

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti Briefing | MONDAY, APRIL 27, 2020

MAYOR GARCETTI: Good evening, Los Angeles, and thank you again for joining me tonight. Thank you to everybody who stayed home this weekend, who helped protect us in the continuing work that we have, to not only bend the curve down, but to save lives of our loved ones and to help lay the foundation for reopening and a rebuilding of our city. I am truly, truly awed by those of you that have continued to not only stay home, but to reach out with your heart and with help to your neighbors, to strangers, to people across Los Angeles as we traverse these uncharted territories, these places where we haven't been before but that I have seen the soul of this city, I have seen the breadth of our generosity, and I've seen the determination we all have to get through these days to as better tomorrow.

MAYOR GARCETTI: As always, let me start tonight's briefing with the numbers that you need to know. Today, the county reported 900 new cases, bringing our total past 20,000 for the first time, 20,417 cases. This is a five percent increase since yesterday, and for comparison, the past seven days which we average out, because if you tuned in, you've noticed some days are higher and some days are lower. Sometimes that is how the data comes in to the county and how the county passes that on to us. But we average that out to give a sense of where we are over time. And the average increase for the past seven days has been 969 cases a day. So we are pretty closed to that average.

MAYOR GARCETTI: In the city of Los Angeles, there were 493 new cases, bringing our total to 9,389 cases in the city of Los Angeles, this also is about a five percent, five-and-a-half percent increase, to be exact. These case numbers suggest that the curve really is beginning to flatten. In the last week we have seen a few data dumps of new test results which artificially inflates some daily case numbers. And remember that the number of positive cases is a very important indicator, but increases often reflect that when you test more people, you will see more positive cases. It is just as important to look at how many, when we do test, come in positive versus negative. Currently about eight percent positive in the city and county drive-thru testing sites, and about 15 percent positive overall, when you factor in tests that are asked for by providers and hospitals and conducted by our county Public Health Lab.

MAYOR GARCETTI: It is important to look at trends also as a number of hospitalizations, which gives us an idea of how many new cases are coming into our hospitals every single day, a metric that reflects not just what the infection rate is like, but very importantly, what is our hospital capacity to meet those new cases. And the trend is a positive one. It is slowly leveling off. But of course, the worst thing I always have to report each evening is the number of deaths in our county. And I should also clarify, this isn't necessarily always a number of the deaths in the last 24 hours, it is the reported deaths in the last 24 hours, and those too can sometimes be higher and lower depending on when hospitals and other places report those.

MAYOR GARCETTI: You recall not this past Saturday but two Saturdays ago, we had 81 deaths reported in a single 24-hour period. A lot of people have asked me, "Well, that was the peak, right?" Say, no, not necessarily because the next day were 17. So we averaged those out as well. But today the sad news is that we lost 29 souls, or it was reported 29 new souls lost countywide. These are 29 souls with lives, with loves, with family, with friends, connected to the life of our city. And my heart mourns with each one of you that this mourning the loss of

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somebody that you love here in LA. That brings the total to 942 lives lost, a three percent increase since yesterday, and for comparison we've seen on the last seven days an average of about 47 deaths a day.

MAYOR GARCETTI: Every death is a deep, deep tragedy. But these numbers also tell us that deaths in Los Angeles County are continuing to stabilize. It may be the same number, but the increase is lessening, as our hospitalizations. That is a tribute to the work that you are doing. A lot of people say, "Great! Open up the doors, open up the floodgates," but it is really a testament to our discipline that those numbers have stabilized. One day as they come down, we can bravely step out and try some of the things moving forward that I know we all want to see here in Los Angeles. So keep your physical distance, keep washing your hands, keep staying at home for now. We can't let up.

MAYOR GARCETTI: And across the county in our general emergency room hospitals there are--sorry, general emergency hospitals, there are currently 1,249 beds, including 1,016 acute care beds and 233 ICU beds available. And an inventory of over 1,000, 1,060--sorry, and 36 available ventilators, another sign that are efforts are paying off and that we haven't exceeded our capacity as well as the heroic work that hospitals are doing to keep expanding that capacity. We are looking to keep folks healthy, safe and out of those hospital beds, and as we know, testing helps us to just that. We now have 34 testing locations, drive-up and walk-up, through the city and county, as well as other places through providers. And through those 34 testing sites, we have the capacity to test now 16,500 people. It was just 12,000 a few days ago, and by the end of today we will have tested approximately 125,000 LA County residents through those sites.

MAYOR GARCETTI: We've scaled so quickly that now testing, as I mentioned last week, is available to our critical workers who are not symptomatic, this includes first responders, our healthcare professionals, people working in hospitals and grocery stores, pharmacies and our public transit drivers. But starting tomorrow, I am proud to announce, as I've said week after week, that we will open that aperture a little bit more and we are going to expand testing to include our partners in transportation, including delivery drivers, rideshare drivers and taxi drivers who can now get a test at one of these centers even if they are asymptomatic, not showing any symptoms.

MAYOR GARCETTI: These are folks that are on the frontlines helping us get to where we need to go, helping us have food delivered to our homes and apartments, and we have to keep them safe, and these tests will do just that. So if you work in one of those industries, go to our portal and get a test. This is the latest milestone in our work to continue expanding our testing. We have now required monthly testing for our residents and workers at skilled nursing facilities, and we are working with the County Department of Public Health to support facilities that are most in need, continually working to test people, making sure that people with symptoms are the top priority but with all the other tests opening up that availability to people without symptoms. So go now and get an appointment if you fit into one of those ever-widening categories at coronavirus.lacity.org/testing. Do it now.

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MAYOR GARCETTI: Saving lives, though, isn't just about getting tested. It is also about supporting our most vulnerable neighbors. And on Friday I was overjoyed to see and to hear from Governor Newsom, the Statewide Emergency Meals Program, together with FEMA in conjunction with many local leaders, his office reached out a week and half ago to me and other mayors across the state with the good news that FEMA would reimburse us and reimburse them and help support our seniors who are isolated and need food. This was a very important announcement. And I am proud that Los Angeles, as you've heard from me, started serving our seniors weeks ago, starting with the 5,000 that used to go to our seniors centers, building that up by another 7,000 to 12,000, seniors and doubling the number of meals so that seniors get 10 meals a weeks, 120,000 meals just last week alone.

MAYOR GARCETTI: And thank you to everybody who called, who signed up, who signed somebody up who was living by themselves, who was unable to get themselves food or to prepare their food and to everybody who has been a part of that supply chain, whether it's Everytable, folks from Access Paratransit delivering. You've really brought a lot of hope into people's lives in a very isolated time. But now, the state and FEMA program allows us to expand that to even more seniors. And we are going to do this in a way that also helps one of our hardest hit industries: our local restaurants and our hospitality workers that work in hotels and restaurants across Los Angeles.

MAYOR GARCETTI: They have seen a huge drop in business. Some of the owners of these mom-and-pop restaurants don't know if they will survive, some of our hotel workers wonder whether they'll ever get a paycheck again. So today I am proud to announce the second phase of our Senior Meal Emergency Response Program. So if you are over 65 or if you are 60 to 64 with a preexisting medical condition, call us because odds are, if you live alone or with a partner alone, you'll qualify. It is not for 100 percent of seniors. You have to be under a certain income amount, but it is 600 percent of the federal poverty level, so there are a lot of folks who will qualify. You can't already be enrolled in another meals program. But just call us. If any of this sounds confusing, we've had a hotline, and thank you to all the operators who have helped us. And let us know if you need meals. You can call between 9:00 and 5:00 starting tomorrow, and it is not a limited period of time. We'll keep enrolling people as much as we can for days and days and days. And that number is 213-263-5226. Or if you are online, just go to our favorite website, coronavirus.lacity.org/seniormeals. and we will make sure we get your information and follow up with you directly.

MAYOR GARCETTI: This is a win/win/win. First of all, a win because we're feeding folks who need meals, who are most at risk in this crisis and who we need to stay at home because coronavirus is the most deadly threat to them. It is a win because we are helping keep LA's hard-hit hospitality and restaurant industries staying in business and keep their workers on the job. And it is a win because we're saving lives and livelihoods through the power of partnerships. So let me thank a few people who have made this possible. We are kicking off this partnership with the Hospitality Training Academy, which is an LA-based workforce and training organization in partnership with the union UNITE HERE Local 11 that trains and develops workers for careers in the food service and hospitality industries.

MAYOR GARCETTI: Today's launch will put 150 Angelenos who have not been earning a cent in their jobs back to work, helping our seniors and doing what they love and excel at. And that's just the beginning, I want to thank next our City Council, who have been feeding, by the way, their communities and their seniors and lifting up the restaurants since the beginning of this. I could name all 15 of them. But each one of them has made sure that these restaurants are supported and people who have needed meals from families and seniors, people with disabilities and others are getting fed. But I am going to ask each of our city councilmembers to work in their own district to navigate this process, and Councilmember Paul Krekorian, who is also our budget chair and who came to me early on saying, "I want to help get our restaurants across the city going" will help work with his colleagues to achieve that district by district. So thank you to Paul and to all of the city council for your extraordinary leadership in helping our suffering restaurants and our suffering population.

MAYOR GARCETTI: Delivery will be handled by another industry that has been hard hit by this crisis, so add a fourth win to this win. That's our taxicab industry. Taxicab drivers will make point-to-point deliveries of these senior meals, picking up meals directly from restaurants or Hospitality Training Academy sites and dropping them off at people's homes. And let me talk about the restaurants for a minute because while we are starting with the Hospitality Institute, on our website today restaurants can sign up to see whether they can qualify and be a part of this program as well, and as early as next week start making delivering meals putting people back to work and making sure that this works.

MAYOR GARCETTI: As we know with our taxi drivers, though, it's great. They're background-checked, they are already providing meal and grocery deliveries to seniors throughout the region using face coverings and other protective gear to mitigate the risk of spreading COVID-19. We wanted to make sure our seniors weren't put in a vulnerable place by these deliveries. And all of this will be done safely. Restaurants, the HTA and drivers will be mandated to follow government guidelines for safe food handling, for preparation, packaging and meal pickups, and my office will be providing spot checks in each of these places to make sure we are paying the employees correctly, and they are utilizing all of the safety procedures that we have mandated. And again, thank you to everybody, our governor, our city council, UNTE HERE Local 11, Hospitality Training Academy, the LA County Federation of Labor and Ron Herrera, our restaurant and taxicab associations, and my team from folks like Sumi Parekh, Barbara Romero, of course, my wife Amy Elaine Wakeland, Matt Johnson and also Rick Jacobs, all who have been working on this very hard for a long time.

MAYOR GARCETTI: Again, seniors are listening, call us starting tomorrow, 9:00 to 5:00 to 213-263-5226 or go to coronavirus.lacity.org/seniormeals. And restaurants who want to step up, go to the same place and we have a place that you can fill out and say, "I am available, willing and I want to help feed seniors and put my people back to work" and we will be in touch. You know, this program demonstrates how creativity and caring come together. When we have the determination and the heart and the brain to get through these tough days, we can really help each other. And you know, years of organizing advocating across the city have led another powerful group to be helping at the neighborhood level, and that is the 99 neighborhood councils that have sprung into action in times of greatest need.

MAYOR GARCETTI: And now they're meeting this moment in a huge way. Del Rey Neighborhood Council has delivered almost 7,000 meals to the residents of the Mar Vista Gardens Housing Project. Southeast Neighborhood Council purchased more than 700 hygiene kits and got them into the hands of their unhoused neighbors. Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council is buying groceries, picking up medications, walking dogs for their neighbors. And from the West Side to the Valley, all across Los Angeles, from north to south, neighborhood councils are providing vital services, whether it is translating into multiple languages, the health information that we are putting out, supporting food banks or feeding seniors, volunteering at LAUSD's grab-and-go centers, donating necessities for unhoused Angelenos, they have been superb.

MAYOR GARCETTI: And the City's Department of Neighborhood Empowerment now led by General Manager Raquel Beltran, has developed a virtual meeting program that will be uniform across all 99 neighborhood councils, so you can begin having regular meetings starting on May 1st. So if you are in need of support, I encourage you to participate in those virtual neighborhood council meetings in your neighborhood, and reach out to your local neighborhood council representatives. To find out more information, go to empowerla.org.

MAYOR GARCETTI: During this pandemic we are doing everything possible to help save people's lives and to rebuild a future for Los Angeles. Yet as I've said time and again, we cannot do this alone. But we need smart, sustained and consistent support from our elected representatives at the federal level. Despite the much needed stimulus package that has moved forward, an economic survival package, as I called it, we're still waiting for the promised action to shore up state and local budgets. We are not calling for a bailout based on the color of our state or our city. This is not a partisan issue, this is an American issue. We can't let states and localities starve to death. This is about all of our people and a United States of America.

MAYOR GARCETTI: I've been in frequent contact with members in Congress, with the Trump Administration, with governors and my fellow mayors across the country. And Speaker Pelosi said it best this weekend when she pointed out that local governments have spent enormous amounts of money on their response while losing extraordinary amounts of a revenue at the same time, revenue that supports the paychecks of firefighters, EMTs, police officers, transportation workers, health workers, emergency services and many other heroes. As she said, "When we say state and local, we are talking about jobs on the frontline of the coronavirus." That's the bottom line. We need to protect the people who are protecting us for our jobs, for our services, for our public safety and health, the federal government must ramp up investments and cities.

MAYOR GARCETTI: Now, if you've tuned into these briefings on a regular basis, you know that federal backing is not the only source of revenue for our city budget. We are also blessed by the generosity of workers, companies, and everyday Angelenos who are doing their part. Last week Snake River Farms worked with the LA County Federation of Labor and UNITE HERE at Local 11 to deliver 35,000 steaks to the LA Regional Food Bank. It breaks our heart to see food getting destroyed around the country, so we are working hard to make sure we get some of those to people most in need. This provided meals for displaced and laid off hospitality workers and

others were most affected by this pandemic. It's a prime example of the private sector stepping up to help our neediest Angelenos, something that Los Angeles County Federation of Labor and its partners have done repeatedly over the past six weeks that they served meals to more than 110,000 individuals across our communities with more feed distribution efforts coming in the works. Recent days, I've also brought that same degree of compassion, whether is the veteranowned Black Rifle Coffee Company which delivered thousands of cans and cases of coffee for the first responders at our emergency operation center and the surge staff at the Medical Relief Center, the hand sanitizer provided by Anheuser-Busch.

MAYOR GARCETTI: And tonight I want to express my thanks to somebody who has been a leader his entire career, who is now stepping up to help the people of this city. On Friday, unsolicited, I received an email from Jeff Skoll, who was eBay's first employee, shaping a company that helped create ecommerce and the lives of millions of entrepreneurs, and he went on later to found Participant Media, where uses films to inform and inspire landmark movies like An Inconvenient Truth, RBG, Spotlight and very insightfully, Contagion, which if you haven't watched in a while, I recommend you do.

MAYOR GARCETTI: I've known Jeff for years. He is a great guy, somebody who is very generous and humble, and I know that he's been working on global risks, like our current pandemic, for more than 15 years. In fact, he had people on the ground in China, in Wuhan, at the beginning of this crisis. And so I am so grateful to announce his quadrupling a grant-making from the Skoll Foundation to address public health, economic and social effects of this pandemic including a two-million-dollar grant to the Mayor's Fund to provided even more financial assistance to LA's hardest hit families.

MAYOR GARCETTI: Together with the other announcements we had last week, we are expanding the Angeleno card by 5,000 more families, from 10,000 to 15,000 who will be helped. Already \$3 million that we put out the door just in the last few days. We are committed to helping in every way we can, and we love you, Jeff, but you don't have to be Jeff Skoll to make a difference. Every dollar counts, so please go to mayorsfund., sorry, mayorsfundla.org to give tonight.

MAYOR GARCETTI: Each day in acts large and small, we are showing the world who we are. I sometimes do national press interviews, even international ones, and people say, "How are you guys holding it together here in LA? Why are your number is so strong? How are you seeing all this generosity come forward?" And I say, "That's who we are. That's what a city of angels is all about." So thank you for doing that. We are stronger because of every step you've taken. I know the temptations each day to get out of the house are greater, but please, until we lift those orders, and there won't be one day which they all just get lifted at once, it'll be a gradual process, continue saving lives, continue bending that curve till it comes all the way down, and we see no new cases or we see negative growth. That will be the day when more people are leaving our hospitals than entering them, that will be the day when we no longer have double-digit deaths, where we know what we have done has laid the foundation for a strong city for years to come. So keep at it, continue to stay healthy and to stay safe and continue to stay at home. I see light in

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the days ahead, and we would walk towards it together. Thank you, Los Angeles. With that, I am happy to answer questions. I'll take the first question.

OPERATOR: First question comes from Steve Gregory with KFI News. Please, go ahead.

MAYOR GARCETTI: Hi, Steve. How are you?

STEVE GREGORY: Eric, good evening. How are you?

MAYOR GARCETTI: I am good.

STEVE GREGORY: I appreciate you taking my call. Listen, quick question, you had mentioned just at the beginning of your presentation about expanding the testing protocols and I just wondered if that might include those media folks working on the frontlines interviewing people every day and out in the field. Also, I want to ask about your response in reaction to lawsuits that are starting to be filed against the city and then some against county, but at least those against the city because of closures and not opening things so fast enough. Thanks a lot, Eric.

MAYOR GARCETTI: Sure. First and foremost, absolutely, and thank you for, I meant to say that actually on Friday. Yes, members of the media are eligible, even if you are asymptomatic. Please do get tested. You are critical workers. You are getting this incredibly important information out to the public, so you can go to coronavirus.lacity.org/testing and sign up and you are one of the qualified areas of workers to get a test. So please do and keep yourselves safe because I know you are out there on the streets, you're interviewing people at safe distances, but you have a greater risk than a lot of other people. So please do. In terms of the lawsuits, I don't really have any response lawsuits, I mean, we get sued about things all the time. That's just part of doing business. I'm never going to change what we are doing based on medical advice and facts. I think we have to use our gut on certain things like closing up early, like declaring such an early state of emergency and being on March 15th one of the first cities in the country to move forward.

MAYOR GARCETTI: I don't regret that for a moment. It's absolutely under the powers that we have to protect people, but it's really never been about city hall, it's been about people out there adhering to things. It's how do you tell a county of ten million people, a city of four million people, "You have to do something"? You can't. And we don't have enough police officers, enough city employees; this is about them adhering to it because they know this is saving their lives. So I really have a ton of respect for everybody out there who has done the right thing, who is doing the right thing. Poll after poll shows people are worried about opening up to quickly more than too slowly, and we're going to continue building our capacity.

MAYOR GARCETTI: And as I said, we are not going to open up one day earlier than we have to, but we are also not going to open up one day later than we have to. And there won't be a single day where we open everything up; I want to keep saying that every night. It's going to be gradual steps, assess those steps, see what happens, keep going forward, sometimes maybe walk

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a little backward and depending on the season and the outbreak levels, we'll have to contract and expand for some time until we have a vaccine. But I do see better days ahead for sure, I do see this work paying off, and I do see us, you know, in a matter of weeks being able to see some of those first baby's steps. Thanks, Steve. Next question, please.

OPERATOR: Next question will be from the line of Gigi Zamorano with KNBC Channel 4. Please, go ahead.

MAYOR GARCETTI: Hi, how are you doing?

GIGI ZAMORANO: Good afternoon, Mayor.

MAYOR GARCETTI: Good to see you or to hear you.

GIGI ZAMORANO: Hi, Mayor. You had mentioned during an interview with KPCC that in the next two to six weeks we will see more baby steps forward with easing up on restrictions here in Los Angeles. Could you please elaborate on this?

MAYOR GARCETTI: You know, every day is a snapshot, so I want to be very clear it's not there is a secret plan from the county, Public Health Department or from the 88 cities here that we all know about today. But I do see the curve has been flattened, that's something that is day to day, so we have to assess that for the next couple of weeks. We know this runs right now through May 15th. There is not going to be a lifting of everything on May 15th, but I do believe as we're seeing in other parts of the world, as we're seeing in some parts of the country, though I would be very cautious. I've seen some what I believe are probably missteps of very public places that could be rife with infection spread opening up first. So we want to make for sure it's the right steps forward, that in conjunction with all of those cities who I'm in regular contact with, with the County Board of Supervisors.

MAYOR GARCETTI: We will see steps moving forward. That could be in public spaces, that could be in places where people work, most importantly. And what I said earlier today on CNN was, you know, there are three things that I look up for that, and these aren't the conditions that the governor or I or the Board of Supervisors has mentioned. These are ways to think about what opens up: A, how great is the need. The need may be psychological but we need to get out and have a place to recreate; the need may be that people are suffering economically, but assess how great is the need. Second, how great is the risk. So in other words, something may be lowneed and high-risk. That's going to probably wait sometime. So other things may be highneed but also high-risk, so assess what the risk level is after the need. And then the third thing to look at is how safe can you make it, even with high risk, are the things we can do to make sure that there isn't spread?

MAYOR GARCETTI: For instance, restaurants are generally higher risk areas, contained spaces where people stay for longer than ten minutes, and where that infection can spread. But what safety measures will we do to allow restaurants to begin to open in the future. Or what safety measures will we have in our parks so that people can be in Griffith Park but not have contagion

zones at places where you start hikes, parking lots or even on trails. So to me those are three things that we are digging deep into the details. As I mentioned with Chief Moore, who's overseen much of this in his role from the Emergency Operation Center where he is in charge of the police chief under our charter is in charge of that. We're in consultation with industries, community members, the religious community and others, how do we get those places and spaces?

MAYOR GARCETTI: So I can't go much further on that, not because we have a secret plan, but those conversations are ongoing. And each night keep asking me because I think the closure we get, the more we should be expecting those answers. But the last thing I'll say is I will follow the advice from Dr. Ferrer and from Public Health, that's what has guiding from the beginning, I want to hear what those risk factors are, but we aren't just talking amongst ourselves here. We are looking at every city around the world, in the country. And the good thing about LA coming into this infection a little later is we can watch what Germany is doing; we can watch what they are doing in other states and cities. We can see the missteps as well as the successful ways to move forward. And that's the way I am determined to make sure LA stays safe while we open that aperture a little bit in the future. Thank you. Next question, please.

OPERATOR: Next question be on the line of Elex Michaelson with FOX 11 News. Please go ahead.

MAYOR GARCETTI: Hey, Elex, how are you doing?

ELEX MICHAELSON: Hi, Mayor, how do you make sure that the cure on this is not worse than the disease? Because if you ask health experts, of course they want people to stay home and we are going to have a lot less coronavirus if nobody ever goes out of the house ever. But there are so many other things that are happening in terms of the economic damage to this, even some of the health effects of people not going to their doctors as often right now. So what metrics are you looking at to know, "all right, there may still be some corona cases out there, but we got to get things back on again"?

MAYOR GARCETTI: Absolutely. It's a great question, Elex. Three things: one, is you have to mitigate during closures. Take for instance, the threat to families who face domestic violence. When we say everybody has to stay at home, that can increase the threat to them, so you have to, during the stay at home, look at options like we have done to expand beds in hotels and motels because people aren't moving out of domestic violent shelters to make sure that people are safe. Look at industries you think they are vital but that you can properly space and inspect like the construction industry, which has continued, but we've made thousands of visits to construction sites. We are satisfied and we haven't seen explosions of coronavirus among workers or construction workers.

MAYOR GARCETTI: Then second, as you open things up, absolutely, and I support, for instance, the governor. I think that elective surgery should go back. I've talked to a lot of doctors who are seeing people are putting things off or even aren't showing up at hospitals because they are worried about getting sick. We have to communicate that very clearly. I hope

that's one of the first things that would be recommended and the governor has already said, "Elective surgeries can go back throughout the state." So that's something here at the county level that we hopefully can change with our order soon. That will be probably one of the first steps that we take. And to make sure that people stay healthy during. You know, we will reopen and people have to just be as vigilant about their health if they are lucky enough to be in of those places or one of those sectors that is allowed to kind of return to some public facing side.

MAYOR GARCETTI: This won't be done on May 15th, it won't be then that you don't have to worry about your health. You can stop wearing face coverings or masks, or you can just go and hug as many people as you want. You can't do that. So you know, this debate nationally about those places that are quote/unquote closed, and those that are quote/unquote open, it's actually a spectrum in which some people might have stronger closures right now, but the places that are opening are taking baby steps, they are not going dramatically to lift veil. And if you look closely at that, I think that's the right way to do it. So I completely agree that we have to be concerned about people's health. And finally, economically, that is why I am anxious to take those steps forward, why I am working so hard with the county, with my peers up and down the state and cities around LA County to say, "What are those things?" And I've told my team, I've told them and I've certainly communicated with the county, "We are ready to go as soon as we get that advice. and we are ready to give our input." And I want to thank members of the religious community, churches, synagogues, mosques, temples, I want to thank members of a lot of industries, I've talked with sports and entertainment, concertgoers, other folks that are looking at what public spaces would look like, manufacturers.

MAYOR GARCETTI: In fact, we've put together, and I'll be talking a little bit more about this this week, industry sector, little clusters that are giving us that advice because I trust them to defend their own people, to protect their own people. I don't think all the answers come from government. We need to be able to trust and say this is good as long as it meets a certain threshold, get some signoff from County Health, let's take those steps because I agree. We can't stay here forever, and those three options of opening up all the floodgates and watching everybody die, that's unacceptable. Keeping it closed forever and watching the economy and our livelihoods die, that's unacceptable.

MAYOR GARCETTI: The next phases in these next couple of weeks if we get through this with these same numbers, and that's an "if," and that depends on our behavior, then we are going to be managing infection and managing opening and managing our health, and I think that's the appropriate next phase we should all be preparing ourselves for. I certainly am for me. Thanks, Elex. Next question.

OPERATOR: Next, line of Betti Halsell with LA Sentinel. Please, go ahead.

MAYOR GARCETTI: Hey, Betti. How are you doing?

BETTI HALSELL: Hey, thank you so much for taking my call, mayor. I want to thank you for your time in delivering this information daily. I know it's a heavy burden, but I want to kind of shine light on the higher death rate within Africans-American communities due to COVID-19. I

want to know, you know, what are we doing about that? I know your two driving factors in calm (unintelligible) COVID-19 is aggressive testing, it's saving lives of every Angeleno. So I just want to ask, is there a proactive task force in managing underserved communities? Are we prioritizing that? What are the chances of activists and experts, you know, discussing it with you on these briefings to lead the target demographic to the support that is provided, if any? Thank you.

MAYOR GARCETTI: Absolutely. And I've hit this point a couple other briefings, but I love hitting it as many times I can. First of all, this virus doesn't discriminate in terms of whether you can get infected. It does discriminate in terms of the outcome because we face a society that has discriminated for a long time where health indicators are not equal, where health access is not equal, where the discrimination that we've seen, whether it's because of poverty or because of the history of this country, results in much higher risk to certain people than to others. And we saw that bear out in our numbers. The day that I heard the numbers here at the time, 9 percent of the county is African-American, for instance, and we saw at that time, I think it was 16 percent, might be down to about 14 percent now of the deaths were among African-Americans.

MAYOR GARCETTI: I said, "We have to point this out, but more than point it out, we've got to do something about it." And so the next day, and thank you to my testing team, to Jeff Gorell, my deputy mayor, to everybody else, we ramped up testing in the areas where we have the highest concentration of African-Americans. Our number-one testing center in the entire county is the Crenshaw Christian Center that I did a press briefing from a couple of weeks ago. We did our first walk-in center in Councilmember Price's district in South LA. We opened up in Inglewood, at The Forum, the county opened up a testing site, and over at Martin Luther King Hospital, we opened up one. So now four, a very robust number, and proportionally getting more test in there than, I think, any other part of LA County.

MAYOR GARCETTI: Second, was education. We saw the polling that we did with Loyola Marymount, and we saw two things. One, is that African-Americans were less likely to have lost their jobs than others, and that's a reflection that many of them are on the front lines in hospitals, government jobs and other places that put them at risk, whether a postal employee, whether a civil servant, that meant that they are doing the jobs we depended on at a grocery store someplace else. So maybe they didn't lose their jobs as much, but they could lose their lives at a higher rate. So that was very important for us to recognize, and that's why we expanded testing to those key workers, even if they are asymptomatic.

MAYOR GARCETTI: And third, that Paul also said that there was the lowest number of people who thought they personally would be infected by COVID-19 of any ethnic group was African-Americans, and so I was really strong with the messaging, and I think all of us can help but this disease does not care what color you are. It will come to you, and so everybody needs to be aware of that.

MAYOR GARCETTI: Last thing I'll say is this bears a conversation that's more than just about tests and a response today. We have to get to the underlying causes, and I love the idea of a task force. I've already received a couples of letters on this. I think it should look at where the

disproportionate impacts are among our poor, among our homeless, among people who are from ethnic groups that are disproportionately either dying or being infected. So absolutely, we are going to give it a nodal flow next couple of days but hope to be able to announce something in the coming days and absolutely bring some experts in as I've tried to do in my briefings to let people know that everybody is at danger, cities need to step up, and I hope that LA has been an example for the rest of the nation of immediately making sure that we had that testing capacity where people were dying so we can get them diagnosed earlier. Thank so much, Betti. Next question.

BETTI HALSELL: Thank you.

OPERATOR: Next question WILL be from the line of Claudia Peschiutta with KNX News Radio. Go ahead.

MAYOR GARCETTI: Hey, Claudia. How are you doing?

CLAUDIA PESCHIUTTA: Hi. I have a couple of questions. Are in-home health supportive services employees considered critical workers? Also the county officials indicated earlier today that there's not enough testing capacity to test all staff and residents at skilled nursing and other long-term care facilities right now. They're having to prioritize those with outbreaks, so given that, I'm wondering if it makes sense to further expand testing at the moment. And also, mayor, you said last week that people would be going out to check garment factories that are working on face masks after the LA Times reported that people were working, you know, in sweatshop conditions and getting paid less than minimal wage. I'm wondering if that's happened, and if so, if there any results to report? Thank you.

MAYOR GARCETTI: Absolutely. Working backwards, I know that there's been some inspections. I don't know the numbers of the results, so let me get back to you on that, but absolutely we rolled that out right away. Secondly, in terms of the testing capacity, I know the county has said that, and they're working with us to prioritize which ones comes first, but we were the first city in America, I believe, to say that it would be a monthly requirement for the skilled nursing facilities to have testing for their employees and the people that are there. We were confident in the city that we had enough tests to do that.

MAYOR GARCETTI: And we want to work with the county to help expand that to all cities and unincorporated areas in LA County because I just think when we see the percentage of deaths that are still coming from seniors that are living in those facilities, it's our greatest vulnerability, it's the most disproportionate place where people are dying, but we are confident that we can do that and that we can deliver that. We told those facilities that they need to offer those tests, and for any that don't feel they can't, we'll bring in our teams to help them. And thanks to Public Health, we're prioritizing which of those inside our city are going to come first in this month. In terms of in-home healthcare workers, it is right now required just in skilled nursing facilities, so not yet because we know that's a huge group of people, but like I said, hopefully each day we expand the aperture and hold on because we hope to have new announcements throughout the week. Thanks, Claudia. Next question, please.

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OPERATOR: Next we go to the line of Dakota Smith with The LA Times. Please, go ahead.

MAYOR GARCETTI: Hi, Dakota.

DAKOTA SMITH: Good evening, mayor. In terms of the restaurant senior program that you talked about, could you break down how that's being paid for?

MAYOR GARCETTI: Sure.

DAKOTA SMITH: Is there city money involved? And if it is, is that something that the city's hoping FEMA will reimburse, and if so, where is that money coming out right now or is that money from the Mayor's Fund or a mix?

MAYOR GARCETTI: So, initially, in the 5,000 that was partially under our existing program, when we doubled it, that was helped by private funds that we raised through the Mayor's Fund and we went to 12,000. That also came from those private donations. Now the good news is that FEMA will under the government program, with the state and with local governments, pay for 75 percent of the expanded ones. So moving forward 75 percent of that will be paid for by the federal government. We are hoping it was 25 percent from the state, but I think they changed that to make it 19 percent, which means that 6 percent has to be paid through our funds. So we'll have to do that from our dollars and/or privately raised dollars, but we're confident that we can cover that 6 percent.

MAYOR GARCETTI: We can go to more seniors if we didn't have to. I think the state said you'll earn that back from restaurants paying sales tax. It seems a little perverse to pay ourselves back for money that we're trying to get to seniors, but I understand that. Everybody is helping. I want to thank the state, that 19 percent is big. The 75 percent is even bigger and together with six percent local, I mean, the city will be able to expand. I know the county is also looking at this program. I think they're going to introduce something for areas outside of LA city and hopefully some populations even in all 88 cities, so hold tight to hear that, they're developing that. We're able to kind of build on what we had already done and be able to move forward starting now. Thanks, Dakota. Next question.

OPERATOR: Next questions will be from the line of Mary Forgione with LA Times. Please, go ahead.

MAYOR GARCETTI: Hi, Mary.

MARY FORGIONE: Hi, Mr. Mayor. So we're all looking towards the steps to reopening.

MAYOR GARCETTI: Yes.

MARY FORGIONE: That's a pretty easy question. You had earlier said, you know, large gatherings and at large events likely won't take place until 2021. Do you consider running races, cycling races, outdoor races of that type as part of that won't happen until 2021?

MAYOR GARCETTI: Yeah. Let me be clear. I was asked my opinion in a cabinet meeting with all my chiefs and general managers who run departments whether I thought large-scale sports events and concerts in places like the Colosseum would be happening this year and I said no. It would just refer to those, and that's still my opinion, I think it's difficult to imagine that just given the public health dangers, but in terms of other things, no. I think everything is on the table. I think sports are on the table themselves, maybe without audiences. I think that as long as people can design, whether it's an event, whether it's an industry, the spaces in a safe way, I think that Public Health and the county and all of us cities will look at that with a very open mind.

MAYOR GARCETTI: And that's what I love, the brilliance of industries coming to us. I've spoken, for instance, to commissioners of sports leagues are saying, "This is how we think we can do a five-week tournament that would be season the for my sport. Would LA be interested in hosting that, even if there were no people in the stadium or the arena? Could we do that in LA?" And I've said, "Absolutely." But in terms of, you know, gatherings, whether it would be something like a cycling race, stuff like that, it would just depend on the plan they bring forward. I would say nothing is off the table. We just have to be smart and look at those three things, what's the need, what's the risk, and how safe can you make it. Thanks.

MARY FORGIONE: Thank you.

MAYOR GARCETTI: You bet. Next question, please.

OPERATOR: Our last question in English comes from the line of David Zahniser with LA Times. Please, go ahead.

MAYOR GARCETTI: Hey, Dave.

DAVID ZAHNISER: Hi, Mayor.

MAYOR GARCETTI: How are you doing?

DAVID ZAHNISER: The city and county are trying to reach agreements with hotels in LA to get them involved in Project Roomkey--

MAYOR GARCETTI: Yes.

DAVID ZAHNISER: --and open their doors to homeless folks. And I'm wondering, is LA going to charge those hotels, the city's transient occupancy tax for each of the rooms that's occupied, or is the city going to waive those taxes to try to get more hotels to participate?

MAYOR GARCETTI: I don't know. I have to check whether legally that can be waived. Certainly, if we can get more, I think that's the last thing we'd charge. I don't think that we are, but let me double-check and get back to you. I can give you the statistics right now. We have 1,365 operational rooms of which about 1,000 are occupied with over 1,140 people, and for the tier 2 which are quarantine spaces, we have about 354 operational rooms, and I know I said this a week ago, but we really are on the brink of signing a couple ones including some strategic ones, hopefully in places like downtown. We have domestic violence survivors as well that we're putting into hotels, and that's been a very successful program. I want to thank the hotels that have opened up the rooms, obviously, we'll never name where those are, but they helped give a lot of hope to folks. But let me check. I can't imagine we are, but I'll make sure you get an answer tonight. Okay? Thank you. Next question.

OPERATOR: Our last question for the night will be in Spanish, and it's from the line of Abel Alamillo with Telemundo 52.

MAYOR GARCETTI: Hola, Abel. Buenas tardes. Good evening.

ABEL JARAMILLO: Hola, Alcalde. Yeah, is there a particular reason why drivers will now get tested? Has there been an increase of COVID-19 cases among these workers or the people they serve?

MAYOR GARCETTI: No. As we expand tests, it's just about who is the next critical group. If we get more tests, we say okay. Before it was just our first responders and medical personnel. Then we went from there to, you know, folks with symptoms, then from there with people with not, with no symptoms but working in critical industries. So this is one more essential industry but it's not because we've seen some outbreak. It's not because people have said we need to go there. We do sometimes look at the risk. For instance, we've seen outbreaks obviously in senior homes. So we have prioritized that, and we saw a lot of vulnerability among Angelenos experiencing homelessness.

MAYOR GARCETTI: And it's actually interesting, I have the numbers on that, that we tested 445 people so far in Skid Row, 378 tests back, only 2 positives, which is really good news, and we're going to keep putting forward those tests, not just on Skid Row, but encampments and other places around the city, but that's a lower rate than probably among housed people as well. But, no, it's not because of some risk. It's because we want to keep growing that and hopefully one day get it to asymptomatic people, period. That's our goal, and to be able to randomly see how many people are infected so we can make decisions about opening up based on one day, hey the infection rate is here, it seems safe. If a month or two later it's going up to here, we say, "Okay, we need to take some people back home and have them work from home." Those are the sorts of decisions that can inform us. So I'll say this also in Spanish.

MAYOR GARCETTI: Este nuevo grupo de personas que puedan tomar estas pruebas no son el resultado de una crisis o un número de casos nuevos. Esto es solamente nuestra aumentación con más y más pruebas nosotros podemos proveer más pruebas a más personas y más clases de trabajadores. En este ejemplo los trabajadores en las compañías de rideshare como Lyft y Uber

los manejadores de taxis también, excuse my Spanish but I forgot the word for driver, y también tenemos la oportunidad a expandir las pruebas esta semana a más clases de personas, pero este no es el resultado de un número de casos muy altos en estas industrias.

MAYOR GARCETTI: Again, thank you, to everybody in English, I'm going to switch to my nightly address in Spanish as well. Thank you to everybody. I know this was a tough weekend when it was beautiful outside, when you wanted to get outdoors and probably do things we always do, but those days I don't believe are far off. Continue, though, to bring them closer by staying at home and remembering that one day that we are all going to jump back to normal. We are going to have to be safe, we're going to have to stay protected, and take those steps together. I look forward to those with you. I'll see you tomorrow.

MAYOR GARCETTI: Ahora en español. Muy buenas tardes, Los Ángeles, y gracias por venir. Gracias por hacer el sacrificio de quedarse en casa este fin de semana para protegernos a todos. Tenemos días difíciles adelante, pero los enfrentamos con valor y siempre con los datos para guiarnos. Los datos, hoy hubieron 900 nuevos casos en el condado de Los Ángeles llegando a un total de 20,417. En la ciudad de Los Ángeles tuvimos 493 nuevos casos, llegando a un total de 9,389. Estos son buenas noticias y continuaremos a bajar el número de estos casos cada día.

MAYOR GARCETTI: Pero muy trágicamente hoy fallecieron 29 personas más en el condado, llegando a un total de 942. Les mando mis más sentido pésame a todas las familias que sufren la pérdida de un ser querido hoy. En nuestros hospitales tenemos 1,249 camas disponibles. Entre ellas 233 están en las unidades de cuidados intensivos, y tenemos 1,036 respiradores. Esto también son buenas noticias. Hoy tenemos 34 sitios de pruebas en la ciudad y en el condado, y tenemos capacidad de hacer pruebas para 16,500 al día, un récord en esta lucha contra el virus. Hasta hoy le hemos hecho pruebas a 106,000 personas, y para el final de hoy habremos hecho pruebas para 123,000 angelinos.

MAYOR GARCETTI: Y estamos ofreciendo pruebas para cualquier persona con síntomas. Además, se ofrecen en Skid Row y para nuestros trabajadores esenciales en supermercados, farmacias, hospitales, conductores de bus y empleados en refugios aunque no tengan síntomas. Y esto es muy importante, empezando mañana estoy orgulloso de anunciar que estamos ampliando el acceso para pruebas para choferes de entrega, taxistas y conductores de viajes compartidos aun si no tienen síntomas. Puedes hacer una cita para una prueba en la página coronavirus.lacity.org/testing.

MAYOR GARCETTI: El viernes el gobernador Newsom anunció el programa estatal para brindar comidas a domicilio para personas mayores en colaboración con los restaurantes locales. Este es un anuncio muy importante, y estoy orgulloso que Los Ángeles logró empezar este mismo esfuerzo hace unas semanas en colaboración con Everytable. Esta semana brindaremos comidas para 12,000 personas mayores en la ciudad con 120,000 comidas. Pero aún hay una gran necesidad ya que aproximadamente 110,000 personas mayores en Los Ángeles viven en pobreza. Por esto estoy anunciado la segunda fase de nuestro programa de respuesta de comidas de emergencia para personas de tercera edad. Es un programa que durará 10 semanas para servir

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10 comidas a la semana para personas mayores quienes las necesitan en colaboración con nuestros restaurantes locales.

MAYOR GARCETTI: Así podemos alimentar a las personas con la mayor necesidad mientras apoyando nuestra industria de restaurantes. Con lanzar este programa se contratarán 150 personas. Además, nuestra industria de taxistas nos ayudará con hacer la entrega de las comidas entre los restaurantes y las casas de participantes. Y para las personas mayores escuchando hoy, si necesitas la entrega de comida a tu casa, llama al 213-263-5226, 213-263-5226, o visita coronavirus.lacity.org/seniormeals para inscribirse.

MAYOR GARCETTI: Igualmente los concejos vecinales estarán empezando reuniones por Internet empezando el 1 de mayo. Para participar y saber más sobre su vecindario, por favor visita la página empowerLA.org. Nuestra ciudad está haciendo todo lo posible para salvar vidas y medios de vida para todos, pero no lo podemos hacer solos. Necesitamos más ayuda, más apoyo federal para nuestros presupuestos locales para proteger y ayudar a la gente de Los Ángeles y todas las comunidades locales de los Estados Unidos. Estamos más fuertes por las acciones que hemos tomado, y saldremos de esto más fuertes que antes con cada decisión que tomamos. Hay luz en los días en el futuro. Hay pasos importantes que nosotros tomaremos en estos próximos días y semanas, pero entonces y hasta luego quédense en buenas salud, quédense protegidos, y por favor, quédense en casa. Y como siempre, mucha fuerza y mucho amor. Gracias, Los Ángeles. Hasta mañana. See you all tomorrow. Thank you so much.