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# Mayor de Blasio Provides Updates on New York City's COVID-19 Response

March 8, 2020

Video available at: <https://youtu.be/GCn8GLsAN9E>

### Mayor de Blasio Holds Media Availability on COVID-19



***New Yorkers should text COVID to 692-692 to get regular updates on the latest developments regarding COVID-19***

**NEW YORK**—Mayor Bill de Blasio today issued additional guidance regarding COVID-19. A new case of COVID-19 was confirmed in the Bronx today, bringing the citywide total to 13.

“As we continue to see community transmission between people who have no direct connection to travel to one of the affected countries, we are asking New Yorkers to adjust their routines to stem the spread of the virus where they can,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “I cannot reiterate enough that if you feel sick, stay home; we need every New Yorker to do their part to keep their neighbors safe.”

### **Protecting Yourself and Others**

To reduce overcrowding, the City is advising private-sector employers and employees to consider telecommuting

where possible and to consider staggered start times for workers. Those who take the subways at rush hour should consider commuting to work via alternative modes of transportation, like biking or walking, if possible.

### **Special Guidance for Vulnerable New Yorkers**

The City is advising those with chronic lung disease, heart disease, cancer, diabetes, or a weakened immune system to avoid unnecessary events and gatherings. If you have family or friends who have one of these conditions, do not visit them if you feel sick.

Those with a history of smoking and vaping are more likely to experience serious illness related to COVID-19. For help quitting, call 866-NY-QUITS.

### **Travel for City Employees**

The City has ordered local government workers to cancel all non-essential international travel, effective immediately.

### **Keeping Kids Safe in Schools**

The City will hire an additional 85 school nurses to ensure every district school building has a full-time nurse by the end of the week. All international school trips have been cancelled for the remainder of the school year. After sending a survey to nonpublic schools to help identify shortage of paper towels, soap, hand sanitizers, and medical supplies, the Department of Education will distribute materials to any school experiencing shortages.

### **Guidance for Doctors and Medical Providers**

With private lab testing now available, the Health Department is sending guidance to providers to test patients with respiratory illnesses who have been admitted to the hospital but are not in the ICU. For non-hospitalized patients with fever and either cough or shortness of breath, priority will be given to patients 50 years and older or individuals of any age who have chronic conditions, such as cancer, heart disease, diabetes, weakened immune systems, or chronic lung disease. Those with COVID-19 symptoms and underlying chronic conditions are at greater risk for serious illness if they contract the virus.

### **Supporting Small Businesses**

The City will provide relief for small businesses across the City seeing a reduction in revenue because of COVID-19. Businesses with fewer than 100 employees who have seen sales decreases of 25% or more will be eligible for zero interest loans of up to \$75,000 to help mitigate losses in profit. The City is also offering small businesses with fewer than 5 employees a grant to cover 40% of payroll costs for two months (an average of \$6,000) to help retain employees. Eligible owners who would like to learn more about these programs should call 311 for assistance.

New Yorkers should continue to exercise basic precautions while going about their lives: wash your hands, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer, and cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing. Starting Monday, the City is expanding its public health advertising campaign to ensure New Yorkers have the facts and resources they need to protect themselves from COVID-19.

If you have any questions on finding medical care call 311. To get regular updates on the latest developments with coronavirus in New York City text COVID to 692-692. You will receive regular SMS texts with the latest news and developments.

Currently 19 New York City residents are under mandatory quarantine and 2,176 are under voluntary home isolation. Those under mandatory quarantine receive daily calls and twice weekly unannounced visits by DOHMH. Upon identification, all individuals under voluntary home isolation will receive calls and texts with information and reminders to call a doctor or DOHMH if they feel sick or develop symptoms, such as fever and cough or shortness of breath.

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