

Gov Press Conference 3/13/2020 10:30am – new Rochelle drive thru mobile testing – Mike Dowling, John Cohen, (bioreference), Mike Copey (Director EM)

New Rochelle has highest cluster of coronavirus cases in the country. Made it a containment zone.

Our strategy in this state is to slow the spread of the virus. Two ways to do: reduce density and increase testing.

This is a very creative way of testing. It's drive thru testing. Means people in this community can call, make an appt, and literally drive thru to be tested. 6 lanes. Medical staff comes to you, takes swabs, and sent to lab. In this case, bioreference. Can do about 200 cars/day. Not only faster and easier/smarter and safer. Up until now, person may walk into hospital ER exposing many people. You can't just come. You have to call first and make an appt. Takes about 15 minutes. Prioritizing New Rochelle residents first. People from throughout Westchester can be served at this facility. Also prioritizing vulnerable populations.

Many will and have been exposed to this virus. Many have already self resolved.

This facility is new and different. Our job is to find ways to respond to the situation. Spoke to VP Pence yesterday. On the issue of testing, I said to VP, I think Fed Gov't should decentralize testing. Rather than trying to control through Washington and FDA, the volume is just too high.

States routinely regulates labs. They do all sorts of testing. Our State DOH routinely regulates those labs. Fed Gov't should let states authorize testing.

In NY, we have dozens of labs that could start testing tomorrow and increase capacity dramatically if left up to state regulatory bodies.

Special thank you to health care workers.

Start capacity to do 5,000 tests/day next week with Bioreference online.

Michael Dowling

Praised the Gov's efforts and leadership.

This is a unique facility. Shows NYs entrepreneurship. As CEO of Northwell, proud to partner with Gov on this. Time to think of community at large. Strong believer that we are going through a lot of inconvenience, but we will win this.

Reiterate that the staff in all the facilities – we have a wonderful health care system in NYS. Workforce coming to work, doing what they need to be doing, taking care of patients, despite own worries. Northwell saying “we are made for this.”

Cuomo: How long? This facility will be open as long as it needs to be. Don't believe this is going to be a short term issue. Think we are looking at a matter of months. This could be a 6,7,8,9 month affair. People should recognize that. There will be waves. Testing: this country is behind. How do we quickly

bring testing up to where it needs to be? Let NY do it's thing. We have ability to bring on dozens of labs, increase by several thousand in a matter of a week.

Cuomo: People call number, make appt, drive up, and get tested right in car, then go home. Priority – New Rochelle and vulnerable populations. I know everyone is anxious. Facts defeat fear in this case.

Cuomo: we are more aggressive about using state testing capacity. But we can't do more than the Fed gov't allows us to. We have 200 labs in NY, regulated by State DOH. Let us use that mechanism to do these tests. It's not a complicated test – it's a virus test. Thus far, Fed controlling testing. We want state to control. We do have prioritization of testing. We will have thousands of tests available next week if Feds hear our pleas

Cuomo: Our guidance is this. If you have a child who tests positive in school, school must close for 24 hours to disinfect. Then we will talk to district and make a decision. Any superintendent can decide to close their school. To do mass closings of schools is not without consequence. Schools run food programs for students. What do you do with those children?

Cuomo: You are much much less contagious if not showing symptoms. What testing is about is to find person who is positive because they can spread it. You spread it when you have symptoms. You cough, sneeze, etc. If you are not showing symptoms, you are probably not contagious. If you have to prioritize, you want to prioritize symptomatic people.

Cuomo: This is the NY model. Everyone designs a model that works for them. Testing itself is relatively straightforward. The problem has not been the testing kits. Problem has been no labs to do the tests. No labs authorized by the Fed Gov't. No labs authorized to do automated testing. Northwell can do 30 tests/day manual. Can do about 1,000/automated.

Cuomo: Common sense. What did we do in New Rochelle. Closed schools and limited gatherings. Limit mass gatherings because that is how it is going to spread. It's inconvenient. Better we take necessary measures now, reduce rate of spread, because we are trying to make the spread of the disease a rate that our health care system can accommodate. I get the anxiety. You can't disregard facts and data.

**Kristin Stephens**