, we think every school can go back safely on day 1. But over time, if a child were to find out to be COVID-positive, or the kids that sit next to him, maybe they have to be quarantined, as well, until they get tested for a period of time, just because they're out doesn't mean that they should be excluded from the education process.

So that's why we created this hybrid model, right, and ideas in terms of how to manage a hybrid model for a classroom, again without overburdening the Teacher. And there's some options in there, right? It isn't a one size fits all. The Teacher must do this and this to include those kids. The Teacher has a couple different options, all of which we included in that guidance document for them to provide that quality education.

So, look, I think we've heard rave reviews from a lot of folks out there. Like any other guidance document, a lot of people are going to have issues with it, whether it's putting out a guidance document for barber shops, or putting out a guidance document for retail stores, or putting out a guidance document for education. Of course it's never going to be a one size fits all. That's not how it's designed. But the best path is with flexibility, working with Public Health to ensure the health and safety of those kids.

Governor, somebody had said you expect another wave, another spike in the fall. Do you think it's likely that a lot of School Districts that start reopening in September will go to remote learning, or a forced hybrid later in the year?

Governor Sununu:

So, by having the flexibility that we built into this document, God forbid we should have another surge. And I do expect at some point it to happen, unfortunately. It's not going to happen across the State all at the same time and at the same level.

So if you were to see spikes in one District and not the other, it doesn't mean that all the schools should necessarily go to remote learning immediately, right? If you create that specificity that people are looking for, that rigidity, you could be shutting down schools and sending kids to remote learning in Districts that have absolutely no COVID, right? And they might be saying, we don't need to do this. We don't want to do this. Give us flexibility. Well, we're giving them flexibility ahead of time so they can help with their planning and their process.

But if there is another surge, as we've seen all across the country, it's likely to happen in certain parts of the State and not others, to start with. And again, all the more reason to provide flexibility in these documents. And it is possible that some Districts, if they see a high level of COVID, if they have a lot of Teachers out, if certain aspects just become unmanageable, they may say, look, we have to go to a fully remote-learning process. We have stipulations for that, too. That can be managed. And that's a tough

one. I mean, that puts a real burden on parents and all that. But we did it before. It's not ideal. We can do it again if we have to.

Would you consider using more CARES Act funding for reusable cloth masks? I was talking today with Alex Ray and he went to Florida with Steve Rand and got 50,000 masks that they distributed for free. They've got an opportunity to get more of those masks, but not the money. Is it possible that you might be able to find some money that would be able to help people?

Governor Sununu:

For schools?

No, for the poor, or anyone who doesn't have reusable cloth masks at their access.

Governor Sununu:

Sure, yeah, that'd be an idea. I haven't heard that request specifically that we...

He says in this email to me that only you could answer the question and asked specifically that in needs for citizens that have social distancing issues, could really use that.

Governor Sununu:

Yeah, sure. If folks are having trouble obtaining a mask, I mean, we can absolutely look at providing something either through our Public Health Networks or some other means. We really don't want to be in the business on the disposable mask side to be putting out millions and millions, and millions of masks. We've put out millions and millions of masks.

This would be like a reusable cloth that you can put in the laundry.

Governor Sununu:

Yeah, for citizens, not necessarily for businesses or schools; yeah, that's a possibility. Sure, we will take a look at that. I mean, there's a lot of cloth masks out there, which is great. And they're affordable. They're reusable. In the long-term, they more than pay for themselves. And if folks are having a hardship, they shouldn't have a barrier to wearing a mask, of course. It's a great idea.

Governor, is there anything to glean from -- I mean, the classroom setting, kids have already been in daycare this whole time. And maybe Dr. Daly can weigh in on this. Is there any evidence of spread, or outbreaks, in those daycare setting which, even in the best-case scenario, tend to be some of the germiest kid-gathering places of any childhood setting? Is there anything to be gleaned from that for going back to school?

Governor Sununu:

We currently have no major outbreaks in any of our childcare facilities, hundreds of which have been open for quite some time. It's an important point, of course. But that doesn't mean it can't happen, right?

Again, I say it a lot. My job is to prepare for the worst and hope for the best. And we could go through the schoolyear with virtually no COVID in our schools. That would be great. That'd be wonderful. But we need to prepare for something that could be worse.

But to your point, there's no evidence of that right now. And just to add onto that a little bit, we've looked at the predictive analytics and the data we're getting from other States, specifically Florida, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Arizona. Those are some of the States we've really looked at for various reasons, the way they're set up and their schools are set up.

When you're seeing the outbreaks that are happening in those parts of the country again, they, again, no huge outbreaks within the childcare population over the summer, or the summer school population. A lot of those schools are going to be going back literally next week. So we will have a bit of data ahead of the game. I'm not saying that those other States are like the canary in the coalmine, but kind of. They kind of are. So we will be watching those States very carefully in terms of what happens in their classrooms.

The vast majorities of those outbreaks are being driven, again, in bars or nightclubs, areas with very, very poor ventilation, areas where there's young adults within not just a couple feet, but even closer sometimes for various reasons. But they're just not taking precautions. And so, those are really those hotbed outbreak centers that we're trying to manage.

How about Bike Week?

Governor Sununu:

Am I going to Bike Week?

That's clearly going to happen. And has your Department been working with the City of Laconia?

Governor Sununu:

Yes.

And is it something you think it'll be okay?

Governor Sununu:

Yeah, so my understanding is we're constantly working with the folks up at Bike Week. My understanding is a lot of the events are being either toned down, or the vendors are being told that they're not having a lot of the outdoor vendors, I believe, that they traditionally might have.

So they want it to happen. But I think they understand that if you have vendors packing the streets and too many people there that can't socially distance, it's going to go bad. And they want it to be

successful, not from an economic standpoint -- obviously, that's helpful, too -- but also from nobody wants Bike Week to be the incident of a major outbreak.

Now, Bike Week isn't a singular event. So it isn't that, hey, we're canceling Bike Week, because it's really all these different pieces. And some are directly related to Bike Week. Some aren't. Some happen all over the State. Some are in Laconia or over at the Weirs. It could happen a variety of different ways.

So it isn't the State approving, or disapproving of Bike Week. We're asking all of them to use the guidance that we've put forward. If you're a retail, you have to use the guidance in retail. You should only have 50% of the people indoors. Anyone that's an Employee should be wearing a mask, same with restaurants, same with all the different venues.

So the benefit we have is a lot of our guidance documents are already there. We're just going to have a very busy week up at the lake. And that's kind of how we're treating it. And I think they're being smart about kind of toning back some of the ancillary things that are typically there that may drive either larger crowds or more tightly packed situations.

Like late-night bar scenes?

Governor Sununu:

And something on the late-night bar scene, I've always said I'm not looking to go backwards. But if it looks like that there's a late-night bar scene, whether it's in Laconia -- I don't want to pick on Bike Week -- or Hampton, or Manchester, or some of the areas where we traditionally -- we don't have a lot of that in the State, but those few areas where we do. I'm not beside myself in terms of putting in additional stipulations, whether they be curfews or late-night limitations, in terms of crowds and gatherings.

Making sure that if that late-night scene is going to happen, do it outside. Do it under a tent, right? Be creative with it. It's summer. Enjoy the summer fresh air because even the large crowds we see down on the beach, again we don't have any evidence of large amounts of outbreak, or anything like that, for those crowds that are practicing social distancing when they're outdoors.

Even though there's thousands of people down at Hampton Beach, we've really opened it up so you can maintain a lot of spacing, and, depending on the time of day that you're there, you have people walking on the streets wearing their masks. Not everyone, of course, it is a beach area. But people are still, I think, trying to adhere to it as much as they can.

One last question?

Governor Sununu:

Sure.

Today, the New Hampshire Democratic Party and members of the Portsmouth Elected Officials were critical of you in your decision to allow the Trump Administration to have an event, even though they canceled it, and you were not willing to go, yourself.

Governor Sununu:

Well, again, I don't go to the Black Lives Matter protests. I didn't go to the big rallies. It's hard-pressed to find me anywhere where there's thousands and thousands of people. And if I am there, I'm probably getting out pretty quick.

So Hampton Beach was an example. I went down to Hampton Beach. As the crowd started getting bigger over the course of the day, I said, okay, enough. I wear the mask and I go. It's my choice, as it is in anybody's choice to participate.

But to say that we shouldn't have a political rally, but we should have a protest, or this-or-that, look, we can't be in the business of picking and choosing based on our political whims what types of gatherings we're going to allow to have, right? I've made it very clear. The protests on the State House lawn, the Black Lives Matter protests, a Joe Biden rally, or a Donald Trump rally, or whatever, we're going to allow those to happen, under the guidelines of making sure people are staying physically separated as much as they possibly can, encouraging of everyone to wear a mask.

We're not giving them any special permissions right now, because we have opened up those opportunities for those large gatherings to happen. And we just want to encourage them to be smart about how they do it. And it's not about Donald Trump or Joe Biden, or Black Lives Matter. It's just about the ability to do it and making sure we have that elevated message of being safe.

Have the Trump Administration reached out to you on a new date?

Governor Sununu:

No.

Governor, you talk about some of the Bills that you're signing in your remarks today. Are there other Bills on your desk right now? What are they? Do you plan on vetoing?

Governor Sununu:

Yeah. Well, there are some Bills on my desk right now that I'll likely sign a few and veto a few tomorrow, to be honest. Again, these Bills are very, very large, like sometimes they're 40 Bills put together. And we're going to have instances where I veto Bills that have good stuff in them. And I'm going to sign Bills that don't have great stuff in them, right, because so much of this has been put together because the leadership in the House and the Senate just they didn't know what to do. And so, they packed all this stuff together, which made it very cumbersome, right?

A lot of this stuff that has been put into these Bills, a lot of it hasn't even received a real public hearing or allowed the public to come in and testify on. And I kind of have a problem with some of that. Some of it's good stuff. But if it can wait and make sure we get the public input, let's do that.

Now, some of them are kind of that low-hanging fruit, the things that we do need in an emergent way. Prescription Drug Bill's a great example. Get it done. I mean, my goodness. So, the opportunity we've created with that is huge.

So I've vetoed a few Bills. I've signed a few Bills. I have some more to veto and sign. I'm trying to think. Tomorrow -- give me a second here. The new Election Law Bill is on my desk, I believe, that I'll sign that has a lot of the flexibilities that were negotiated out. I think that's on my desk and I'll likely sign that tomorrow.

I know that that really bad Unemployment Bill, to be honest, it's a horrible Bill. I will absolutely veto that one tomorrow. I think we had three Commissioners stand up and say, if you sign that Bill, we're going to be out of compliance with pretty much every Unemployment Insurance Rule on the books. And we're going to have to put hundreds of millions of dollars in taxes just to keep the unemployment. I mean, that Bill was beyond horrible. That's an easy one.

There's a few others out there. I'm trying to do this off the top of my head. I apologize. But, there's a few highlights for you. So, I got yelled at because I didn't take the phone calls. But one more, and then we will go to the phones. And then, I'll come back. I promise.

This is from my boss, Nancy West. She wants to know why you let Betsy Devos' people write the guidance document for schools.

Governor Sununu:

No, how do I even answer that? Look, I believe what that question is referring to -- Betsy Devos' staff did not write our education guidance document at all. There is a contractor that has been working with the Federal Government for decades, I mean, literally decades. They've been working with the State in a variety of levels. I believe it's AIR. I think that's the name of the organization. And they work under what we call the Comprehensive Centers. And they've been here since the Bush and Obama Administrations. For years ago, they've been working with Education Departments all across the country.

I believe they've been working with us in a variety of areas within our Department of Education. And in this sense, I think they helped do the logistics around like the surveys. They helped coordinate some of the meetings. That's my understanding. But they did not write content. They did not write. The content was written by the Department of Education right here in New Hampshire. That's why it's so flexible. That's why it's all about local control. No, the Federal Government did not write our document at all. Let's be very clear about that. Hi, how are you?

Good.

Governor Sununu:

Good.

Kathy McCormack with Associated Press:

Hi, thank you. I have two questions. On the Prescription Drug Bill, can you provide a few more details on the insulin pricing? And my second question is: what are your thoughts at this time on going back to allowing reusable bags in grocery stores?

Governor Sununu:

I don't have good answers for either of those. So, on the Prescription Drug Bill, it's great. It allows us now to have the lowest-cost insulin in the country. What we will do is we will send you something about the details. I'm hesitant to push too many of the details, because if I get it wrong, I'm getting it wrong in front of a lot of people. And I don't want to misrepresent information. But we will get you all the information on the Bill and how it practically works.

But the fact it can go into -- I think other States are going to kind of copy what we're doing towards either the end of the year or early next year with their legislation. But this definitely puts us kind of ahead of the pack. And our hats off in a very bipartisan way to the Legislature.

On the reusable bags, no, we're still not there in the grocery stores. At some point, we definitely will be. I have to be honest. I really haven't looked at that issue in the past couple weeks. Again, if we really thought we were kind of out of the woods with COVID, if we really thought that the low numbers that we have today are completely sustainable and we don't have anything to worry about, we do. We absolutely do.

And so, I'm hesitant to go backwards and kind of go backwards on really anything right now, to be honest, in terms of the flexibilities. I think we're in a good place right now. I think, overall, we want to keep it there.

As soon as you start creating more flexibilities here-and-there in times of where we are, given where we are right now, I don't want to necessarily open up the floodgates and then everyone's asking for everything to be more flexible. It's just not responsible right now.

So, small sacrifice to keep using the non-reusable bags, we ask people just to be patient. And hopefully we will get there if we can show that our COVID numbers are going to stay down permanently and we're not going to create a worse situation than we currently have.

Donna Jordan with the Colebrook Chronicle:

Yes, good afternoon. I have two questions. The first one is if you could just refresh my memory, there's been so much here. Are we not still under a State of Emergency? And if so, where do we stand with that? I thought it was expiring as of this week or next week. And my second question is: I'm looking for clarification on where we stand with requirements and recommendations, according to the guidance documents. How do we know the difference? Several weeks ago, I had asked you this, but we were in a different place and time. The Stay-At-Home Order was in place and you said, at that time, the Stay-At-Home Order was mandatory, for example no large-scale public events, as an example. With the Stay-At-Home Order now expired, all of the guidance documents have been produced. What, in those guidance documents, is mandatory today? Or are you coming from the thought of, we recommend that this is how you conduct your business? For example, does the restaurant have to require their customers to wear masks? Is that a violation of a mandate if they don't? Just going on the basis of you also being consistent with telling people really wear a mask when you go out, practice social distancing. Practice good hand hygiene, stay away from

crowds, and stay home as much as possible, which, of course, flies in the face of let's get outdoors and in places we're here and all that thing. So, just if you could help me again?

Governor Sununu:

Sure. Yeah, I'll do my best. So we are still in a State of Emergency. I believe it technically would expire tomorrow, but we will reup it. If the State of Emergency goes away, all the Orders that we've put in place go away completely. And the Legislature is gone. They're not going to reenact anything.

So we're likely going to be in a State of Emergency continually. We have to reup it every three weeks by law. And my sense is we're going to be here for quite a while, frankly. It just allows us the flexibility to make sure we're managing and being responsive, whether it's with CARES Act funds; whether it's being able to obtain supplies, or PPE; whether it's making adjustments to guidance documents ; allowing the telemedicine and the telehealth opportunities move forward. So, things like that really live under the State of Emergency Order and we're going to keep it there.

The short answer to your question in terms of, now that we're out of a Stay-At-Home Order, we're still in the State of Emergency. But the Stay-At-Home Order is now more of a, we call it, an advisory, Safer-At-Home Advisory.

Within each of those guidance documents, there's keywords to look for. When we say shall or must, that's the requirement. When we say recommended or should, that's simply a recommendation or should means we think you should, but it's not an absolute requirement.

So we tried to be very picky about our words. In some cases, we've had to go back and adjust the words a little bit, just to make sure we were being very specific to your point. But within each of those guidance documents, if it says recommended or should, that isn't an absolute enforceable mandate, so to say. The shalls and the musts, if you will, are the ones that are really enforceable and we're asking folks to make sure -- we're not asking. We're telling folks, if you will, to make sure that those are being adhered to, whether it's in a movie theater, or a retail store, on the beach, whatever it might be.

Michael Graham with New Hampshire Journal:

Yes, Governor. So, State Senator Feltes says that you have delivered chaos to the school systems by not issuing mandates for how they must reopen their schools. And Executive Councilor Volinsky says that it's your job to issue those Orders and you're not doing your job. Would you talk about whose job it is to make decisions for local schools and how the New Hampshire system works regarding local school control versus State control? And in the modern era with something like COVID, which is a unique threat, should New Hampshire reconsider local control? Maybe local control doesn't fit in the 21st Century.

Governor Sununu:

As I said earlier, local control in our education system and in so much of what impacts our lives here in New Hampshire, it works. It's a tried-and-true process. No process is perfect, of course. But ours works better than most. It really does. And it's a reason why our education system is so good.

To Senator Feltes, who's issuing a complaint that the State must mandate everything across the board, or Councilor Volinsky, who says it is our job to tell every school and every Teacher exactly what they must do in the classroom, I don't know why they don't have faith in Teachers and Administrators, and parents to find the solutions for themselves in areas where we're providing a little bit of flexibility. I

have all the faith in the world that the Teachers and the parents, and the Principals know how to manage those classrooms, not a Governor sitting in the corner office.

So, we've provided those guideposts, if you will, and the guidelines. But, again, providing that flexibility because we have faith that the locals and the parents, and the Teachers are the ones. I don't know why they wouldn't have faith that other folks other than themselves might have some answers and solutions in this process.

Todd Bookman with New Hampshire Public Radio:

Yes, thank you, Governor. Could you comment on what the average turnaround time is right now for COVID tests? And is the turnaround time being impacted in any way by the surges we're seeing in other States? I assume some percent of our tests, the swabs are taken here but they're sent to be processed in laboratories in other States.

Governor Sununu:

Great question; the vast majority of tests that we take here -- it's very easy to get a test. I always want to start with that. Go get a test, even if you're asymptomatic. Go get a test. It's great to find out. Make sure you're not asymptotically transmitting. There's virtually no lines. We do anywhere on an average about 2500 tests a day across the State.

The important part of your question is spot-on. The two- to three-day turnaround times that we were seeing about a month ago have really exacerbated to seven and sometimes almost up to 10 days because not of what's happening in New Hampshire, but what's happening in the rest of the country.

About 70%-or-so -- that's a rough number on any given day -- but the majority, let's say, of our tests are processed -- they're done here in New Hampshire, of course, but they are processed by outside labs: LabCorp, Quest. These are the laboratories across the country that have the vast majority of all the reagents that are out there. And even that number is dwindling, by the way, which gives us a lot of concern.

But, yeah, I don't want to say we're being put back in the back of the pack. We're still on par with everyone else in the country. But because there's such a surge of testing demand on the system, the turnaround time is being exacerbated to seven-or-more days. And it is very frustrating.

Now, what are we doing? We're not just accepting that. What are we doing to attack that problem? We're looking to purchase more devices here New Hampshire. The university system, itself, is looking to purchase some testing devices.

We have a lot of capacity that can still be tapped into over at Dartmouth. They have a machine that can do up to 1,000 tests per day. And we want them to tap into that resource. So they're utilizing what they can do, but our Public Health Lab, as well.

Getting the reagents, so not just the devices, but the actual reagents to perform the tests, we're a bit beholden again to those that are manufacturing those reagents. The majority are going to the commercial labs, because they're handling the majority of the tests across the country. But it makes it harder and harder to actually get the materials to do the tests.

We have well over a million, maybe even close to 2 million swabs in the State. So we can do the swabs. We have the viral transport media to get the test done and sent to the lab, wherever it might be. But the turnaround times are very frustrating for the vast majority of individuals. We appreciate that.

So we're trying, like building up our cache of PPE supplies, as we talked about on Tuesday, or building up the funds that we need to provide resources to the State and to businesses, and to schools and hospitals. The same goes with testing supplies. We're trying our best to make those purchases.

There's a high demand on them. We're even looking overseas at different testing opportunities. But unfortunately, right now, it looks like the turnaround time is going to be there at least in the indefinite future.

My sense is, over the next few weeks, as well, you're going to see a lot of college students that all have to get tested before they go back to college, right? That's a requirement for most colleges and universities to open up across the country. There's going to be another surge on the system there with folks that are completely asymptomatic.

People are being turned away by the hundreds and thousands in other States right now. And that's unfortunate, of course. So I have a lot of sympathy for those situations. But I want to give that as an example of the massive run on the entire national system of testing supplies.

So we've done a pretty good job getting what we have here. We have some new devices coming in to long-term care facilities. We have our Abbott rapid tests. We're getting more and more of those reagents to use in those tests, as well. And the more we can use those devices and have those reagents here in the State takes more of a burden off the overall system on a national level.

And all States are making those investments and getting those devices. So hopefully more States will be doing their own stuff, less demand with the -- I'm sorry, more demand on the rapid localized tests, less demand on the nationalized system, and ultimately that turnaround time gets reduced. But, we're a bit beholden, as is every other State right now, to the massive demand going across America.

Tony Schinella from the Patch:

Oh, thank you so much. Thank you, Governor, for taking my question. And thank you, Dr. Daly, for all your work. Adam asked a question about daycare centers, took some of my thunder. But I want to maybe shift a little bit and follow up this way. According to the data dashboard, less than 2% of all infections have been children nine and younger, about 100 kids. The first part of the question is: do we know what percentage of those children attended daycare centers, or became infected from daycare centers? And then, the second part of the question is you said hundreds of daycare centers have stayed open. But in many of those cases, they were children of essential workers, like First Responders and Healthcare Workers, meaning they had a greater danger possibly of infection due to the jobs of their parents. How does the State's experience with daycare centers from the Public Health Department, from the Education Department, fit into some of the fears that some parents have raised about the Reopening School Advisory Plan?

Governor Sununu:

Great question, so I'm going to have Dr. Daly come up and provide some answers.

Dr. Daly:

So, in terms of the first question you had asked: what proportion of those children under nine were in daycare centers? So, I don't have the exact number with me. It's a very small proportion. I'm going to say less than 10% of those. There's only been a handful, maybe two handfuls of kids in daycare.

A lot of times, the ones that we've identified -- and as the Governor said, we've had no outbreaks occur, which means we haven't had even three cases in a single center. Where we've had even two cases, it's typically been because of siblings. And these individuals are exposed outside of the childcare center, maybe through one of those essential worker parents who was identified as a case. And then, when we do our investigation, then, if we find that is happening, we will exclude those exposed children from the childcare center right away, which I think helps to limit any potential future cases that might occur in a childcare center, and then any potential outbreaks.

So, similarly when schools reopen, we will use a similar type of process where, if we do identify any cases in the school, we will conduct that investigation to identify who is at-risk and exclude them from school, if they had very close contact with a confirmed case, to prevent any additional transmission in that setting.

And in the same vein, then, for those essential workers whose kids might be in school and who might be at higher risk because they work in a healthcare setting or whatnot, if that individual, who's the essential worker, becomes ill and becomes a case, as a household contact those children would not be allowed to attend school in-person during that time. So we do have procedures and processes in place to address these types of situations and control any potential spread in these settings.

Governor Sununu:

Thank you, Dr. Daly. Great, we're all set. Thank you so much. That's great. We got an awesome team at Public Health. It makes me feel good.

Numbers questions, with regard to the self-employed, have you decided how much money in grants you're going to be giving out to that sector? Or are you waiting for the applications to conclude?

Governor Sununu:

It'll run very similar to the Main Street Relief Fund in terms of their percent losses and all of that stuff. Yeah, it's going to run almost exactly the same way. We had to close the Main Street Relief Fund and kind of reopen this fund, by rules, and so there wasn't abuse in the system. But we did it in a way that we could kind of match exactly both the financial opportunity that's there and the requirements that we were asking of individuals.

With the foster care, I wasn't quite sure. Did you say \$500 a week, or a month?

Governor Sununu:

That's great. Yeah. Let me double-check. It is definitely \$500. I thought it was per month, but let me double-check. Per child, 500 per child.

Per child, okay.

Governor Sununu:

Yeah, yeah. And then, again, that can be matched with other opportunities. For example, let's say you wanted to be part of the Boys & Girls Club. We're trying to do a lot more with our summer programs at Boys & Girls Clubs or PAL, or Girls Inc., if those programs are running. So, they have some resources at their level, too, to keep those programs running and maybe provide other financial opportunities.

So we're kind of attacking it on a financial side at both ends, right? We don't want dollars to be the limiting factor for kids to be able to participate in the programs, especially these foster kids that, again, just traditionally don't have as much opportunity. Want to make sure that those doors are open to them, because it's so important to their health.

Okay. Well, great. Well, thanks, everyone, for joining us. I've been told it's going to be quite a humid and hot weekend. So not just with the public health and safety issue of COVID, we want people to stay cool, stay safe. And it could be up into the 90s with a lot of humidity. So just be weary of that. It is summer, which is a good thing, as much as we can stay outdoors and be healthy. But we also want people to be cool and safe.

Numbers are still very good here. The economy is doing very, very well. We're back on track. But by no means is this a mission accomplished. We got a long way to go. I said at the last press conference we're at about mile 17 of the Boston Marathon. We're at about mile 17.5 right now. So every day's a challenge. But the citizens of this State keep doing a great job. Have a great weekend and we will be back next Tuesday. Thank you, guys.