

**President Trump Holds Press Conference; Trump Belittles Spread Of Virus In The West Wing; Trump Claims To Have Succeeded On Testing; Chinese-American Reporter Calls Out Trump On China Coronavirus Remark; Trump Claims Anyone Who Wants A Test Can Get One; U.S. Coronavirus Deaths Surpass 80,000; Trump Asks Asian-American Reporter To Ask China About Coronavirus Deaths; Minnesota Projected To Remain At Peak Of Cases For Two Weeks. Aired 5-6p ET**

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**Byline:** Wolf Blitzer, Gloria Borger, Kaitlan Collins, Sanjay Gupta, Daniel Dale, Brian Stelter

**Guests:** Jacob Frey

**Highlight:** President Trump gives a press conference on the Rose Garden answering questions regarding the state of the pandemic in the United States. Trump is dismissing concerns over the virus spreading in the West Wing where he works. Trump claims having succeeded on testing even when 80,000 Americans have died because of coronavirus.

## Body

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[17:00:00]

DONALD TRUMP, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: And the people aren't going to stand for it. They want to get back. They're not going to stand for it. They want our country open. I want our country open too. I want it open safely, but I want it open.

Don't forget, people are dying the other route. You can go with the enclosed route, everything's closed up, you're in your house, you're not allowed to move. People are dying with that too.

You look at drug addiction, you look at suicides, you look at some of the things that are taking place. People are dying that way too. You can make the case it's in even greater numbers.

So, it's a situation that some people, and I've noticed that some states could be moving more quickly and also at the same time, safety. Look, safety is paramount, but people are dying in the lockdown position too.

And everybody understands that. They're just starting to find out. And look at what's going on with drugs and look at what's happening with suicides. Please. Please, go ahead.

President Trump Holds Press Conference; Trump Belittles Spread Of Virus In The West Wing; Trump Claims To Have Succeeded On Testing; Chinese-American Reporter C....

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Hi Mr. President. So, Americans have been self- quarantining for several months now, social distancing. Yet we're still seeing about 20,000 new cases a day, 1 to 2,000 deaths. Is there anything else the administration is planning to do to get these new cases under control because we seem to be on a plateau? Or is this --

TRUMP: Well, excuse me. The 20,000 -- the numbers are way down from what they were two weeks ago. I mean, the numbers are really coming down very substantially. This weekend was one of the lowest we've had.

This is, you know, the numbers are coming down very rapidly, all throughout the country, by the way. There may be one exception. But all throughout the country the numbers are coming down rapidly. I think you see that, admiral.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Yes, but (inaudible) 130,000 cases that go through August. Is that -- do you agree with those models? Is that your expectation as well?

TRUMP: Well, the models haven't been exactly accurate. These are models done by a lot of think tanks, a lot of universities. You look at some of the models, they've been way off.

A few of the models have been accurate, but as far as the models are concerned, if you go by the model, we were going to lose 2.2 million people and because we took -- we mitigated, we did things that were very tough for our country to do, frankly, we had to turn off our whole magnificent economy.

We had to turn down the whole country. We're at the lowest of all of the models. I mean, if you look at, I guess 120, 100 to 120,000 people would be at the low side and we're at -- there's nothing low. Look, nothing low.

One is too many people and I say it all the time. One person to lose for this is too many people. It's a disgrace what happened. But if you look at the models, we're at a low -- at the lowest of those projections. But the models are not models done necessarily by the White House.

They're models done by many people all over the world. And if you take the most respected of those people, many of those models are wrong. I mean, they've been wrong as far as the U.S. is concerned because those numbers are nowhere near what was projected potentially.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Do you have an expectation of what the death toll is going to look like by the summer?

TRUMP: You know what, I don't want to think about it even. I know that we're doing everything we can. We're doing a good job. We acted very early. We acted extremely early in keeping China out of our country and banning people from China coming in, other than our citizens, which we obviously had to take and they were quarantined or watched carefully.

They were tested. They were watched very carefully. But we had about 40,000 people coming in from China, from Asia, and we had to obviously take the people. Can you imagine, they said you're a U.S. citizen, we're not going to take you, that doesn't work.

So, but they were very carefully -- I was with Ron DeSantis. He said they put -- literally put the people that came in from China in quarantine for a substantial period of time. Now, that was a big decision. I think we saved hundreds of thousands of lives by acting very early.

And when I did this, I think the admiral can say it, everybody was against my doing it. Everybody. Everybody was. The professionals, the doctors. I was pretty much by myself on that one. And it was a lucky thing we did it because we saved hundreds of thousands of lives. Yes, please, go ahead.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Thank you, Mr. President. Earlier today the vice president urged governors to have all their nursing home residents tested. Why not just mandate that? Why not require that? Have you considered that?

President Trump Holds Press Conference; Trump Belittles Spread Of Virus In The West Wing; Trump Claims To Have Succeeded On Testing; Chinese-American Reporter C....

TRUMP: Well, I would certainly consider that. I will mandate it if you'd like. I think it's important to do. And I think frankly, some of the governors were very lax with respect to nursing homes. It was obvious right from the beginning, the state of Washington, where 26 or 28 people died very early on, and I would have said, nursing homes. And I did say nursing homes, that's what they should.

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Now, some of the states, many of the states are doing that. But I think all of the states should be -- they have the capacity to do it. They should be doing nursing homes. That is a real vulnerability.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: The two staffers that were announced last week as testing positive, are you aware of any additional White House staff --

TRUMP: No, not at all. I'm only aware of people that saw them were tested. The tests were negative. And they're quarantining anyway. So -- please, go ahead.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Thank you, Mr. President. I wanted to ask, are you now or are you considering separating some more with Vice President Pence as a precautionary measure?

TRUMP: Well, first of all, the job he has done on task force, the job he's done, frankly, as the vice president of the United States has been outstanding. And he's a warrior too, just like doctors and nurses.

I mean, he is working so hard and he's coming into contact with a lot of people. But again, he tested negative. So we have to understand that. But he comes into contact with a lot of people.

It's something probably during this quarantine period we'll probably talk about. I have not seen him since then, but I would say that he will -- he and I will be talking about that. Yes, we can talk on the phone.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Question for Admiral Giroir, if I could. The president just said that Dr. Fauci, Dr. Hahn, have tested negative. Then why do they need to be isolating? Is there some concern that they could be spreading the virus in some way? Is there a concern about the testing? Why do they need to isolate?

BRETT GIROIR, ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR HEALTH: So, this is a very fundamental concept and I'm so happy you brought that up because it underlies a lot of the questions here. If you test negative just at that one point, that just means you've tested negative for that point in time.

We know that the incubation period for this virus can be many days. So the CDC guidelines really says that if you're in close contact, just testing negative on that one day doesn't mean you won't be positive later on. So the prudent and the recommended thing to do is to self-isolate yourself for the entire period of incubation and really then some. So that's what they're doing. It's a precautionary manner because they were negative.

We all hope that they remain negative. But if they turn positive in a day or two or became symptomatic, that's still possible even with a negative test, okay.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Go ahead, Phil.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Mr. President, in one of your Mother's Day tweets you appear to accuse President Obama of the biggest political crime in American history by far, those were your words. What crime exactly are you accusing President Obama of committing and do you believe the Justice Department should prosecute him?

TRUMP: Obama-gate. It's been going on for a long time. It's been going on from before I even got elected and it's a disgrace that it happened. And if you look at what's going on and if you look at now all of this information that's being released and from what I understand that's only the beginning.

President Trump Holds Press Conference; Trump Belittles Spread Of Virus In The West Wing; Trump Claims To Have Succeeded On Testing; Chinese-American Reporter C....

Some terrible things happened and it should never be allowed to happen in our country again. And you'll be seeing what's going on over the next -- over the coming weeks. And I wish you would write honestly about it, but unfortunately, you choose not to do so. Yes, John, please.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: What is the crime exactly that you're accusing him of?

TRUMP: You know what the crime is, the crime is obvious to anybody. All you have to do is read the newspapers except yours. John, please.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yes, Mr. President, if I can just get a clarification on the testing. We've seen clearly that the numbers of tests have gone up. There have been some advancements in testing, but you've said twice here today that every American who wants a test can get a test.

TRUMP: Yes.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: That's not the case, 1.9 million tests per day is far short of every American that wants a test to be able to get it.

TRUMP: Well, I'm going to have the admiral, but I will say, just from listening and hearing like you do, we all do, not everybody should get a test because they have to have certain things and they're going to know when they're not feeling right. Those are the people that will be getting the test. But admiral, I'll let you take it from there, please.

GIROIR: So, everybody who needs a test can get a test. We have plenty of tests for that. Right now in America, anybody who needs a test can get a test in America with the numbers we have. If you are symptomatic with a respiratory illness, that is an indication for a test and you can get a test.

If you need to be contact traced, you can get a test. And we hope, and not hope, we are starting to have asymptomatic surveillance which is very important. Again, that's over 3 million tests per week. That is sufficient for everyone who needs a test, symptomatic, contact tracing, and to our best projections, the asymptomatic kind of surveillance we need to get that, and that's the way it is.

And remember, I work at HHS. I work there every day. I don't get tested every day.

[17:10:00]

I get monitored for my symptoms. Am I febrile? Do I have any other symptoms? I wear a mask when I go out. That's a safe work environment for the environment we have. If I became symptomatic, I would get a test. And if it were positive, I would isolate and there would be contact tracing to stop that just the way it was done here.

If I'm not symptomatic, I do the precautions as everyone is recommended in phase one and that's the essence of safely opening America.

TRUMP: And John, the numbers are coming way down and they're coming down rapidly and that's a beautiful thing to see. And that's pretty much universally all across the country. They're coming down very rapidly. So, very important. Please, go ahead.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: -- the admiral. So Americans who are going back to work shouldn't expect and shouldn't need, shouldn't want to have the same thing that people coming to work here at the White House have which is the ability to get tested regularly, regardless of symptoms?

GIROIR: So, let me clarify as well. People who come into close contact with the president get tested on a regular basis, okay? If I were not in close contact with the president specifically, I would not get tested like most people here do not get tested. That's a very specific circumstance.

President Trump Holds Press Conference; Trump Belittles Spread Of Virus In The West Wing; Trump Claims To Have Succeeded On Testing; Chinese-American Reporter C....

When I work at HHS, I go to HHS, I don't get tested. I do the exact thing that we ask Americans to do, to monitor your symptoms. If you are symptomatic, self-isolate, get tested with one of our community- based testing sites, at your hospitals.

There are even at-home testing now that has been authorized. And to cooperate, that if you need to be contact traced, be contact traced and cooperate with your local public health.

But not everybody who walks in here gets tested every time they do. If you're symptomatic, here at HHS, at a meat packing plant, at a school, you need to get tested.

TRUMP: And the meat packing plants now are doing very well. There's great testing around those plants and we're finding out who had the problem. They're being quarantined. And the meat packing is moving along very nicely. But they were trouble spots. They were hot zones, definitely. Please. And you know, one thing I think is very important though, John, just to finish, we have now, and nobody says it, they just don't want to write it, by far more tests than any other country in the world, not even a contest.

And the quality of our test is the best anywhere in the world. That's very important to say. Please, go ahead.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Yes, to make sure I understand the White House's position, are you saying that right now, you feel there is enough testing, adequate testing across the United States or do you feel that it needs to be ramped up, and by how much, if so, does it need to be ramped up?

GIROIR: We've been -- I think we've been clear all along that we believe and the data indicate we have enough testing to do the phase one gradual reopening that has been supported in the president's plan and the task force plan.

And it has to be a phased reopening. Nobody is saying turn the light switch on and everyone go because then it would be really impossible to control the spread of the virus. You know, there are many, many models out there.

The Rockefeller Foundation published their recommendations of about 3 million tests per week. That's exactly what we're doing. If you look at our agent based models, it's far below that.

If you take the Safra Center at Harvard and correct their misassumptions like on the sensitivity of the test, the mitigation processes and how many people get hospitalized, you get about that number.

Now, I am not going to come here and say we can absolutely swear it's God's truth that this is the number we need. But we know we have enough to open and we're going to be very careful with our (inaudible) net, with our surveillance programs, and what the data come in to inform us even further as we grow and learn.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: And I think Brad --

BRAD SMITH, DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR AND DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR MEDICARE AND MEDICAID INNOVATION: And let me just add a little bit to that because most days I don't come to the White House to work. I either go to FEMA or I go to HHS. And let me just talk you through what the protocols are there because I would never get tested if I wasn't coming to the White House.

So every day when we come in we get our temperature taken and we get asked questions about if we have symptoms. If you don't, then you enter the workplace. And then there's hand sanitizer all over the place in rooms that are made for conference rooms.

They put pieces of paper that say don't sit in essentially every other or every third seat to separate people. And so there's a lot of precautions that we're taking in the federal government that are separate from testing and those are the precautions that the agencies, that Admiral Giroir and I are working at everyday or using to let us continue working.

President Trump Holds Press Conference; Trump Belittles Spread Of Virus In The West Wing; Trump Claims To Have Succeeded On Testing; Chinese-American Reporter C....

TRUMP: If people want to get tested, they get tested. We have the greatest capacity in the world, not even close. If people want to get tested, they get tested. But for the most part, they shouldn't want to get tested. There's no reason.

They feel good. They don't have sniffles. They don't have sore throats. They don't have any problem. If they do feel there's something happening, they have the absolute - easy. In fact, Ron DeSantis of Florida, the governor doing a fantastic job in Florida.

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He said he's got a little bit of the opposite problem, he's got so much testing that people sit around and wait for people to come in, that they have far great overcapacity for testing and there are numerous other states that have told me the same thing. That's, by the way, a good problem, not a bad problem, okay? Yes, go ahead, please.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: You said many times that the U.S. is doing far better than any other country when it comes to testing.

TRUMP: Yes.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Why does that matter? Why is this a global competition to you if every day Americans are still losing their lives and we're still seeing more cases every day?

TRUMP: Well, they're losing their lives everywhere in the world. And maybe that's a question you should ask China. Don't ask me. Ask China that question, okay? When you ask them that question you may get a very unusual answer. Yes, behind you, please.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Sir, why are you saying that to me specifically that I should ask China?

TRUMP: I'm telling you. I'm not saying it specifically to anybody. I'm saying it to anybody that asks a nasty question.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: That's not a nasty question.

TRUMP: Please go ahead.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Why does it matter?

TRUMP: Okay. Anybody else? Please, go ahead in the back. No, it's okay.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: But you pointed to me. I have two questions Mr. President.

TRUMP: Next. Next please.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: You called on me.

TRUMP: I did, and you didn't respond and now I'm calling on the young lady in the back. Please.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Sorry, I just wanted to - I just wanted to let my colleague finish, but can I ask you a question?

TRUMP: Ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much. Appreciate it. Thank you very much.

(END VIDEO)

WOLF BLITZER, CNN HOST: A very, very ugly ending to that one hour appearance by the president in the Rose Garden, refusing to answer our own White House correspondent Kaitlan Collins' question and going after another reporter, several reporters in the course of that one- hour exchange.

President Trump Holds Press Conference; Trump Belittles Spread Of Virus In The West Wing; Trump Claims To Have Succeeded On Testing; Chinese-American Reporter C....

His opening statement, the major point the president repeatedly made is that anyone who wants a test, anybody who wants a test could get a test. They said that 9 million people in the United States have already received tests. Anyone who wants a test, the president said, can get a test, which isn't true.

There are a lot of people who would like to get a test but they can't get a test right now. Admiral Brett Giroir, the assistant secretary of Health and Human Services, corrected the president when he said anyone who needs a test, who needs a test, can get a test, didn't say who wants a test.

A lot of people would like to have a test, but they're simply not yet available. They might be available in the coming weeks and months but not right now.

Gloria Borger, the president was very determined on several issues and we're going to go through all of them here in "The Situation Room." But he was clearly, clearly insisting something that wasn't necessarily true, that you want a test, you can get a test.

GLORIA BORGER, CNN CHIEF POLITICAL ANALYST: Right.

BLITZER: All of us know people who would like to have a test but they simply can't get one.

BORGER: And, you know, he said, and this is a phrase that just sticks in my mind, which is, we have met the moment and we have prevailed. And when later asked about it, he said that was about testing. I mean, Wolf, this is the White House who told us that there would be 27 million tests by the end of March.

We know that is not the case. They're getting close or better, I should say, to what's needed. But there are studies that say that the United States should be conducting tens of millions of tests per day.

So the president said, look, not everybody should get a test, if you're feeling fine, don't get a test. And Wolf, what have we been talking about for the past couple of months, is asymptomatic spread of this disease.

If you're feeling fine, you can still give the virus to somebody else. And so this is a president who clearly wants to convince the country that the administration has prevailed.

I mean, the last question that was asked that got into a very nasty back and forth was, why do we need to get into a competition with other countries when you have 80,000 people who have passed away in this country? Why do we care if we are better than South Korea or better than anybody else?

And the president didn't really answer that question. He went on and on saying that Americans should be able to get a test right now. If somebody wants to be tested now, they'll be able to be tested.

And Wolf, if you go around the country and you talk to people, for example, who were working in those meat packing plants, if they were able to get tests, the answer is no, they were not.

And so it just seems to be this sort of a sense that the president was trying to say how fabulously the administration has done when at the outset of this, they promised they would do a lot better. And trying to say that we in this country are ready, all over, for a phase I reopening.

And one more thing I would like to add. He said he can feel the enthusiasm out there for people who want to get back to work. And obviously people want to get back to work. I would like to be sitting next to you in the studio right now, Wolf.

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But if you look at the polling, it shows, there was a recent Pew poll, 68 percent of the people in this country are nervous that they would be going back to work and don't feel safe about it.

President Trump Holds Press Conference; Trump Belittles Spread Of Virus In The West Wing; Trump Claims To Have Succeeded On Testing; Chinese-American Reporter C....

BLITZER: Right at the very end, Gloria, of that news conference, the president did something and it was really, really, as I said, ugly. An Asian-American White House correspondent asked a very reasonable question, and the president then said, why don't you go ask China, I'm paraphrasing right now, about that.

And then she wanted to follow up and say why are you asking me that about China, and our own White House correspondent Kaitlan Collins paused, she had been called on to ask the next question, but she wanted to give her colleague an opportunity for a followup.

And the president wouldn't hear from it and then he wouldn't even call on Kaitlan Collins. But what he did to that Asian-American White House correspondent really was nasty.

BORGER: Well, it was nasty, it was dismissive. I just -- it's hard to find words to describe a president of the United States treating a member of the Press Corps that way.

We know that he tends to treat women of the Press Corps very differently from the way he treats a lot of other people, not that he's not rude to the men as well.

And while you're adding something that was -- let me add something else that was kind of astonishing in all of this, Wolf, in addition to that behavior, was he was asked about his tweets over the weekend where he accused former President Obama of a crime.

And he was asked, what crime? What crime are you accusing a former president of? And he did not answer it. He said it's obvious. And then he didn't answer it. So I don't even know what to say about that.

BLITZER: And then he suggested - and that was - and then he suggested things will be coming forward in the next few weeks, you'll see. But he refused to answer. He did accuse the former president of the United States of committing in his words, and I'm paraphrasing once again, the greatest crime in American history. Let me play this clip, stand by for a moment.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: -- that matter, why is this a global competition to you if every day Americans are still losing their lives and we're still seeing more cases every day?

TRUMP: Well, they're losing their lives everywhere in the world. And maybe that's a question you should ask China. Don't ask me. Ask China that question, okay. When you ask them that question, you may get a very unusual answer. Yes, behind you, please.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Sir, why are you saying that to me specifically that I should ask China?

TRUMP: I'm telling you. I'm not saying it specifically to anybody. I'm saying it to anybody that would ask a nasty question.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: That's not a nasty question.

TRUMP: Please go ahead.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Why does it matter when --

TRUMP: Okay. Anybody else? Please. Go ahead.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLITZER: It certainly was not a nasty question, you know. Gloria, it was really awkward to see that unfold. And I give our White House correspondent Kaitlan Collins a lot of credit for deferring to that colleague of hers who was asking a reasonable question and the president said to this Asian-American, go ask China about that.



President Trump Holds Press Conference; Trump Belittles Spread Of Virus In The West Wing; Trump Claims To Have Succeeded On Testing; Chinese-American Reporter C....

BORGER: Well, and I think I give the journalist a lot of credit because what she is saying is, are you being racist in asking that question to me. Now, he denied it, but you can judge for yourself, Wolf. There he was, saying to her, ask China. Why would he do that?

And, you know, I think this isn't the first time this has occurred from this president. And I think that, you know, she had a lot of guts in saying to him are you asking me this, you know, because of my appearance and who I am.

BLITZER: Yes, which was a fair question and a fair response. You know, Kaitlan Collins is with us right now. Kaitlan, you were there on the scene. Give us your sense of what happened on several related issues.

And as Gloria correctly points out, the president accusing former president Barack Obama of committing the greatest crime. "Obama-gate" he keeps calling it, although when pressed what crime did he commit he didn't have an answer. For that, he said stick around maybe you'll see something in the next few weeks.

KAITLAN COLLINS, CNN WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT: Yes, Wolf. He said the answer to that question was obvious so he did not state what it was if he feels it's so obvious. And, of course, a strange end there to the press conference where the president had called on me.

I was letting my colleague, Weijia Jiang from CBS finish her question and then the president abruptly ended the press conference, did not let me ask my questions. We had multiple questions of course for the president. He had not called on us yet.

And this was not only about testing, but also the president is facing questions about the coronavirus outbreak happening here at the White House and what he is going to do moving forward with his relationship with the vice president who notably was not there, Wolf.

I don't think that that has ever happened in our time here at the White House, where the vice president has been here in Washington at the White House and not attended a press conference that the president always has. So, clearly, some kind of separation happening there.

[17:24:58]

But then when the president was asked at the end, you know, what his point of this entire press conference was, to talk about testing and to talk about how his administration has ramped it up and he repeatedly was talking about where the United States falls in the world ranking of who is doing the most testing, testing not only, you know, overall but also per capita.

And when the reporter at the end was asking why that is such an important thing for him to stress, why does he keep talking about that as in, you know, a global ranking, basically, that's when he got irritated at the end when he was telling Weijia Jiang to ask China that answer to that question.

And Wolf, we had several other questions for the president including about his own decisions that he's made, what he's going to do going forward after he decided not to self-quarantine after his personal valet tested positive for coronavirus.

We've seen several officials who came in contact with the vice president's press secretary decide to self-quarantine after they had sustained periods of contact, though that is not an option that the vice president himself is taking.

And of course, Wolf, the other thing you noticed that was different in that press conference today out in the Rose Garden than what we've seen in any others, is that the staffers were wearing masks, the ones you saw standing alongside the colonnade, even the Health and Human Services secretary, Jared Kushner, another official that they've hired to come and help with testing.

President Trump Holds Press Conference; Trump Belittles Spread Of Virus In The West Wing; Trump Claims To Have Succeeded On Testing; Chinese-American Reporter C....

The guests were wearing masks. But the president himself was not wearing a mask and we know previously when the CDC issued that guidance at the beginning of April, saying they believed people should cover their face when in public and they couldn't socially distance from others, that the president said he was not going to follow that.

So the question is, is he also not going to follow this new requirement that staffers entering the West Wing should all be wearing mask. So, a lot of questions to the president, Wolf, but he did not take any from CNN there at the end.

BLITZER: Yes, he certainly didn't. All right. I want to bring in Dr. Sanjay Gupta, our chief medical correspondent. Sanjay, let's talk about this very, very critically important issue of testing. The president says anybody who wants to get a test can get a test, which isn't true.

A lot of people would like to get a test but they're simply not yet available, maybe they will be in the weeks and months to follow but not yet. Dr. Brett Giroir, the assistant secretary of Health and Human Services, then corrected the president.

He said anyone who needs to get a test can get a test. Is that even true right now, anyone who needs a test because there are a lot of people out there who are asymptomatic and may have the coronavirus but they just want to get a test and found out if there is anything there?

SANJAY GUPTA, CNN CHIEF MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT: Right. I mean, that is the bottom line, Wolf. I mean, there is a prioritization, you know, people are symptomatic, health care workers are probably at the top of the list, people who are symptomatic in general, also, you know, next to them on the list.

But that's the challenging thing about this virus. You know, temperature checks and all these type of things, they can remain, you know, screening tools, but the issue is exactly what you said, that people who don't have any symptoms at all, not only could they have the virus, Wolf.

But as we've learned in what is called the presymptomatic period, before someone develops symptoms, they could actually be more contagious. I mean, this is tough. I mean, to be fair, this is a tough situation.

But what it means clearly is that we have to have much more testing. I mean, part of this is physically figuring out where the virus is, being able to turn mitigation into containment, which is very possible. It can be done. It's happening in places around the world. But part of it I think is well, Wolf, to your point is a psychological confidence. I mean, the White House in this case is a bit of a microcosm. They test regularly, every day for some people. They did contact tracing.

They sort of did things right in terms of actually being able to contain the virus within the White House. It's very contagious so, it's still likely other people will be found to have the virus.

But that is sort of the same thing that's going to need to happen at places all over the country, large institutions, communities, states, and the country as a whole.

We need to do a lot -- maybe not every single person needs to be tested, but people who are going to be going into public places where they can't reliably physically distance, where I can't say comfortably I'm going into a situation where I know the people around me had been tested, it's going to make it very challenging. We can do this. We need to do this.

BLITZER: It's a really important issue. We did see people there, certainly the reporters and some others including the president's son-in-law, Jared Kushner. They were wearing masks. The president obviously was not wearing a mask. He doesn't want to be seen wearing a mask.

The Vice President Mike Pence, even though his press secretary tested positive for coronavirus, Katie Miller, he came to the White House without a mask today as well.

President Trump Holds Press Conference; Trump Belittles Spread Of Virus In The West Wing; Trump Claims To Have Succeeded On Testing; Chinese-American Reporter C....

Should everybody be wearing a mask right now out of an abundance of caution given the fact that two White House officials, Katie Miller and a U.S. Navy valet who serves food to the president, drinks to the president and others, both have come down positive for coronavirus?

GUPTA: No question about it. I mean, that's what should be happening, Wolf. I mean, you know, first of all, the situation in the West Wing, you know, it's very tough to maintain physical distance.

[17:29:59]

If you're absolutely convinced that your surroundings have been disinfected and you're not going to pick up the virus by touching a surface and touching your face, you're not going to come in proximal contact with people 6 feet or under, then perhaps you should still have a mask.

Maybe you can lower it at that point if you're going to be at your desk or something. But, yes, no people should be wearing a mask. I mean, this is this is almost like a -- you know, I was asking Ambassador Bix, do you think about this like protecting the President from a secret service standpoint.

The same sort of thing here, but it applies to everybody. I mean, you take it even a step further, you know, Vice President Pence I understand he's, you know, he and Ambassador Bix are running the Coronavirus Task Force. But you've just seen the head of the CDC, the top infectious disease doctor in the country and the head of the FDA all go into some sort of quarantine or modified quarantine. That is the right thing to do. That is how you start to contain the virus.

And I know Ambassador Bix is running the Coronavirus Task Force along with Vice President Pence, they have important work to do. But, you know, this is a tough situation. They probably need to be self- quarantining as well. This virus does not discriminate.

If the Vice President is harboring the virus inside his body just hasn't tested positive yet, he could potentially infect other people. I mean, that's just the nature of the biology here. So I don't know that, you know, these are going to be easy decisions, but they're important ones if we actually want to start talking about containment rather than just continuing to try and slow it down.

BLITZER: And I think it's fair to say as much time as Katie Miller, the Vice President's Press Secretary spent with Dr. Fauci or Dr. Hahn or Dr. Redfield, she's clearly spent a lot more time with the Vice President than with any of those scientists and those doctors.

And the Vice President presumably should be very, very cautious right now, even though he's tested regularly, almost every day presumably comes out negative. But sometimes there are false negatives 15 percent or so of these relatively fast tests unfolding.

I want to bring in Daniel Dale, our CNN fact-checker to talk a little bit about the President's assertion that anyone who wants to test could get a test. Tell us what you're discovering, and you've looked into this closely, Daniel.

DANIEL DALE, CNN REPORTER: I have Wolf. I think you and our colleagues have basically cover it, it's just not true that anyone who wants one can get one. And in many places, there are still restrictions on who is even eligible. You know, there are jurisdictions that are still testing people, only people who have symptoms. I thought it was interesting that Brett Giroir tried to amend or add a caveat to the President's claim.

He came up and said that you can get a test if you need one, if you're symptomatic, if you're being a contact trace, because you might have had contact with someone who has tested positive. And then the President came back up and returned to the original claim. He said, If you want one, you can get one. This was after Giroir tried to help him out. And I think it's another example of how hard it can be to budge the President from his inaccurate talking points.

President Trump Holds Press Conference; Trump Belittles Spread Of Virus In The West Wing; Trump Claims To Have Succeeded On Testing; Chinese-American Reporter C....

Wolf, I think it's also important to provide context on what the President and other administration officials are boasting about with regard to per capita testing as it relates to South Korea's. So I think their numbers are now accurate or roughly accurate.

The U.S. is now doing much more testing per capita than South Korea. But it's important to note that the U.S. and South Korea had their first confirmed case right around the same time, and South Korea jumped to a huge lead in the number of tests per capita it was conducting. And that allowed South Korea to crush it's curved.

South Korea had 34 reported new cases yesterday. That was the highest number in a month. They've had fewer than 300 deaths where again, the U.S. has passed 80,000. So yes, the U.S. has jumped ahead now as of April in per capita testing, but in those crucial early weeks, South Korea was far outpacing the U.S. And experts say that is a significant reason why South Korea has done so much better than the U.S. in handling this outbreak.

BLITZER: Very important point of data. And let's not lose sight of the big picture right now. Just moments ago, 80,000, 80,000 Americans have now been confirmed to have died from the coronavirus, 80,000. Here's some perspective.

And I just checked two months ago on March 12th, exactly almost two months ago, there were 38 deaths in the United States, 38 deaths two months ago. 80,000 deaths, specifically right now, 80,087 deaths in the United States. So 80,000 people have died as a result of the coronavirus in only two months.

Thirty-eight, look how fast that went. You know, it's -- and, Sanjay, I want you your perspective on this. Even some of the best estimates out there or some of the modeling, some of the forecasting is by early August, that number could be 130,000 or 135,000. Americans dead.

GUPTA: Yes. I mean, you know, when they -- when this particular organization, AHMA (ph) changed their projections here, I mean, it was a significant change, Wolf. You remember they had gone up from around 60,000 to 72,000 then basically, within a couple of days went to this number that was almost double that.

[17:35:00]

And some of the, you know, the initial projections really did not account for the state's reopening. You know, so these newer projections are starting to try and account for the state's reopening, but still unclear just how much mobility there will be.

It looks like people are really starting to move around a lot. I mean, there are these polls that were out, Wolf. You remember, as states were considering reopening, if your state reopens, how likely are you to actually go out and do some of these things.

And still, the majority of people said that they wouldn't. But, you know, this mobility data, which they tracked by using anonymous cell phone data seems to suggest that people are moving around quite a bit, Wolf. So, you know, sad to say, and again, as I've said so many times over the last few months, I don't enjoy, I take no joy in saying this stuff. But I think the models are even going to be higher than that. I mean, you can just look at the trends right now in the country, start to follow them out.

Hopefully, none of these places start to go into what's called exponential growth if they start to actually really start to develop clusters in some of these places. Sadly, we could see a lot more people be contracting this illness, getting sick and possibly dying, Wolf.

BLITZER: And Sanjay, one other important point that came out during the course of this news conference, the President suggesting, well, maybe he's not going to be spending a whole lot of time personally with the Vice President. I don't know if he's concerned about continuity of government, or anything along those lines. But the Vice President was not there, even though he's in Washington, he was not in the Rose Garden today. He's almost always at these events with the President wasn't there today.

President Trump Holds Press Conference; Trump Belittles Spread Of Virus In The West Wing; Trump Claims To Have Succeeded On Testing; Chinese-American Reporter C....

And the President at one point said, I guess we could talk on the phone. Maybe. I think that would be significant. If we're not going to see the President of the United States together with the Vice President of the United States, maybe even if they're wearing masks.

GUPTA: Absolutely. I mean, you know, that probably is a recommendation that my guess was made to the President, Vice President even, you know, much earlier than now. You have a contagious virus. It's in the White House. It's the -- I'm sure they're disinfecting, they're obviously taking these precautions. But these are still just precautions. I mean, it's the best we can do right now.

I think people sort of fundamentally understand that these precautions are important. But they're not a failsafe in terms of protecting this virus from being contagious and still continuing to transmit from person to person. So now we're talking about a situation where, in the White House, the virus is there, the President, Vice President both work there, I think it's really important to make sure you can do everything you can to stop the spread, especially among people who we know have been exposed to the virus.

The Vice President was likely exposed to his press secretary in some way, whether it was low risk or medium risk exposure, we don't know. But what did have an exposure and that's of concern, even if he's being tested on a regular basis, it could be that he tested negative for several days and then test positive from an exposure many days ago.

I mean, again, you know, this is tough to talk about. Some people may be sort of a little jarring to hear that we're talking about the White House and the President United States and the Vice President of United States this way. But this is a microbe, it doesn't care. It doesn't care who or where it's located. It just wants to go and jump person to person and wants to continue to find hosts, whoever those hosts may be.

BLITZER: I want to bring in Brian Stelter right now, our media correspondent. Brian, at the very, very end of that one hour appearance by the President in the Rose Garden, and you were watching, all of us were watching, it was really ugly. I'll play the clip once again. This is the CBS White House Correspondent Weijia Jiang. I'll play the clip. She asked a reasonable question and watch the President's response.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP) WEIJIA JIANG, CBS WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT: Why is this a global competition to you if every day Americans are still losing their lives and we're still seeing more cases every day?

DONALD TRUMP, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: Well, they're losing their lives everywhere in the world. And maybe that's a question you should ask China. Don't ask me. Ask China that question, OK? When you ask them that question, you may get a very unusual answer. Yes, behind you please.

JIANG: Sir, why are you saying that to me, specifically that I should ask China?

TRUMP: I'm telling you, I'm not saying it specifically to anybody. I'm saying it to anybody who would ask a nasty question like that.

JIANG: That's not a nasty question.

TRUMP: Please go ahead.

JIANG: Why does it matter?

TRUMP: OK. Anybody else?

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLITZER: All right then, he had originally called on Kaitlan Collins, our White House correspondent. She was polite enough and did the journalistic right thing. Let her colleague follow-up, which is appropriate. I spent seven years as

President Trump Holds Press Conference; Trump Belittles Spread Of Virus In The West Wing; Trump Claims To Have Succeeded On Testing; Chinese-American Reporter C....

a White House correspondent, we often let other White House correspondents do a follow-up question to the President --

BRIAN STELTER, CNN CHIEF MEDIA CORRESPONDENT: Yes.

BLITZER: -- at these kinds of events just out of simple courtesy to her colleagues. And that's what Kaitlan Collins did. The President then wouldn't even address a question that she was ready to pose. But let me get your thoughts on that exchange the President had with the CBS White House correspondent.

STELTER: Well, clearly, the President was rattled, rattled enough to walk off because he didn't want to hear the questions from Kaitlan Collins and Weijia Jiang. And I think what we saw on that exchange with Weijia Jiang is something that has racial overtones.

[17:40:07]

It is racist to look at an Asian-American White House Correspondent and say, ask China. This doesn't happen in a vacuum. This is part of a pattern of behavior from the President that goes back many years. So he's -- he doesn't have the benefit of the doubt that someone might have if, for the first time ever in their life, they made a comment like that to a reporter. But the President has been rattled by ways of Jiang's questions in the past, he has treated her and other female reporters differently in the past. And he's also had this pattern of reacting to minority journalists in a very specific and different way, Wolf. For example, a few years ago, President Trump said to April Ryan, a black correspondent, to follow- up with the Congressional Black Caucus because he kind of just assumed they were friends.

And here today saying to a Chinese born journalist, asked China. Now, of course, he says he was directing he would have said the same thing to anyone, but the pattern suggests otherwise. The pattern suggests a racial reaction to certain individuals in the press corps. And that's deeply, deeply disturbing.

Let me just tell you Weijia Jiang's background if he doesn't know. She's a White House correspondent for CBS, one of the best reporters on the beat. And she describes herself in her biography as a Chinese born in West Virginia. What a beautiful sentiment, right, to be Chinese born and then to be a part of this country and to be from West Virginia, and to describe yourself in that way.

Normally, we wouldn't even be talking about her background, we wouldn't be talking about our heritage. But it's come up because the President routinely targets reporters who are women and people of color. In this case, he targeted Weijia Jiang today, but this is a pattern. And as much as we are competitive in the press corps, I think it's important we show solidarity in moments like this and call out racial kind of reactions from the President.

BLITZER: And once again, her question was totally, totally fair, serious, tough question but totally --

STELTER: Great question.

BLITZER: -- fair question. And the President obviously didn't want to hear about that. Then he goes and attacks these young journalists from CBS News. And I give her a lot of credit for the way she responded. I also -- stand by for a moment, Brian, because I want to bring back Kaitlan Collins.

Kaitlan, you were courteous to your colleague, and I applaud you for that. You did the right thing, you let your colleague do a follow-up question. You could see she wanted to follow-up. And that's what, you know, we used to do when I was a White House correspondent all the time. But what were you going to ask the President if he would have allowed you to ask a question?

COLLINS,: Yes. Wolf, it's standard protocol just to let someone finish their question. They were clearly still having an exchange back and forth. The President had called on me that's why I was standing there waiting to go to the microphone. And then the President cut off, did not take my questions, because I let Weijia finish. Though we had

President Trump Holds Press Conference; Trump Belittles Spread Of Virus In The West Wing; Trump Claims To Have Succeeded On Testing; Chinese-American Reporter C....

plenty of questions for the President, Wolf, not only about testing, which is the point of that press conference. That's why he had his other officials out there to speak to reporters.

And then, you know, he called on me initially. I just want to point that out. He had actually called me to ask a question and then he did not let me ask those questions that we had for the President. And, of course, there are a ton of times topics to ask the President about many questions in that press conference there about testing.

But not only that, there are questions about whether or not he and the Vice President are going to start separating themselves, what he is going to do, given the fact that two people who work closely to him and to the Vice President both tested positive for coronavirus last week.

There's a new mask policy here at the White House. We saw something we never see there at the Rose Garden where people are wearing masks and the guests, the staffers and some of the President's own cabinet secretaries and his top aides including his son-in-law, Jared Kushner, was also wearing a mask. But the President abruptly cut off that press conference there at the end, because he did not like the follow-up questions that he was getting about a question and an answer that he had given to a reporter.

It's not clear why the President would not have just answered those questions if he was confident in what his answer was, and then moved on to me and let me ask my questions, before finishing the press conference, Wolf. I mean, it's inexplicable. It doesn't really make a lot of sense why the President wouldn't just take the questions from the reporter that he had called on.

BLITZER: Yes. And he basically said you had your chance, you didn't ask the question. And that's why he's not going to let you ask a question, but it was totally appropriate for you to allow Weijia Jiang to go ahead and do her follow-up question after what the President had insinuated. I don't think there's any doubt about that. Do you want to -- Brian, you want to react to that?

STELTER: I just think it shows the President is trying to portray strength, trying to present all this data and try to impress the country. But then it's only paper thin, because when he is questioned, when there are follow-ups, when he is asked about why it's different for the White House and everywhere else in America, he just seems to fold under the pressure. This is a President who tweeted or retweeted 120 times just in 24 hours, all sorts of nonsense and conspiracy theories.

And it doesn't seem anybody in the Republican Senate, anyone in the Republican leadership is willing to stand up and say, behave like a president, behave like a leader and not as someone who just wants to challenge, who wants to pretend to be strong until he's challenge.

[17:45:05]

BLITZER: Yes.

COLLINS: And Wolf, I --

BLITZER: Go ahead.

COLLINS; -- I want to notes, there was actually a big discrepancy that needed to be asked about there and a confusion in what they were telegraphing and one was, who can get tested and who needs to be tested throughout the country. Because the President seem to be sending this message that anyone who wants a test can get a test.

The admiral there who has been really the point man on testing for the administration throughout this pandemic was really saying that people who need a test can get a test and he was talking about the importance of people who are symptomatic getting test. But of course, a big question for people going back to work as even if they're not symptomatic if they're asymptomatic, can they get a test.

President Trump Holds Press Conference; Trump Belittles Spread Of Virus In The West Wing; Trump Claims To Have Succeeded On Testing; Chinese-American Reporter C....

And that is critically important, Wolf, because we even saw it play out here at the White House last week where these people are tested daily, and the Vice President's press secretary who is constantly in the West Wing, constantly interacting with top officials was asymptomatic and then she got a test the next day and was positive. Now you've seen both sides of the coin here because the valet who tested positive last week actually showed up to work, he was exhibiting symptoms and that's why he was tested. And then of course, tested positive.

It's very important for people going back to work to know they can get a test even if they do not have symptoms, because they want to be able to get tested to feel comfortable, because you can have coronavirus and not have symptoms, as Sanjay Gupta has said, 100 times, maybe more on our air. So that's a really important distinction, but that's not one that the President let us ask about today.

BLITZER: And some of those tests do result about 15 percent or we're told do result in false negatives. You actually do have coronavirus, but the test shows that you don't when you really do. So those tests are not perfect to begin with.

You know, let me Gloria, back into this conversation. Gloria --

BORGER: There --

BLITZER: -- yes, go ahead.

BORGER: There's one more thing I want to add to this conversation because I think we've covered an awful lot of the President's bizarre behavior, particularly at the end of this press conference. But he also charged as he did in a tweet over the weekend that the Democratic governors really don't want to get their citizens back to work because of course they want to use it to their political advantage.

I think you -- maybe he want to have another conversation with Governor Cuomo, whom he apparently watches every day and who today outlined in detail, a kind of gradual reopening of his state. He said, there's no effort on the part of certain blue states to get into gear. The people won't stand for it. They want our country open, and they're not -- the blue states are not showing enough effort to turn their economies back on.

Now, he also has claimed at assorted times, that he has very good relationships with a lot of these blue state governors. And that, in fact, he mentions Cuomo and has used Cuomo in an ad of his praising, praising the President. Well, what blue state governors do not want to get their people back to work, and how exactly is it politically advantageous for any governor to keep their people at home, given what it does to their state's economies. So it was a remarkable in the way that he kind of explained his tweet over the weekend. But he did not back down on it just like he did not back down on the bizarre charge about Obama's crime --

BLITZER: Yes.

BORGER: -- without explaining what it was because it ought to be obvious to all of us.

BLITZER: Yes, that was extraordinary, as well. He's accusing his immediate predecessor in the White House, former President Barack Obama and -- of committing the greatest crime. And then when a journalist asked what crime -- what exact crime did President Obama commit --

BORGER: Right.

BLITZER: -- the President wouldn't answer, oh, you know, well, he said, you know, the crime. I'm just looking at my notes. He said, you know, the crime. Well, we don't know the crime.

BORGER: Right.

BLITZER: The President may think there may have been a crime but he refused to say what the crime was. Then they said, just see what happens in the coming weeks down the road. That was pretty outrageous.



President Trump Holds Press Conference; Trump Belittles Spread Of Virus In The West Wing; Trump Claims To Have Succeeded On Testing; Chinese-American Reporter C....

BORGER: It was, and let's see what the attorney general has to say about that. Now, he's already said that a former president has committed an obvious crime. You know, my question is, does the attorney general know what this is? Is the Attorney General going to charge a former President Obama with a crime?

I mean, you know, you think about the context of this. This is a President speaking from the Rose Garden, in the midst of a pandemic, and attacking this journalist, attacking a former president and attacking Democratic governors in this country for not wanting to help their citizens and reopen their states.

BLITZER: Yes, it's -- I think it's fair to say it's pretty amazing to hear the President -- the current President of United States make these kinds of charges against the -- especially the former president of the United States, as you say the Democratic governors, the journalists, were used to do that by now because he does that all the time.

[17:50:02]

But specifically to accuse President Obama of committing a crime when he was asked what crime is he going to be charged with refusing to answer, that's pretty amazing when you think about that, as well. This was an opportunity, Gloria, for the President to come out there and reassure the American public that he knew what was going on. And he was doing the best he could to prevent more Americans from dying, once again, 80,000 Americans over the past two months have died here in the United States. But by going too far in these other areas, way too far, he missed that opportunity.

BORGER: Well, this is why people in the White House prevailed upon him to stop doing these longer briefings, because he really can't help himself and he doesn't do himself any good. And so he did have this. This was supposed to be sort of phase one we're reopening. Here's all the progress we've made on tests and inevitably, it kind of devolves into this nasty exchange with journalists whenever he's asked a question that he feels doesn't treat him fairly or is it all probing, by the way.

And, you know, this is a president who's not used to getting a lot of probing questions because he doesn't -- he hasn't fit until the pandemic, he hasn't faced the media, generally other than at a heliport outside the White House. So he really -- when he is questioned in a probing way, he is clearly defensive, and he fights back, and it's not an appealing characteristic. Should we say that?

BLITZER: Yes.

BORGER: -- and the public has said and you can see it in the polling, they don't like it.

BLITZER: All right, Gloria standby. I want to update our reviewers on what's going on around the country right now. At least 48 states will be reopened to some extent by the end of this week. But the model often cited by the White House now says an explosive increase in mobility is raising the projected number of U.S. deaths to 137,000 by early August. 80,000 deaths right now.

Tonight, once again, just moments ago, the death toll here in the United States surpassed 80,000 with more than 1.3 million Americans, having confirmed coronavirus cases worldwide. There are more than 4 million cases and more than a quarter million deaths right now.

Joining us now Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey. Mayor Frey, thank you so much for joining us. I want to get your reaction to some of the stuff we just saw. You heard the President say we have prevailed on testing. Would you agree with him based on what's going on in your community?

MAYOR JACOB FREY (D), MINNEAPOLIS, MN: No, I would not. We have not met the moment. We have not prevailed. Saying we have prevailed at this point is like being at mile 10 of a 26 mile marathon and raising your hands of victory. That is not where we're at right now. We've got a whole lot of work left to do. And at this point in Minnesota, in Minneapolis we're recognizing where we are in this race and we're keeping our nose to the grindstone.

President Trump Holds Press Conference; Trump Belittles Spread Of Virus In The West Wing; Trump Claims To Have Succeeded On Testing; Chinese-American Reporter C....

BLITZER: The White House says that it will now allocate \$11 billion in previously appropriated funds to states to increase their testing capacity. How much of a difference will all this make in your ability to reopen your beautiful city of Minneapolis quickly and safely? FREY: Testing is going to be perhaps the critical component of opening safely. It's got to be testing, followed by tracing, followed by isolating for those who have come up with positive tests. And that's actually exactly how we're collaborating with our state right now.

We've got a wonderful partnership with our state, our University of Minnesota and then the Mayo Clinic and we hope to be able to get up to 20,000 tests per day. Right now we're hovering around 5,000. And yes, in order to do this properly, in order to do this with our eyes wide open and responding to the data, we're going to need more tests.

BLITZER: Why hasn't the curve of new cases in Minnesota flattened already?

FREY: Well, in Minnesota, we took fairly aggressive action very early on. And so we did not get those spikes from the get-go in Minnesota because we've been so effective at extending the curve. That's a big part of why we're seeing ascending numbers right now. In other words, rather than have a huge spike early on, the numbers increase over time.

And the second piece is naturally, with an increase in tests, you're going to see an increase in positive numbers. And we're not shying away from the results here. We're not hiding from the realities.

We're actually going into some of these hotspots. We're going into our senior centers. We're going into congregate care facilities. We're going into food processing plants. These are areas where we can expect to have higher rates of contraction and we're testing there and yes, we are seeing positives as well.

[17:55:05]

And so as we are seeing an ascension right now in the number of cases, we've also given ourselves some time to prepare because, you know, here's an important piece that people seem to be missing oftentimes. You know, by doing all of this affirmative work, we are not preventing the total number of people from contracting COVID-19. We are preventing the total number of people from contracting COVID-19 all at once. And that's an important distinguishing factor especially as we gradually, gradually being a key word start to reopen.

BLITZER: Well, good luck to everybody in Minneapolis. Good luck to everybody in Minnesota. Right now, we'll stay in close touch Mayor Frey with you. Thank you so much for joining us.

FREY: Thank you for having me.

BLITZER: All right, we're going to have a much more and all the breaking news right after this.

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