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NASSAU COUNTY LEGISLATURE

FULL LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

COVID-19 VACCINATION PROCESS

RICHARD NICOLELLO,  
Presiding Officer

1550 Franklin Avenue  
Mineola, New York

Thursday, February 4, 2021  
10:05 A.M.

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2     A P P E A R A N C E S:3     RICHARD NICOLELLO,  
4         Presiding Officer5     HOWARD KOPEL,  
6         Alternate Deputy Presiding Officer7     DENISE FORD,  
8         Alt. Deputy Presiding Officer

9     STEVEN RHOADS

10    DEBRA MULE

11    C. WILLIAM GAYLOR III

12    VINCENT MUSCARELLA

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14    LAURA SCHAEFER

15    THOMAS MCKEVITT

16    KEVAN ABRAHAMS,  
17         Minority Leader

18    ROSE MARIE WALKER

19    JOHN FERRETTI, JR.

20    JOSHUA LAFAZAN

21    ARNOLD DRUCKER

22    JAMES KENNEDY

23    DELIA DERIGGI-WHITTON

24    CARRIE SOLAGES

25    SIELA BYNOE

26    MICHAEL PULITZER,  
27         Clerk of the Legislature

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1           COVID Vaccination Hearing/2-4-21

2           CHAIRMAN NICOLELLO: I'd invite  
3 the legislators to the chambers. Let's get  
4 started. I'm calling this hearing of the  
5 Legislature to order and ask Legislator Tom  
6 McKevitt to lead us in the Pledge of  
7 Allegiance.

8                   (The Pledge of Allegiance was  
9 recited.)

10           CHAIRMAN NICOLELLO: Thank you,  
11 Tom, and thank you to all the legislators  
12 who are here and participating remotely.

13                   I will say a few words at the  
14 beginning and hope to jump right into the  
15 program.

16                   We have Dr. Eisenstein, our  
17 commissioner of health, available remotely  
18 for approximately an hour. We also have  
19 Kyle Rose-Louder, the Deputy County  
20 Executive; as well as Gerard Giuliano  
21 counsel to the Department of Health to speak  
22 with us today.

23                   We also have a tremendous number  
24 of comments that we have received via email  
25 and it's unfortunate that we could not have

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2 the public here participating directly, but  
3 obviously with COVID it's too much of a  
4 concern at the current time and hopefully  
5 many of our residents are watching this on  
6 the stream on the Nassau County website.

7 Although the plan for years has  
8 been for the local departments of health to  
9 administer vaccines in situations such as  
10 the one we are in now, the state of  
11 New York, when the vaccine rollout began,  
12 decided it would control this process  
13 completely. It has done so using local  
14 hospitals as an exercise of that control  
15 providing Nassau County and other counties  
16 throughout the state with a very limited  
17 role to play.

18 I personally want to thank  
19 Dr. Eisenstein and the Department of Health  
20 for what they have done to date.  
21 Dr. Eisenstein's leadership and the  
22 information he's provided us and we provided  
23 to the residents has been exemplary and we  
24 really appreciate all that you've done and  
25 all that your staff has done.

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2 The vaccine began distribution in  
3 December, mid December, and, to date, only a  
4 small fraction of our population has been  
5 vaccinated. Unfortunately most of us  
6 expected more.

7 I think we can safely say now  
8 that it looks like it will be a number of  
9 months before we have sufficient vaccines in  
10 arms to get anywhere near a herd immunity.

11 What I'm saying is not a  
12 criticism of our Department of Health. I  
13 believe our Department of Health has done an  
14 excellent job with the limited role that  
15 they've had and limitations that have been  
16 imposed upon them by New York State.

17 But the rollout otherwise could  
18 not have been much worse. The state had  
19 increased eligibility including, in one  
20 week, going from 75 years olds to 65 year  
21 olds, to the point where millions of  
22 New Yorkers are eligible for the vaccine.  
23 Hundreds of thousands of Nassau County  
24 residents are eligible and, as we all know,  
25 there is a very limited supply.

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2           The obvious result is that the  
3   system has been overwhelmed. The most  
4   concerning part of that is that we are not  
5   getting enough vaccines to the most  
6   vulnerable part of our population.

7           All of us as legislators have  
8   heard from our residents through email,  
9   telephone calls. We've had an incredible  
10   number of public comments that have been  
11   submitted for this hearing.

12           Far and away the biggest issue  
13   the biggest complaint is the vulnerable  
14   people in our population, especially the  
15   elderly, 80, 90 year olds, not being able to  
16   get the vaccine.

17           We've heard from those elderly  
18   people, from their children who are  
19   concerned about their parents. We heard  
20   from many people with underlying conditions,  
21   disabilities, et cetera.

22           They've had difficulty with the  
23   state's website. They've been unable to get  
24   through. When they have, they've gotten  
25   appointments several months out. Telephone

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2 numbers have not worked adequately.

3 Here in Nassau County we had  
4 begun vaccinations with a limited supply  
5 provided by the state and we are providing  
6 that to the general population of eligible  
7 residents. We were directing our seniors as  
8 to how to contact the county as to how to  
9 obtain those vaccines and the state a week  
10 or so ago decided that the county itself  
11 directly could no longer provide to the  
12 general population, but had to provide to  
13 first responders and transit workers leaving  
14 many seniors unsure of where to go and how  
15 to get their vaccines.

16 In today's paper, the governor  
17 again notes that Long Island has the highest  
18 positivity rate in the state, the Long  
19 Island region. In his words Long Island,  
20 Long Island, Long Island.

21 Yet, we learn that New York City  
22 is restricting appointments to its  
23 residents and those who work in the city.

24 Today we read that the state has  
25 opened a mass vaccination site at Yankee

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2 Stadium providing 15,000 doses in a week,  
3 which is almost as much as they have given  
4 to Nassau County to date.

5 We need our leaders to advocate  
6 more strongly on behalf of this county. In  
7 particular, we must call upon the governor  
8 to open a mass vaccination site at Nassau  
9 Coliseum similar to Yankee Stadium.

10 Again, the county's positivity  
11 rate is the highest in the state. We are  
12 also calling again for New York City to open  
13 their vaccination site to all residents such  
14 as the county itself is doing and the state  
15 is doing.

16 Most of all, let's change the  
17 focus of what this vaccination rollout is  
18 and go back to what we should be doing, just  
19 protecting the most vulnerable.

20 We've known for over a year and  
21 Dr. Eisenstein has said this countless times  
22 that those who are most vulnerable, the  
23 seniors, especially those with underlying  
24 conditions, general population with  
25 underlying conditions, are most at risk for

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2 serious ailments or possible death. Those  
3 are the people that should be protected  
4 first. Other states have done this. We  
5 have to do more to accomplish that.

6 Again, we have many, many public  
7 comments. I'm not going to read them. They  
8 are all going to be included in the record.  
9 We have the points that have been raised and  
10 we will attempt to raise every one of those  
11 points during the course of this hearing.

12 I just wanted to briefly mention  
13 the individuals and I will give this list to  
14 the stenographer, the individuals who sent  
15 public comments.

16 Amy Solomito, Richard Sigelman,  
17 Kathleen Lynch, Jim Caulfield, Joan (no name  
18 provided in the comment), Virginia McNamara,  
19 Barbara Thompson, Lorraine Stanton, Ray  
20 Muntz, Diana Loeffel, Lizz Mancini, Phyllis  
21 Firedenthal, Steven Brslin, Chari Biton,  
22 Kathleen Lynch, Selma Miller, Kathy Basile,  
23 Slaski, Dorothy Young, Linda DaRocha, Ida  
24 Iacovino, Nina Gavan, who is the president  
25 of the CSEA of the Nassau University Medical

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2 Center, Dr. Sharon Llerena, Tony Tommasulo,  
3 Mark Blinderman, Nicole Posin-Oneill, and a  
4 number of others who did not leave their  
5 names but we have their email addresses.

6 Again, we saw every one of those  
7 comments. We read them. We will be raising  
8 the points that you've raised during the  
9 course of this hearing. Your comment will  
10 also be included as part of the record.

11 I want to thank you all again for  
12 giving me the opportunity to make those  
13 remarks and I ask Dr. Eisenstein if he wants  
14 to start things off with a statement or go  
15 right to questions.

16 DR. EISENSTEIN: Just a very  
17 brief statement. The Legislature has been  
18 great in our weekly meetings and I thank you  
19 for the opportunity to testify and answer  
20 any questions.

21 I'm very proud of the work that  
22 the Nassau County Department of Health staff  
23 has done. We are up to the vaccination  
24 stage of the response to COVID, which is  
25 something that we dreamed about for the

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2 first ten months. But it's been around the  
3 clock for all of us.

4 I'm very grateful to County  
5 Executive Curran for giving me the support I  
6 needed all the time even including last week  
7 when we felt there wasn't enough vaccines  
8 for seniors coming to the county. There is  
9 still not enough but with her help we  
10 advocated and got a supplemental 600 dose  
11 allotment last week that we were able to  
12 give to seniors.

13 We didn't get that this week  
14 because pharmacies opened to start  
15 vaccinating seniors. But I'm very  
16 appreciative of the support that I have  
17 gotten.

18 The health department, I want  
19 this to be clear on the record, of more than  
20 100 percent of the vaccines that we have  
21 been allotted have gone into arms. We are  
22 able to go over 100 percent because we have  
23 in most cases, we've been given Moderna  
24 vaccines since our first day on January 5th.  
25 The governor had given us seven days to use

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2 each allotment and we've cleared it out way  
3 before that.

4 We've gone over 100 percent of  
5 our allotment because the Moderna comes in  
6 vials of ten doses but they actually package  
7 it with 11.

8 In most cases, with the proper  
9 sized needles, and we shifted to smaller  
10 needles which work just as well for  
11 injections safely and effectively but we  
12 have been able to get the 11th dose which  
13 was not accounted for in our allotment. So  
14 we've actually done above 100 percent.

15 Yesterday we were a little bit  
16 delayed because of the snow. That's one of  
17 the reasons we're heavily booked these days,  
18 even over capacity, but I will be there to  
19 help shortly and we are going to get it  
20 done.

21 Yesterday we started second doses  
22 for people that received their first doses  
23 with us.

24 IT has been very helpful. I want  
25 to thank IT for helping us put a second dose

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2 platform in such that everybody that gets a  
3 first dose gets an email within a day or so  
4 giving them the appointment and 87 percent  
5 of the people who have gotten the first dose  
6 have made an appointment quickly. We then  
7 reach out to everybody who doesn't respond  
8 to make sure we have the correct email and  
9 get them second doses.

10 As of yesterday, we passed the  
11 15,000 total doses given just by the health  
12 department at our two sites plus the one  
13 site we did at a church in Hempstead on Dr.  
14 Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

15 Of those 15,259 doses, 14,716  
16 were first doses and now we're up to where  
17 we're going to be first doses and second  
18 doses basically every single day straight  
19 through. It's a lot of work but it's very  
20 rewarding and this is why a health  
21 department exists and I'm very appreciative  
22 of my staff who is there seven days a week,  
23 very long days, and I'm appreciative of all  
24 the support I've been given. I jut want to  
25 put that on the record before I begin.

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2 CHAIRMAN NICOLELLO:

3 Dr. Eisenstein, as I mentioned before, a  
4 couple of weeks ago, the state changed who  
5 was eligible to receive the vaccine at the  
6 Nassau County sites.

7 How are we directing our seniors  
8 in terms of where we must go and what the  
9 eligible seniors where they must go to  
10 obtain their vaccines; is it to the  
11 pharmacies and what is the procedure they  
12 should be following at this point?

13 DR. EISENSTEIN: So in the very  
14 beginning, in the first few weeks, seniors  
15 were not on the eligible list. Then when  
16 they became eligible it was 75 and over  
17 followed the next day by 65 and over, and at  
18 that point they were on the list of people  
19 we were able to vaccinate.

20 So, during the first couple of  
21 weeks that seniors were eligible, we did a  
22 comprehensive amount of -- a very large  
23 percentage of the vaccines that we were  
24 allotted those weeks, probably in the realm  
25 of 75 or 80 percent, with the help of

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2 Commissioner Carolyn McCummings,  
3 Commissioner of Human Services, under the  
4 leadership of Deputy County Executive  
5 Rose-Louder, the Office of the Aging worked  
6 to set up a process where people were able  
7 to get on a list and get instruction and  
8 guiding them is still something that we are  
9 trying to do.

10 What I was doing is asking for a  
11 set number of people from the list of  
12 seniors that we tried to reach.

13 We worked very hard to reach  
14 seniors in underserved communities using  
15 community leaders who were in touch with  
16 people that might not have computers or  
17 might have difficulty accessing the  
18 internet.

19 So, for what the process is now  
20 with -- so I would say, you know, send us X  
21 number of seniors each day with a list, and  
22 now we are continuing on as of about two  
23 weeks ago, seniors were assigned, the  
24 governor outlined who can vaccinate who.  
25 The local health department is not longer

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2 eligible to vaccinate seniors. We have been  
3 given a list of prioritized essential  
4 workers.

5 It's not all essential workers,  
6 it's those on the priority list, which  
7 includes police and fire, transit workers,  
8 airline workers, teachers. Just in the last  
9 day or two the governor said he would be  
10 adding restaurant workers.

11 So that's what we've been  
12 assigned. Seniors since then have been  
13 assigned to be vaccinated at pharmacies  
14 which started getting vaccine. A bunch of  
15 Walgreens in the county started getting  
16 vaccine this week as well as at the mass  
17 testing sites that the state has stood up.  
18 There's one at Jones Beach and Stony Brook  
19 on Long Island.

20 But I'm happy to turn it over  
21 Deputy County Executive Rose-Louder to  
22 discuss the Office of the Aging and how we  
23 are organizing support for seniors

24 MS. ROSE-LOUDER: Good morning,  
25 everyone. What we're doing in the

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2 Department of Human Services is we obviously  
3 noticed at the beginning of our vaccination  
4 program that the calls to our Department of  
5 Health calling center just shot up. It went  
6 from hundreds of calls a day to thousands.

7 And obviously with the staff that  
8 we had at the calling center, we did not  
9 have sufficient staff to handle all those  
10 additional calls.

11 So what we first did was pull  
12 staff from other departments, mainly the  
13 Department of Social Services, and chose  
14 those staff that are used to speaking to  
15 people and helping and know how to assist  
16 our seniors best and those from the office  
17 of aging as well.

18 We started to get them trained so  
19 they could take on some of those calls and  
20 start assisting our seniors.

21 What we did -- because this  
22 population obviously had difficulty  
23 navigating the website and the website was  
24 crashing, and it presented a lot of problems  
25 for our seniors, our concept was to take

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2     their names and numbers so we could  
3     preregister them and put them on a list and  
4     provide that list to the Department of  
5     Health for the pods.

6           So that's what we started to do  
7     and not only were we getting calls through  
8     the calling center, the office of aging was  
9     getting calls, many government elected  
10    officials were giving us information from  
11    their constituents that they were having  
12    difficulty in giving us names.

13           So we were receiving -- and  
14    community as well just calling in for their  
15    friends and family, churches, calling us  
16    about how can they get their seniors  
17    vaccinated.

18           So we started compiling lists  
19    from all of these different areas.

20           When the County Executive was  
21    successful in getting state to allow us to  
22    vaccinate an additional 600 last week, we  
23    pulled from those lists.

24           We had thousands of seniors on  
25    the list, so obviously many were going to be

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2 left out. We tried to do it as fair as  
3 possible by pulling from various lists and  
4 looking at those most vulnerable, our older  
5 seniors, and tried to get them into our  
6 system.

7 That's what we were doing and  
8 we're still helping the calling center  
9 because our calls, while they have  
10 diminished some, since the seniors can no  
11 longer be vaccinated by us, we still have a  
12 tremendous amount of calls that have  
13 skyrocketed almost from the beginning of the  
14 pandemic, but obviously during the summer  
15 there has been a lull and it has picked up  
16 again.

17 So, we have our office -- I'm  
18 sorry, Department of human services,  
19 Department of Social Services both assisting  
20 with the Department of Health to alleviate  
21 some of that backlog to at least get people  
22 on the phone and direct them.

23 Unfortunately we don't have a lot  
24 of direction to give them because we know  
25 that the pharmacies, there are very few

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2 pharmacies here in Nassau County that are  
3 part of the program and hopefully more will  
4 be coming online soon as more vaccine  
5 becomes available.

6 We do tell them that will be an  
7 option for them as well as the state system  
8 and that's the most information we can give  
9 them at this point.

10 Obviously if the state relaxes  
11 the responsibility and allows Nassau County  
12 to resume vaccinating seniors, we will do  
13 that and we will continue to do that by  
14 preregistering them so they don't have to  
15 worry about getting access to computers and  
16 that we can get them to our pods and get  
17 them vaccinated.

18 CHAIRMAN NICOLELLO: So then  
19 seniors are directed now to go to one of two  
20 places. It's the pharmacies and the state  
21 site?

22 MS. ROSE-LOUDER: That's correct.

23 CHAIRMAN NICOLELLO: With respect  
24 to the pharmacies, are they to -- how do  
25 they know that a local pharmacy is

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2 participating? Are they supposed to go and  
3 get themselves on a list before the doses  
4 are even available? What's the process?  
5 What are we telling people to do?

6 MS. ROSE-LOUDER: The only  
7 information we had, we got information that  
8 there were four pharmacies, Walgreens  
9 locally that had been been allotted from the  
10 state vaccine, and that those were the  
11 participating, and that was last weekend.

12 So that is all the information  
13 that we received from the state with respect  
14 to the pharmacies.

15 CHAIRMAN NICOLELLO: In terms of,  
16 obviously the state, in order to be eligible  
17 they would have to attempt to navigate the  
18 state website and things of that nature, but  
19 with respect again to the pharmacies, is  
20 there any specific direction that we are  
21 giving? Are we in Nassau County telling  
22 them to call our number? Are we telling  
23 them to check with the pharmacies, a  
24 combination thereof?

25 MS. ROSE-LOUDER: If they call

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2 our number, we are just giving them that  
3 information that they need to call our local  
4 Walgreens, or these four Walgreens, and that  
5 they have access to the state system.  
6 That's all the information that the state  
7 has given us.

8 CHAIRMAN NICOLELLO: Is it just  
9 the Walgreens or are other pharmacies  
10 participating?

11 MS. ROSE-LOUDER: We were given  
12 information last weekend about these  
13 specific Walgreens but there may be other  
14 pharmacies that are signing on to the  
15 program, but right now that's all the  
16 information that we have.

17 CHAIRMAN NICOLELLO: The  
18 preregistering that the county is doing, can  
19 you explain to me what is the benefit of  
20 that?

21 MS. ROSE-LOUDER: Well, we  
22 recognize that many of our seniors don't  
23 have computer skills. Some of the site was  
24 problematic and everyone seemed to be having  
25 some difficulty there.

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2 So if you have a senior that is  
3 not computer savvy and can't navigate the  
4 website or even have access to a computer or  
5 smartphone to be able to do that, that  
6 represented a large number of our seniors.

7 So what we did or what we were  
8 going to do, set out to do, was to just get  
9 them on the phone and talk to them. We do  
10 the registration on our end on their behalf.

11 What we were doing, actually, we  
12 were just taking their information, taking  
13 their name and information, and when we get  
14 them to the site, we register them through  
15 our system that way. So that they would not  
16 have to worry about sitting down at a  
17 computer screen and trying to figure out how  
18 to go get that done. We would take that on.

19 That was very short lived  
20 because, as you stated, the state virtually  
21 prohibited us from continuing in that  
22 program so we had to stop.

23 So the last 600 we did, we did by  
24 having our seniors actually get registered.  
25 We did a pre-registration for ourselves, but

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2 once they got to the site, that is when they  
3 were registered and were able to get  
4 vaccinated.

5 CHAIRMAN NICOLELLO: Honestly you  
6 are trying to do your best to answer the  
7 question, and the limitations are not  
8 necessarily the results of the efforts  
9 you're making and the Department of Health  
10 is making, but it's clear to me that the  
11 issue here is with the state. There has to  
12 be a better system to getting these people  
13 the information they need how to navigate  
14 the system to make an appointment of where  
15 to do.

16 It just seems like the directions  
17 are in flux and these are for individuals  
18 who need very specific directions.

19 So I think, again, I think we  
20 need to refocus our attention on the state  
21 and advocate that the state do something  
22 better for our vulnerable population.

23 I know that they're making  
24 efforts to many of our vulnerable population  
25 and we support that.

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2 Certainly the communities that  
3 are affected to a greater degree should  
4 receive more resources which is good.

5 But in this specific area I think  
6 that -- I don't think what we are doing is  
7 enough. I don't know what we could do more  
8 at the county level, but New York State has  
9 got to change. They got to make it easier  
10 to open up these vaccines and for people to  
11 register.

12 So, we here in the Legislature  
13 are going to make sure we make our voices  
14 heard to get that done.

15 I'm going to turn it over to the  
16 other legislators but there's a question for  
17 you or the doctor.

18 In terms of the new groups that  
19 the state is allowing counties to determine  
20 whether they will allow I think its taxi  
21 drivers, restaurant workers, and  
22 developmentally disabled, what's the  
23 county's plan for that? Is the county going  
24 to expand eligibility or not?

25 DR. EISENSTEIN: So I'm in the

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2 process of discussing with County Executive  
3 Curran and Chief Deputy County Executive  
4 Williams and Deputy County Executive  
5 Santeramo, Deputy County Executive  
6 Rose-Louder.

7 We think that -- we're going to  
8 come out with a formal policy on how to do  
9 it, but we understand that's all of the  
10 essential workers are important and we need  
11 to find a way to mitigate risk throughout  
12 all of our sectors.

13 It certainly helps if  
14 restaurants, we want to see restaurants  
15 open. It helps if restaurant staff is  
16 vaccinated that it can happen more safely we  
17 think.

18 So we have tried to be fair with  
19 what we vaccinated. Last week we'd been  
20 doing a certain percentage of our vaccine  
21 each week for police and fire.

22 We made sure we got a bunch of  
23 grocery store workers who are essential  
24 workers vaccinated. We've gotten transit  
25 workers and NICE bus teachers vaccinated.

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2 This week we're getting teachers vaccinated  
3 so I think we're going to come up with a  
4 fair means of making sure that all of the  
5 essential workers who are eligible are  
6 represented.

7 Unfortunately still our allotment  
8 this week was still the same 2,800 doses  
9 which was the same that we had last week.

10 2,800 doses and we are getting  
11 2,800 doses into arms easily. That's not a  
12 number we can't handle. We certainly could  
13 ramp it up if we had to and would like to  
14 but there are tens of thousands, maybe  
15 hundreds of thousands of eligible workers,  
16 eligible essential employees.

17 So we're going to try a find a  
18 way as quickly as possible to get all  
19 represented groups vaccinated and come up  
20 with a plan to make on how to make sure, the  
21 way we've gotten at least a certain  
22 percentage of transit workers and police and  
23 fire and that's across the county, not only  
24 county police, but local village police and  
25 volunteer fire departments and mass transit,

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2 NICE bus, grocery store workers.

3 We have hit a certain percentage  
4 of all of them and we're going to try to  
5 incorporate everybody that we are  
6 responsible for vaccinating with the hope  
7 that more and more vaccine comes so it can  
8 be speed up and that they can also be  
9 vaccinated in other segments besides just  
10 our pods.

11 CHAIRMAN NICOLELLO: Are you  
12 hearing, Dr. Eisenstein, from your  
13 conversations with state officials whether  
14 it's expected that the number of vaccines  
15 are going to increase? What are we looking  
16 at in the next few weeks?

17 DR. EISENSTEIN: So, last week,  
18 your allotment as a local health department  
19 this week is going to remain the same.

20 Then they added a 16 percent  
21 increase for three weeks. So our number was  
22 2,800. We were told to expect that for  
23 three weeks with a 16 percent increase.

24 That 16 percent came to us in the  
25 form of 500 doses specifically assigned for

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2 us to use on OPWDD state facilities, office  
3 of people with developmental disabilities,  
4 to make sure we were reaching that  
5 vulnerable resident and staff population.

6 Through the Office of Mental  
7 Health, Commissioner McCummings, and Deputy  
8 County Executive Rose-Louder were working  
9 with OPWDD providers with that 500 dose  
10 supplement which is added on to the 2,800.

11 We were told to expect the same  
12 numbers for three weeks but then a couple of  
13 days after that the governor said that 16  
14 percent may go up to 20 percent.

15 So I think numbers are starting  
16 to trickle up, but for the next couple of  
17 weeks, I don't anticipate a large increase  
18 to us. The other thing to consider is when  
19 more vaccine becomes available, it may not  
20 be allotted directly to us.

21 More pharmacies may get it to  
22 come online as Deputy County Executive Rose  
23 Louder said, there are four specific  
24 Walgreens that already have vaccines this  
25 week.

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2                   I assume -- I don't know this as  
3   a fact, I assume there are going to be  
4   others and other chains as well.

5                   We know that CVS is part of the  
6   federal program to vaccinate. So I would  
7   assume as more vaccine becomes available, I  
8   hope some of it comes to us but I assume  
9   more pharmacies are going to come online.

10                  I know the federally qualified  
11   health centers are awaiting vaccine. I know  
12   that private doctor offices are eagerly  
13   awaiting.

14                  So as more comes to us, I don't  
15   know how much is going to come to the health  
16   department, per se, but I was told to  
17   prepare for three weeks of a similar amount  
18   to what we have now and that's since been  
19   increased to 16 percent and then 20 percent  
20   additional, but that is already designated  
21   for specific populations and we are working  
22   at vaccinating them.

23                  CHAIRMAN NICOLELLO: Okay. The  
24   other question I had from one of the  
25   residents who submitted a comment is, if

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2 someone receives a first shot and then  
3 becomes sick, what is the protocol?  
4 Apparently the information they were  
5 provided after the first dose was received  
6 did not specify.

7 So, if you become sick after  
8 receiving the first dose, what does that  
9 person do?

10 DR. EISENSTEIN: Absolutely. I  
11 think that's a really important question  
12 because, especially, we've been given the  
13 Moderna vaccine. It's 28 days between the  
14 first and second shot. So people do still  
15 get sick.

16 It does take approximately ten  
17 days to two weeks for initial immunity,  
18 which is not complete immunity and not fully  
19 protective and the literature is full of  
20 people who got the first dose and became  
21 sick within a couple of days or a week or  
22 two. Some of them were exposed before they  
23 were vaccinated. Some of them might have  
24 been exposed immediately after. I want to  
25 be clear, it is not related to getting the

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2       vaccine. The vaccine cannot get you sick.  
3       It is not alive. It does not cause a living  
4       virus.

5                   It's just temporally related. We  
6       have a lot of disease in the community and a  
7       lot of people being vaccinated.

8                   If you get sick between the first  
9       and second dose, the CDC offers that you  
10      wait 90 days because we know that there will  
11      be 90 days immunity, but you can get the  
12      second dose 10 days after the start of your  
13      symptoms or later if you have resolved.

14                   So we certainly will work with  
15      people to reschedule if they choose, and  
16      depending on when the timing is, they may  
17      not qualify for a second dose on the 28th  
18      day. They may have to wait until the 40th  
19      or 50th day.

20                   On individual cases, we set up a  
21      means of responding to people with unique  
22      circumstances. I want to thank you Gerry  
23      Giuliano who is in the chamber with you who  
24      is overseeing that effort for individuals  
25      who have extreme circumstances or they got

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2       called in, a police officer gets called in  
3       to work on the 28th day and can't get a  
4       vaccine.

5                       So there are numerous  
6       circumstances where some people will have to  
7       be reschedule and if they contract disease  
8       between the first and second dose, it will  
9       require a medical evaluation as far as  
10      whether they should get it on the 28th day  
11      or they should wait.

12                      We know that after people are  
13      infected they are immune for 90 days, so the  
14      CDC says you can wait for 90 days. That's  
15      true for the first shot too. We have had  
16      people come in for a vaccine and they were  
17      just infected in the last four or six weeks.

18                      If it's more than ten days out,  
19      it's not contraindicated to give them the  
20      shot but they also are presumed immune for  
21      90 days so we would want them to get the  
22      shot which is most effective for them as  
23      well as, if they are already immune, we  
24      would like to see the shot go to people who  
25      are not immune, but it's not a

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2 contraindication, as long as they are ten  
3 days out and recovered from symptoms.

4 So the same is true for first and  
5 second shot, whether people get COVID before  
6 the first shot or between the first and  
7 second shot, but each of our pods we have a  
8 medical consultant and certainly they can  
9 call their provider ahead of time for  
10 guidance.

11 CHAIRMAN NICOLELLO: Legislator  
12 Ferretti had a question. Anyone else?

13 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Hello,  
14 Dr. Eisenstein. Gerry, Ms. Rose-Louder.

15 I want to echo what the Presiding  
16 Officer said about the Department of Health  
17 and what a fantastic job you have all done.

18 Dr. Eisenstein, I know you have  
19 all been available to us 24/7 and your  
20 response has really been outstanding as  
21 always. So thank you for that.

22 DR. EISENSTEIN: Thank you.

23 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Just some  
24 numbers I want to confirm. I have some  
25 numbers here that indicate that

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2 approximately 288,000 doses have been  
3 received in the Long Island region. Is that  
4 roughly accurate?

5 DR. EISENSTEIN: So, the total  
6 vaccination process for the Long Island  
7 region, Long Island has been designated as  
8 one the state's hub regions. The hub is  
9 being coordinated by Northwell Health. I  
10 don't know what the total that has been  
11 distributed in Long Island is. Northwell  
12 coordinates that.

13 I know what's allotted to me and  
14 certainly I'm on the hub calls with  
15 Northwell.

16 I'm not sure exactly how much has  
17 come to Long Island as a whole.

18 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: So I'm  
19 giving you numbers given to us from the  
20 state. What we are showing is 288,000  
21 doses, approximately 2.7 million people are  
22 in the Long Island region, that's the  
23 population.

24 Now, in New York City, there is  
25 approximately 1,041,000 doses, again,

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2 according to the state information and they  
3 have a populate of approximately 8.4  
4 million.

5 Now the vaccine to resident ratio  
6 in Long Island is 10.6 percent and the  
7 vaccine to resident ratio in New York City  
8 12.4 percent.

9 This is a number that's somewhat  
10 troubling to me in light of the fact that  
11 the Long Island region right now has the  
12 highest infection rate.

13 So my question is, maybe this is  
14 a question for Ms. Rose-Louder, what, if  
15 anything, is the administration specifically  
16 County Executive doing to advocate for more  
17 equity here in the state distribution of the  
18 vaccine?

19 DR. EISENSTEIN: So I would say  
20 that I am on hub calls with Northwell, and  
21 when we have seen a gap like I described  
22 last week when I felt there was no vaccine  
23 coming to seniors, County Executive Curran  
24 got right on the phone with me speaking with  
25 executive chamber in Albany excellently got

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2 us 600 extra doses for seniors last week.

3 I understand 600 doses is not sufficient,  
4 anywhere remotely sufficient but it was 600  
5 more than we had been allotted.

6 I have been on the hub calls with  
7 Northwell who is the coordinating body. We  
8 have also been on calls with the New York  
9 State association of counties, and  
10 advocating for our fair share and I think --  
11 and I'm on the call with the state health  
12 department almost every single day bringing  
13 up the numbers and bringing up our  
14 population and with the understanding being  
15 a neighbor to New York City, and there is  
16 always -- that always presents public health  
17 interesting scenarios related to being on  
18 the border. We share an open border with  
19 New York City.

20 So I think we have advocated, we  
21 have spoken with the Governor's Office  
22 multiple times, and the County Executive,  
23 every time I have identified an opportunity,  
24 has joined me and has been great in joining  
25 me with this.

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2 Certainly I want us to have our  
3 fair share and even more than that if I  
4 could get it.

5 So on my end, I can say I'm  
6 advocating relentlessly for our residents.  
7 Sometimes it has worked in getting us  
8 supplemental vaccine and I feel fully  
9 supported by County Executive Curran in  
10 doing that.

11 But do I want to see New York  
12 City get more than us, absolutely not, I  
13 want us to have our fair share. I fully  
14 agree with you.

15 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: I  
16 appreciate that, Dr. Eisenstein. I  
17 reiterate, I think you are doing a great  
18 overseeing the administration of the vaccine  
19 that we are in possession of.

20 But, what I'm asking, and I'm  
21 glad to see that Deputy County Executive  
22 Rose-Louder is here, working so closely with  
23 the County Executive, because my question is  
24 more towards what exactly specifically the  
25 County Executive is doing.

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2 I see that she seems to have a  
3 good relationship with the governor when she  
4 requests certain executive orders, they seem  
5 to get done to her credit.

6 When we had the recent assessment  
7 debacle with the veteran's exemption, she  
8 asked for an extension of the due date of  
9 the tax bills and it got done. So I think  
10 that's a good thing.

11 Since that relationship exists,  
12 I'm just curious to know what specifically  
13 the County Executive has done and I would  
14 ask Deputy County Executive Rose-Louder  
15 maybe she can explain, you know, to advocate  
16 for this vaccine.

17 600 extra doses is wonderful.  
18 Obviously we should take every single dose  
19 we can get our hands on. But that doesn't  
20 change the fact that the percentages are  
21 showing, the numbers are showing that a  
22 disproportionate amount of vaccines are  
23 going to an area that has a lower infection  
24 rate.

25 You can say -- and I'm sure many

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2 of us on this dais have severe disagreements  
3 with Mayor Deblasio on many issues, but you  
4 have to give him credit for being out there  
5 and advocating to the governor directly  
6 taking him on and, you know, we see the  
7 results. His area is getting a  
8 disproportionate amount of the vaccine.

9 So, my question is, what is the  
10 County Executive doing to make this right?

11 MS. ROSE-LOUDER: I can assure  
12 you that the County Executive is doing  
13 everything that she can to get as much  
14 vaccine for our residents as possible. That  
15 means that she is on the phone with the  
16 state as Dr. Eisenstein indicated daily,  
17 explaining to the state what's happening  
18 here on Long Island, what our needs are, the  
19 capacity that we have through the Department  
20 of health to do the job, and that has  
21 resulted in us getting the additional doses  
22 that we have been allotted up to date.

23 So it is a strong advocacy. She  
24 has been relentless with it and its a daily  
25 effort. It's a daily push. It's

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2 unfortunate this is not something that is  
3 controlled.

4 Obviously the city gets a lot of  
5 attention. They had been greatly impacted  
6 and the way that the living environment is  
7 of the city poses a particular challenge.  
8 So there's a lot of fear with respect to how  
9 they live and the ability for the numbers to  
10 skyrocket there overnight.

11 So, that may be factoring. I  
12 don't know. It's a speculation as to why  
13 they are getting more.

14 And also, obviously, the  
15 positively rate fluctuates, so that is a  
16 factor. But I can tell that the County  
17 Executive is doing everything that she can  
18 possible do in terms of advocating for every  
19 resident to get more vaccine. It is of  
20 paramount concern to her. It's in the  
21 forefront of everything that we are doing  
22 right now.

23 The push is there. There's no  
24 back sliding. There's not stepping up to  
25 the plate and getting it done. That's

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2 something that she's doing every day.

3 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Let me ask  
4 you something. You may have recently see  
5 the majority held a press conference calling  
6 publicly on the mayor to stop the policy in  
7 New York City of keeping Nassau and other  
8 non-New York City residents out of the city  
9 run vaccination sites.

10 Has the County Executive made any  
11 public comment or issued a statement joining  
12 us in demanding the New York City mayor  
13 allow Nassau residents to be vaccinated at  
14 these sites?

15 MS. ROSE-LOUDER: To my  
16 knowledge, she has not.

17 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: When you  
18 say she's has done everything that she can,  
19 how about she does that because that's  
20 another avenue. We have these vaccines, a  
21 disproportionate amount, that are being sent  
22 to New York City and we can't get them.

23 We are legally allowed to and the  
24 mayor is not our residents, our seniors, our  
25 veterans to do it, and, yet, the County

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2 Executive has not joined us in demanding  
3 that he follows the policy of the federal  
4 government and allow our residents.

5 I understand and appreciate your  
6 that she's stepping up to the plate and  
7 doing her best. I don't see it.

8 I don't think the residents of  
9 Nassau County see it and the residents are  
10 demanding results, not phone calls, they  
11 want results.

12 When you're telling me she's  
13 doing everything she can, this is a slam  
14 dunk.

15 The mayor has to let our  
16 residents into New York City at those city  
17 run facilities and get vaccinations. I  
18 would hope that she would join us in  
19 demanding that.

20 MS. ROSE-LOUDER: I will take  
21 that back to her and I'm sure she will  
22 consider it strongly.

23 I know we not been exclusive in  
24 our pods and we had admitted residents from  
25 all over the state, from all the boroughs,

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2       and that's what we've been doing.

3                   Up to this most recent effort by  
4       the mayor, our residents have been welcome  
5       there too. So that's a change in  
6       circumstance and I'm sure the County  
7       Executive will consider the Legislature's  
8       move and consider whether she wants to speak  
9       on that as well.

10                   LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: I think  
11       that -- we're following the guidelines. We  
12       are allowing residents that are not Nassau  
13       residents to come to our sites. I'm not  
14       being critical of that.

15                   But you have to recognize, and  
16       the County Executive needs to recognize the  
17       inequity here that a larger portion of the  
18       vaccine is going to New York City and we  
19       can't use those sites. A smaller portion of  
20       the vaccine is coming to Nassau and they can  
21       use ours.

22                   So there's a large inequity here  
23       and when you see all these emails of  
24       seniors, and not even seniors, people  
25       emailing on behalf of their senior parents

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2 or grandparents, with real worry and  
3 concern. They need results. They demand  
4 results.

5 So saying you're doing everything  
6 you can, and I know this isn't you, you are  
7 just relaying a message, when we had a press  
8 conference asking for her to join us and she  
9 hasn't, it's discouraging. I hope that she  
10 demands results from the governor.

11 This will be one of the few times  
12 I would say, mirror what the mayor is doing  
13 in taking the governor on if he's not going  
14 to produce results and make sure it gets  
15 done. So thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN NICOLELLO: Just,  
17 Dr. Eisenstein, how long do you have with  
18 us?

19 DR. EISENSTEIN: I got another 15  
20 minutes or so and then I have to get to the  
21 pod.

22 CHAIRMAN NICOLELLO: Why don't we  
23 for the next 15 minutes direct our questions  
24 to Dr. Eisenstein and then when that's  
25 finished we can then resume with the Deputy

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2 County Executive.

3 I believe we have Legislator  
4 Rhoads, Bynoe, Walker, and Drucker in that  
5 order and Kennedy.

6 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Thank you,  
7 Presiding Officer. I do have several  
8 questions for the administration which I  
9 will hold, they're really not directed to  
10 Dr. Eisensteain, but I will ask Dr.  
11 Eisenstein, again, not to beat a dead horse,  
12 but I do want to compliment the Department  
13 of Health and compliment you, personally, on  
14 the work that you've done and your  
15 department has done absolutely tremendous  
16 taking what has been a mess of the state's  
17 rollout of the vaccine and trying to turn it  
18 into very confusing guidance, a workable  
19 effort on behalf of Nassau County residents.  
20 I certainly appreciate that.

21 One of the frustrations that many  
22 of the residents have mentioned, the fact  
23 that, for example, residents who happen to  
24 have underlying health conditions were  
25 approved by the governor to receive the

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2 vaccine over a month ago. Yet, the state  
3 hasn't issued any guidance with respect to  
4 what underlying health conditions qualify  
5 them to receive the vaccine.

6 So, as a result, even though they  
7 are eligible, no one has been able to sign  
8 up for an appointment either at a Nassau  
9 County site to any of the state sites due to  
10 the absence of the criteria from the  
11 governor.

12 Have there been my communications  
13 between our government and the Governor's  
14 Office, the health department with respect  
15 to that guidance and what seems to be the  
16 delay?

17 DR. EISENSTEIN: Absolutely.  
18 That came up each week, the governor does a  
19 press conference where he mentions who's  
20 going to become eligible for the following  
21 week.

22 There was three or four weeks ago  
23 he said I'm adding certain populations  
24 including immune compromised populations but  
25 the guidance defining that never came forth

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2       and that's been put on hold.

3                   When I'm on my calls with all the  
4       other county health commissioners and  
5       directors around the state, that's a topic  
6       that comes up every single call. We are  
7       waiting for that guidance.

8                   We understand that immune  
9       compromised population is an at risk  
10      population and it's something that I'm  
11      advocating for but as of now I do not have  
12      an answer for you.

13                   LEGISLATOR RHOADS: So we've been  
14      given no indication as to when that guidance  
15      is going to be forthcoming?

16                   DR. EISENSTEIN: No, but we are  
17      pushing strongly for it because I agree with  
18      you that that's a vulnerable population and  
19      I think of myself at the pods, I'm there.  
20      I'm doing some vaccines myself. I'm the  
21      medical consultant at the pods a lot of the  
22      times and I have people, I speak with people  
23      face-to-face, hear their stories and I  
24      sympathize and I get it.

25                   I wish I had the answer as to who

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2 in the immune compromise categories qualify,  
3 and what conditions are considered for  
4 vaccine. As soon as it is we will  
5 incorporate them if it's us who is allowed  
6 to vaccinate them.

7 But I have advocated strongly on  
8 behalf of this, and the answer we typically  
9 get is it's a matter of supply and demand.  
10 As soon as there is enough vaccine to reach  
11 more populations, they'll release it to us.

12 So, to answer your question, yes,  
13 I have advocated strongly with the state on  
14 this. I think it's important but,  
15 unfortunately, I don't have the specific  
16 answer of conditions yet.

17 We are not allowed -- that is not  
18 an eligible criteria right now, immune  
19 compromised.

20 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I guess part  
21 of the frustration is what Presiding Officer  
22 alluded to before. You mentioned it and  
23 it's great that the state recognizes the  
24 fact that they only want to make additional  
25 people eligible and issue additional

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2 guidance if they have the vaccine to be able  
3 to provide it, but isn't it true,  
4 commissioner, at this point probably  
5 somewhere in the area of 900,000 out of the  
6 county's 1.3 million and change population  
7 is eligible for the vaccine, yet we are only  
8 receiving 2,800 doses a week. The math just  
9 doesn't work.

10 Is there an explanation? So many  
11 people have been made eligible for the  
12 vaccine when there is no vaccine supplied to  
13 accommodate that population? It does simply  
14 lead to confusion and frustration and  
15 aggravation on the part of many residents,  
16 and only heightens their fears being  
17 eligible for something and not being able to  
18 get it.

19 DR. EISENSTEIN: So there is no  
20 doubt there are hundreds of thousands of  
21 eligible residents in Nassau County and it's  
22 frustrating for us that I only have 2,800  
23 doses knowing that.

24 We've had days where we've made  
25 the link online for appointments available

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2       and 600 or 700 doses have gone in under two  
3       minutes.

4                   I'm out in front of the press  
5       with County Executive Curran and we keep  
6       saying the same message, get us more vaccine  
7       and we will get it into more arms.

8                   But, absolutely, 2,800 supply for  
9       us is not going to meet the demands right  
10      now of hundreds of thousands of people. So  
11      I agree with you.

12                   LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I do have  
13      several questions from residents and I do  
14      want to cover one or two of them.

15                   The question is, if wedding  
16      attendees can take a COVID test to attend an  
17      event, why can't a family member do the same  
18      to visit a loved one in a hospital or a  
19      nursing home?

20                   DR. EISENSTEIN: The governor  
21      just mentioned that that's going to be a  
22      requirement when catering halls are open for  
23      weddings in the middle of March.

24                   The guidance on how that's going  
25      to work or what the requirement is has not

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2 come out yet. So it may be when that comes  
3 out that there is that kind of allotment. I  
4 think we are going to have to also  
5 reevaluate as more people are vaccinated,  
6 what's going to be the requirement for them  
7 to attend an event as they are considered  
8 immune, but the science is still not  
9 finalized on their ability to transmit  
10 although I think it's unlikely because  
11 that's typically how respiratory viruses  
12 work.

13 It's a fair question but the  
14 guidance even on weddings, weddings and  
15 other parties, as well as bar mitzvahs,  
16 sweet 16s, is it just big corporate  
17 gatherings? We don't know what that's going  
18 to entail yet. So that question may be  
19 answered in the guidance that comes.

20 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: So  
21 specifically with respect to -- and, look,  
22 the problems that the governor's guidance  
23 has visited upon nursing homes is well  
24 documented, certainly what occurred in the  
25 early part of the spring, and now with the

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2   information that the numbers may have been  
3   purposely under reported, I've gotten  
4   several comments and questions specifically  
5   about the ability to visit residents inside  
6   of nursing home. As I indicated, in a  
7   private conversation, my own grandmother  
8   passed away in a nursing home from COVID  
9   right at the start of the pandemic. We  
10   weren't able to visit, there is no funeral,  
11   wake, nothing.

12               People want to be able to get in  
13   and see their relatives. If they have a  
14   test, if they've been vaccinated, is there  
15   any indication on the part of the governor  
16   as to whether or not they are going to be  
17   permitted to visit their relatives who they  
18   haven't been able to see since basically  
19   March?

20               DR. EISENSTEIN: I think it's a  
21   fair question. I think the role that  
22   testing is going to play in allowing a lot  
23   of aspects of society to open up, I think  
24   they are working on that as I'm reading the  
25   tea leaves. But I have not gotten any

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2 specifics on that yet. So I think we'll  
3 hopefully see guidance along those lines in  
4 the next few weeks.

5 But to answer the question, no, I  
6 don't know of any specific mechanism yet  
7 regarding that kind of visitation and how  
8 testing might work.

9 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I know your  
10 time is limited and I know other legislators  
11 have questions specifically for you so I'm  
12 going to defer the remainder of my questions  
13 but I have one last one.

14 You, by specialty for residents  
15 that don't know, you are an epidemiologist  
16 in private practice, you are an infectious  
17 disease doctor, that was your specialty,  
18 correct?

19 DR. EISENSTEIN: I am board  
20 certified infectious disease specialist  
21 still, but I'm not in practice because I'm  
22 your commissioner.

23 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: And thank God  
24 you are the perfect man in the perfect place  
25 for this particular pandemic for Nassau

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2 County. We appreciate everything that you  
3 have done.

4 Based on your knowledge and  
5 expertise, has the state ever bothered to  
6 consult with you, or any other doctors that  
7 you're aware of on a local level in our  
8 individual health departments, as to how  
9 this vaccine distribution system was going  
10 to be set up, as far as what guidance is  
11 going to be issued as far as how any of the  
12 pandemic was going to be handled, or is  
13 everything coming out of the executive  
14 chamber essentially however they decide to  
15 do it?

16 DR. EISENSTEIN: So, to answer  
17 your question, nobody has consulted with me  
18 specifically based on my expertise as an  
19 infectious disease specialist.

20 I am on calls with the state  
21 health department virtually multiple times a  
22 week. And I'm also the chair of the New  
23 York State Association of County Health  
24 Officials Disease Control Committee. I am I  
25 think the only infectious disease doctor who

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2 is a commissioner or a director of health in  
3 all of New York State. I am the chair of  
4 that.

5 I do get to speak with the state  
6 health department, make our concerns heard,  
7 make our questions asked. We some get  
8 answers and we sometimes don't.

9 My line of command is up through  
10 the state health department. They hear our  
11 concerns and questions. Once those calls  
12 end, I assume they go up to the chamber. I  
13 don't where they go through Albany's  
14 pathway, but has anybody reached out to me  
15 specific to my infectious disease expertise,  
16 no.

17 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: So no one  
18 from the Governor's Office has ever been in  
19 contact with you?

20 DR. EISENSTEIN: Well, we've been  
21 in contact but not particular for me being  
22 an infectious disease specialist.

23 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: No one from  
24 the Governor's Office has consulted with you  
25 based on your expertise?

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2 DR. EISENSTEIN: No.

3 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: No. I have  
4 no other questions for Dr. Eisenstein. But  
5 I will reserve.

6 CHAIRMAN NICOLELLO: Legislator  
7 Bynoe has questions for the administration  
8 but not the doctor, so we will come back to  
9 her. Legislator Walker for Dr. Eisenstein.

10 LEGISLATOR WALKER: Yes.  
11 Dr. Eisenstein, I, too, I know we say it  
12 over and over, but I want to thank you and  
13 thank all your staff and all of the  
14 volunteers for the excellent job you are  
15 doing.

16 We try to make our residents  
17 realize that you are doing everything  
18 possible that you can but unfortunately your  
19 hands are tied and you have to follow the  
20 guidelines that the state is setting up as  
21 far as who you can give the vaccines to.  
22 Certainly the number of vaccines we have,  
23 and so on and so forth. Again, thank you to  
24 all of you.

25 Have you and the other health

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2 departments throughout the state, like you  
3 said before, this is something that you are  
4 prepared for, you have a plan for,  
5 especially vaccinations, so on and so forth,  
6 yet, you kind of reached out to get any of  
7 your expertise or let you take the lead in  
8 that in the fact that you know what you are  
9 supposed to be doing.

10 Have you all reached out to the  
11 state and to the governor in saying, like,  
12 what happened here, why all of a sudden do  
13 you have to be the king here and do what you  
14 set out to do and kind of leave us out of  
15 the picture when we've been prepared to do  
16 this all along?

17 DR. EISENSTEIN: So I'm on the  
18 board of directors of the New York State  
19 Association of County Health Officials. I  
20 was the president a few years back. I'm  
21 also the disease control committee chairman.  
22 That's the association of all the health  
23 directors and commissioners of every county  
24 in New York State.

25 We have an executive director who

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2 communicates with the state health  
3 department and executive chamber on our  
4 behalf because there are 63 different  
5 counties.

6 We speak with the state health  
7 department frequently. Once in a while  
8 executive chambers does join the calls.

9 We have sent our concerns on  
10 numerous issues, as we do with any topic,  
11 and make our recommendations and ask our  
12 questions.

13 So I have both advocated  
14 individually and through the association of  
15 our concerns, our recommendations.

16 You know, we've been asked why  
17 we've been at the sites we're at with our  
18 pods and that's because those are  
19 pre-approved plan sites where we have done  
20 drills that we know work because they're  
21 pre-approved by the state.

22 So you know we're at Nassau  
23 Community College, you know we're at the Yes  
24 We Can Center. Those are locations one and  
25 two on our pandemic plan. We've done drills

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2     in those locations. We have held pods in  
3     those locations.

4           After Super Storm Sandy, if you  
5     remember, the special needs shelter that the  
6     health department ran was at Nassau  
7     Community College in the same room we are  
8     giving vaccines now.

9           We follow our plan. The hub  
10    designation was something new for us that  
11    Northwell was going to be at coordinating  
12    factor. Now, we have a great relationship  
13    with Northwell. We are in communication  
14    with them. They have been a great partner.  
15    They have helped us when we needed help in  
16    all kinds of ways.

17           But that was something new to us.  
18    So we adjusted it. We asked our questions.  
19    I don't have a direct line to the executive  
20    chamber.

21           There is also for the county a  
22    control room call that we have in the  
23    administration, a control room  
24    representative, that speaks with one of the  
25    governor's representatives to talk about not

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2 necessarily health related issues but any  
3 COVID related issues ranging from what are  
4 the local business requirements and that  
5 sort of thing. So there was a group put  
6 together. Those calls happen frequently.

7 So I take the health route  
8 through my health lanes and there is a  
9 control room so we do the best we can but I  
10 don't have a direct line to, for example,  
11 the executive chamber. Buy my concerns and  
12 letters do get there, I believe.

13 LEGISLATOR WALKER: As I stated  
14 to you before in many of our phone calls, I  
15 wish you were the man in charge because I  
16 think things would have been rolled out a  
17 lot differently and certainly a lot better.

18 DR. EISENSTEIN: Thank you.

19 LEGISLATOR WALKER: And I know  
20 that we have emphasized this and you,  
21 certainly, when you are able to give the  
22 vaccines to our seniors, I was at the pods.  
23 The pods are amazing, doing a great job  
24 there. To see our seniors there, literally  
25 crying because they're so happy they are

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2 able to get the vaccine.

3 Unfortunately we get the phone  
4 calls too from those crying or their  
5 children crying in the fact that they aren't  
6 able to get an appointment, can't set  
7 something up. We have senior housing that  
8 if we can do something there, bring in the  
9 vaccine to them. They could all be  
10 vaccinated right there at their senior  
11 housing complexes.

12 I know we did that with nursing  
13 homes, not the county, but whether it was  
14 pharmacies or whatever. But anything that  
15 we can do to -- I mean, most of the emails  
16 that we have gotten, phone calls, are in  
17 regards to the senior population; some who  
18 don't even have internet capacity or don't  
19 know how to utilize it to get an  
20 appointment.

21 I also had some questions from  
22 people who are a single parent. They lost  
23 their husband or raising their children on  
24 their own or lost their wife and raising  
25 their children on their own. They are very,

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2 very concerned because, although they might  
3 be younger and don't fall into any of those  
4 categories yet, they are the sole providers  
5 and the sole person taking care of these  
6 young children and they are very frightened.  
7 They feel they are so far down the list to  
8 even be able to be eligible to get a  
9 vaccine. Of course they have reached out to  
10 see what can be done for them.

11 I know I spoke to you yesterday  
12 too about now that we have sports beginning  
13 back in our schools which is wonderful for  
14 all those playing sports and hopefully doing  
15 the right thing, to think about, what about  
16 our officials that don't fall into any other  
17 categories. They are looking to be able to  
18 get the vaccine because they will be working  
19 closely with our children.

20 I don't want to hold you up. You  
21 have to get to your pod, but thank you for  
22 everything that you're doing and anything  
23 that we can assist you with we will  
24 certainly keep reaching out to the state to  
25 do what is right for all of our residents

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2       here in Nassau County who deserve everything  
3       that they should be able to get.

4           Again, you are not holding it up  
5       but, in many ways, the state isn't doing the  
6       right thing by our residents.

7           CHAIRMAN NICOLELLO:   Legislator  
8       Drucker.

9           DR. EISENSTEIN:   I want to thank  
10      you.   The official thing is, I always  
11      appreciate feedback from the Legislature.  
12      That's the sort of thing I immediately took  
13      up because in all of my work that's  
14      something in thinking about it that we need  
15      to advocate for.   You are absolutely right.

16           I do appreciate the support.  
17      It's great that you and some of the other  
18      Legislators came to visit us.   It's great  
19      for our morale and our staff and medical  
20      core volunteers who we have to thank that  
21      are volunteering their time.   Many of the  
22      people vaccinating on many days, the  
23      majority of the vaccinators themselves are  
24      doctors and nurses donating their time to do  
25      it.   It's very rewarding work.

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2           I do have to reiterate, when I do  
3 feel that there is something that we need to  
4 address, I feel very supportive by the  
5 administration. They are always backing me,  
6 always giving me -- the County Executive and  
7 I are out in front of the press and trying  
8 to get as many needles into arms as we can.

9           Like I've said, 2,800 is a  
10 frustrating low number for us, but I do feel  
11 very supported by the County Executive, I  
12 feel supported by the Legislature. I'm very  
13 appreciative for the staff and the medical  
14 reserve core, and I have time for one more  
15 question, Presiding Officer, and then I got  
16 to run.

17           CHAIRMAN NICOLELLO: Legislator  
18 Drucker.

19           LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: Thank you,  
20 Presiding Officer, and I would echo the  
21 sentiments of all of my colleagues here.

22           Dr. Eisenstein, it's been about a  
23 year now that you have been front and center  
24 during this pandemic from the early stages  
25 and throughout the summer and now with the

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2 vaccination process you have been there too.  
3 You have always been a great resource to the  
4 legislative staff and us legislators and  
5 everyone else. I want to thank you also.

6 DR. EISENSTEIN: Thank you.

7 LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: I think the  
8 consensus today is clear that the problems  
9 that we've been having are really emanating  
10 from the State of New York and perhaps, you  
11 know, Presiding Officer we could have asked  
12 someone from the state Department of Health  
13 to come down today and answer a lot of  
14 questions we have. I think that would have  
15 been very helpful too since it's clear that  
16 the county is beholding to the state on  
17 these issues.

18 But I have one question because a  
19 lot of the questions have been asked Dr.  
20 Eisenstein.

21 If you had to identify one area  
22 or an area the distribution process that was  
23 flawed or what, if anything, would you have  
24 done differently in getting the vaccines  
25 into people's arms?

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2 DR. EISENSTEIN: That is a  
3 complicated question but I think that I  
4 would love to have some time to mull that  
5 over because we do a running hot washes  
6 which is reviews of what's gone well and  
7 what can be improved.

8 I think the single most important  
9 thing that has been difficult for us is we  
10 haven't had an electronic system that has  
11 helped us with things like -- so, for  
12 example, when we were able to make  
13 appointments online, the system would keep  
14 crashing in the middle of the day that  
15 slowed the pods down. It made it  
16 frustrating for people to get appointments.  
17 They would go on see an appointment  
18 available and click the button and, before  
19 they could finish their registration, the  
20 system would go down.

21 That is something that is being  
22 done state wide. So a local system would  
23 have been created and our IT group, I want  
24 to thank them, they have been incredible  
25 working with us around the clock.

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2 They are in the middle of  
3 creating an electronic platform for us where  
4 we will fully be able to make appointments  
5 and schedule and send reminder emails and  
6 schedule second dosing.

7 But the system we were originally  
8 given, every shot that we give has to be  
9 registered through the state system called  
10 NYSIR, the New York State Immunization  
11 Registry. That's the law.

12 So our system has to be eligible  
13 to enter into theirs. Electronically it's  
14 been frustrating because we've been reliant  
15 on a different system that has had numerous  
16 issues. It has caused people a lot of  
17 frustration and it's not something that we  
18 could plan ahead of time because we didn't  
19 know what our roll in this was going to be.

20 Now that we do, we are still only  
21 vaccinating less than a month and I think  
22 that's really important. Our first doses  
23 that the health department gave were on  
24 January 5th. It's been less than a month.

25 The strides that we have taken

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2    from an IT and an operational standpoint as  
3    far as dealing with the situation that we  
4    have in front of us, amending our plans to  
5    work in all of these components, to accept  
6    that the hub is overseeing vaccine  
7    distribution, and we are part of that  
8    processing, all of these things have  
9    happened are still less than a month. It's  
10   only February 4th. Tomorrow will be a month  
11   since we gave our first dose.

12                I think that obviously the thing  
13   that would have been great is if there was  
14   more vaccine for us. That would be the easy  
15   thing for me to say. I wish we had more  
16   vaccine. That is absolutely without a doubt  
17   the answer, I wish we had more vaccine,

18                Your question is deeper than  
19   that. We talked about that numerous times  
20   already today.

21                I think for us, having an IT  
22   infrastructure, a program in place that  
23   would have been less difficult for the  
24   public was something that might have been  
25   helpful but thanks to our IT internally,

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2 and, again, I got the resources I needed  
3 from my boss and County Executive and now I  
4 think going forward in the near future  
5 that's going to be rectified and, as more  
6 vaccine becomes available, I think there  
7 will be much more of a friendly customer  
8 satisfying experience for Nassau County  
9 residents as they try to get appointments  
10 and second dose appointments.

11 Second dose appointments are  
12 going great already and that's because of  
13 our in-house IT team. So I can say that.

14 I would like more time to mull  
15 over that question if I could fix one thing,  
16 but, definitely, the one thing I would fix  
17 immediately is if there was more vaccine of  
18 course. I know everybody feels that way.

19 But, for me, operationally, it  
20 would be a smoother IT component because  
21 people have been frustrated and, you're  
22 right, it's equally frustrating for us when  
23 we have a line of people to vaccinate and a  
24 full army of vaccinators, and the system  
25 crashes and we then have to pull out the

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2   paper and do it all on paper rather than  
3   just click go on the computer and give a  
4   vaccine and let the person move on. We have  
5   to write all the information in when the  
6   system crashes and put it in later.

7           Those are the kind of delays,  
8   although it doesn't happen that often, when  
9   it does it backs things up and it's much  
10   more of an efficiency strain on us.

11           That's I think what I would say  
12   right now but I would love more time to  
13   reevaluate my answer to that question.

14           LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: Sure. Thank  
15   you. So is it fair to say, Dr. Eisenstein,  
16   that your discretion and your authority in  
17   the distribution process is limited or  
18   controlled by the state or the federal  
19   government and hampered in that way?

20           DR. EISENSTEIN: So we've been  
21   given an assignment as to who we can  
22   vaccinate. We've been given a limit as to  
23   how much vaccine we are getting and we find  
24   out on the weekends for the following week.  
25   There have been days where our vaccine has

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2 arrived Tuesday in the morning and Tuesday  
3 by noon they're being used.

4 We were limited to the state's IT  
5 system which we are now developing our own  
6 internally and that process has been great  
7 but as far as operating our pods, we are  
8 following our plan. It's one of the most  
9 important things we teach in emergency  
10 preparedness is you have a plan, you have to  
11 tweak it based on unforeseen circumstances  
12 but we communicate with the hub at  
13 Northwell. We are part of a greater  
14 operation which is the hub region  
15 vaccinating all of Long Island. We are just  
16 a piece of that.

17 Once we get our assignment as to  
18 who we vaccinate. Once we get the allotment  
19 of vaccine, I think we've been judicious,  
20 we've been fast and efficient in getting our  
21 full allotment of vaccine into a full  
22 allotment of eligible recipients and we have  
23 prioritized and done it fairly so every  
24 sector has gotten a percentage of it.

25 So, yes, we are limited as far

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2 as, do I like the idea right now that we  
3 can't vaccinate seniors? No, I said it to  
4 you as a Legislature probably a hundred  
5 times, they are the most vulnerable  
6 population. That's not assigned to us right  
7 now.

8 Would I like to be able to  
9 vaccinate seniors, yes, it's very  
10 uncomfortable to me when I'm at a pod and  
11 they're telling me about their senior  
12 parents and I'm unable to vaccinate them.  
13 But we have to attest legally that we are  
14 vaccinating who we are eligible to  
15 vaccinate.

16 But, as far as the actual  
17 operations of running our pods, once you  
18 take all the factors out that we have no  
19 control over, I feel that my staff has  
20 operated almost perfectly. We have followed  
21 our plan. The pods are going great.

22 I can't tell you, I spend a lot  
23 of time just speaking with our residents and  
24 so many of them say, wow, I've heard so many  
25 horror stories. This is totally different.

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2 Yes, it's totally different because this is  
3 what we do. This is why you have a health  
4 department.

5 It's unfortunate that for a  
6 health department our time to shine always  
7 seems to be when something terrible is  
8 happening but I do want the Legislature to  
9 rest assured that we are prepared for this,  
10 we were prepared for this. We've been going  
11 seven days a week around the clock since  
12 February.

13 Our call center, there are days  
14 our call center has taken many many  
15 thousands of calls. They were open on  
16 Christmas on New Year's and on Thanksgiving.  
17 That's because my workforce is willing to do  
18 it. It's lifesaving work. So all we can  
19 control is how we do within the parameters  
20 that we're given. Within those parameters I  
21 think it's been an amazing response. It's a  
22 credit to the staff and the medical reserve  
23 corp and the leadership that's given me all  
24 support that I can.

25 So thank you again to the County

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2 Executive and all of you for your support.

3 Are there things outside of my  
4 control that I would like to see different,  
5 of course. But I do want to thank  
6 Northwell. They've been a great partner and  
7 I'm in communication with them every day.

8 LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: In your  
9 opinion, doctor, has the County Executive  
10 done all that she can to advocate for and  
11 protect our most vulnerable population?

12 DR. EISENSTEIN: Absolutely. And  
13 she's always accessible to me, 24 hours,  
14 seven days a week. For somebody in my  
15 position, that's the most important thing  
16 when I need to speak with my boss or I need  
17 something that they are available.

18 All of the deputy county  
19 executives, Deputy County Executive  
20 Santeramo, Deputy County Executive  
21 Rose-Louder who is there and the Chief  
22 Deputy County Executive Williams, and the  
23 County Executive herself, we are  
24 communicating multiple times every day,  
25 multiple times. It's basically one long on

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2 going conversation.

3 I always felt that when I need to  
4 get a message through, it is immediate when  
5 I call and I also appreciate that they  
6 consult me, they ask me my medical  
7 expertise, my opinion, and it's nice to work  
8 in a place where I feel so supported during  
9 what has been for everybody a very difficult  
10 time.

11 I am very comfortable and I feel  
12 the same way about the Legislature too.  
13 It's a pleasure for me to be on the calls  
14 with you.

15 I don't always have the perfect  
16 answer but I think the communication has  
17 been really good and many of you call me,  
18 you know that, I try to be accessible to  
19 everybody. Sometimes it takes a little  
20 while for me to get back to you especially  
21 if I'm actually vaccinating. I want to keep  
22 the phone right there on the table.

23 I want to thank you all as well.  
24 For as difficult as this has been, for me  
25 feeling supported by my boss and everybody

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2       around me, that has not been a problem.

3           LEGISLATOR DRUCKER:   Thank you  
4       very much, doctor.

5           DR. EISENSTEIN:   I'm going to run  
6       to the pod now and thank you very much and  
7       certainly any follow-up questions we will  
8       have more chance to discuss.

9           LEGISLATOR WALKER:   Thank you,  
10      Dr. Eisenstein, and get to the pod safely.  
11      Thank you.   Legislator Bynoe.

12          LEGISLATOR BYNOE:   Thank you,  
13      Legislator Walker.   Good morning.   How are  
14      you?   I would have liked to have thank  
15      Dr. Larry for all he's done, but in the  
16      interest of time I will make those accolades  
17      in his absence.   I want every one to have a  
18      direct question for him to speak.

19          But I am very, very thankful for  
20      his service during this time from handling  
21      the initial pandemic to now trying to get to  
22      the recovery piece of it where we're doing  
23      the vaccinations.

24          I had the opportunity to visit a  
25      pod at the Yes We Can Center and it does run

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2 very smoothly and the process is guided by  
3 many that are volunteering. Strict  
4 volunteers and then you have people who are  
5 volunteering from other departments.

6 So I would like to thank also the  
7 commissioners of the Department of Social  
8 Services as well as the Department of Human  
9 Services. I know that I've seen  
10 Commissioner McCummings at that site as  
11 well.

12 So, I want to start first by  
13 thanking the county and thanking the County  
14 Executive's team for some of the work that  
15 was done in an effort to ensure access for  
16 our most vulnerable populations.

17 Very early on, I was very  
18 cognizant of the fact that seniors would  
19 have a problem utilizing the website.

20 So I made the call over to Chief  
21 Deputy County Executive Helena Williams and  
22 requested a meeting. I believe you were on  
23 the call. I know Dr. Larry was and a few  
24 other folks on the call and that's when we  
25 talked about there needing to be a call

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2       center locally here at the county.

3                   I also had concerns about how we  
4       would even notify people living in public  
5       housing and the like and if we could go to  
6       those sites and put the needle in the arm.  
7       Immediately there were a lot of different  
8       ideas that were being put forward on the  
9       phone. I would commend you because it was  
10      the county, because you could see there was  
11      a willingness there.

12                   We talked about going to the  
13      different sites and Dr. Larry talked about  
14      how incredibly challenging that would be to  
15      go to the senior centers or to even the  
16      housing authority senior housing locations  
17      and talked about getting centralized spot  
18      and I said, well, transportation will be an  
19      issue, can we contact NICE Bus, and  
20      everything was yes, yes, yes, let's do this.

21                   I think probably one of the more  
22      impactful things that we were able to do was  
23      to set up the phone lines.

24                   Senior they can't navigate this.  
25      They're going to need help.

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2 Immediately, including Williams  
3 said we're set this up, we're going to get a  
4 phone line. She explained to me how she  
5 would do it. It would be different  
6 departments throughout the county that would  
7 be part of this phone tree.

8 So folks sitting in the Office of  
9 Minority Affairs, Hispanic Affairs, Health  
10 Center, Aging, will get these calls sitting  
11 at their desk.

12 So I said, Perfect, that will  
13 work. I can't remember but I think the call  
14 was like on a Tuesday. I'm going to say  
15 maybe January 10 or 11 or whatever it was.  
16 By the next day I had the phone number. By  
17 the next day the phone number was set up and  
18 it was going to go live by the following  
19 Monday and we were going to be able to take  
20 these sort of registrations over the phone  
21 and community organizations, local mayors,  
22 everybody was going to be a part of getting  
23 these names and getting them over to the  
24 centers so folks can make the calls and  
25 register the folks. It was working very

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2 well.

3 Disappointing to me that we came  
4 across a barrier that was not of our own  
5 making of the state that by their directive  
6 we could not vaccinate seniors.

7 So it was incredibly  
8 disappointing to me because representing the  
9 Westbury New Cassel community, New Cassel  
10 having a pod in its backyard, and I stated  
11 when it was opened, when we had the press  
12 conference, to make sure that the larger  
13 community new about that pod, that I thought  
14 it was great that we came right in the  
15 backyard of front line workers and we were  
16 going to vaccinate some of the most impacted  
17 residents of our community and be able to  
18 give them vaccinations.

19 Not lost on me, is just across  
20 the street from the Yes We Can Center are  
21 two senior developments. You have Magnolia  
22 Gardens with about 91 units. It's public  
23 housing.

24 Right next door to that you have  
25 a low income tax credit property. I think

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2    it's 77 units, 77 residents that live there  
3    or more than that, 77 units there. That  
4    being said, we are now -- what's troubling  
5    me is the state has created the situation  
6    where the folks who live in those buildings  
7    who did not get the shot in the immediate  
8    week or so are now going to have to travel.  
9    They're going to have to travel to the  
10   nearest location to them is now in East  
11   Meadow.

12               They are going to have to travel  
13   if they have a car or have the ability to be  
14   transported by vehicle, the direct vehicle  
15   is going to take them nine minutes to get  
16   there. While they're sitting there, looking  
17   at this pod, looking at people coming from  
18   all over Nassau County getting vaccinated  
19   and they're shut out.

20               Those who don't have a car now  
21   have to travel 50 minutes by public  
22   transportation if they are physically able  
23   to do so.

24               So this is incredibly troubling  
25   to me as it is for all my colleagues here

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2 who are representing their communities and  
3 have these heartbreaking stories of seniors  
4 who can't get a vaccination.

5 So they can't get it for a  
6 multitude of different reasons that I just  
7 laid out. Technology is not always afforded  
8 to them, okay? If they do have it, you  
9 know, it's not an easy site to navigate.  
10 Then transportation would be the other  
11 piece.

12 So, I am troubled about how the  
13 state has rolled this out. I really really  
14 would like to see a considerable amount of  
15 pressure put on the state to allow us to  
16 localize a plan for how we can distribute  
17 the vaccine in a way that meets the needs of  
18 our communities that we serve.

19 I am concerned that we're going  
20 to shut people out from being able to get  
21 this vaccine while they're looking at pods.  
22 The Nassau Community College, it's right  
23 across the street from Uniondale, from some  
24 of the folks, one of the other highly  
25 impacted communities, what kind of access do

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2 they have to that site?

3 We're going to have to put the  
4 pressure on the state to understand what our  
5 concerns are, what our shortcomings are here  
6 and our inability to meet the needs of the  
7 folks that we serve directly. I really do  
8 think we need to do that.

9 I'm going to ask a couple of  
10 questions but I did want to start out by  
11 thanking the county because I do believe the  
12 willingness was there but we have been  
13 handicapped.

14 So, one of my first questions is,  
15 does the state even provide the county a  
16 list of the proper pods that they're going  
17 to have, and, moreover, do they provide you  
18 with a list of these pharmacies that  
19 actually have the shots so that we can then  
20 communicate directly to our residents where  
21 they can go and get the shot?

22 Because I happen to come upon the  
23 four sites on Facebook. That's how I  
24 learned about the four sites. Is the state  
25 providing you with a list at all of these

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2 sites that are providing the vaccines?

3 MR. GIULIANO: Good afternoon.

4 We were on a state wide conference call  
5 where I believe it was on Sunday where they  
6 told us that Walgreens was going to start  
7 rolling out some of these outfits and there  
8 were going to be four sites. I don't  
9 believe they specifically mentioned it on  
10 that call.

11 I do know that they were going to  
12 send out to the public health directors and  
13 commissioners more information on that.  
14 That's not something I received, but they  
15 were looking to send out some more  
16 information as to where these specific sites  
17 were

18 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: I think we  
19 have to communicate to the state that we're  
20 going to need that information. If they're  
21 not going to let us vaccinate our seniors,  
22 then they need to give us the information so  
23 we can provide it to the seniors.

24 MR. GIULIANO: Okay.

25 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: And then I

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2     think we -- I honestly think they should be  
3     setting aside, and allowing us a certain  
4     allocation for just seniors every week. I  
5     don't care, if they give us 600 last week,  
6     give us 20 percent of the allocation that  
7     comes down on a weekly basis and allow us to  
8     vaccinate seniors, or those -- and I would  
9     go further when we open up for those that  
10    have underlying conditions also be  
11    considered in that same pool, because we  
12    know that they may also have trouble  
13    transporting.

14                I think the governor has done a  
15    wonderful job in dealing with the pandemic.  
16    I think in this particular aspect, he's got  
17    to give us the freedom to localize a little  
18    bit. I think asking for a certain  
19    percentage of the allocation to be granted  
20    to those populations would be extremely  
21    helpful. Then I'm going to go a step  
22    further and request that the county consider  
23    keeping up that senior phone line that was  
24    created just so they can help seniors who  
25    don't have commuters, people that might be

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2 visually impaired to be able to register to  
3 get the shot.

4 Although it's not of our doing  
5 that they can't come to us, but we can still  
6 help them to get to the Walgreens or the  
7 state sites by providing that service. I  
8 think it would be extremely helpful.

9 MR. GIULIANO: So I can tell you  
10 that this county has done more vaccinations,  
11 we have done more vaccinations in the state  
12 than any non hospital entity has done.

13 Because of that, because we have  
14 been able to get more than 100 percent of  
15 the doses into the arms by utilizing that  
16 extra dose that is sometimes available, the  
17 state did give us, we were able to wrangle  
18 out -- I shouldn't say we, I should say the  
19 health commissioner and administration were  
20 able to wrangle out those extra 600 doses  
21 that we did get earlier on to do the seniors  
22 and I know they continue to fight for that.

23 We are going to continue to fight  
24 for that. We did so well. They were  
25 willing to allow us to continue to get some

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2 extra seniors doses but we will continue  
3 that fight. I know that they're doing that  
4 basically on an every day basis for seniors.

5 With respect to those who are  
6 immune compromised and others, we know it  
7 was mentioned on one of the governor's  
8 briefings. We have been looking and waiting  
9 to seek guidance from the state and it  
10 hasn't and we continue to wait and watch and  
11 we will continue to ask when we might be  
12 able to expect that.

13 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Again, my  
14 frustration is really directed at the folks  
15 that are managing this process and I know  
16 it's not Nassau County.

17 I again applaud you and my  
18 passion comes from the frustration that I'm  
19 experiencing in trying to help the seniors.

20 I was in Stop and Shop the other  
21 day and I was like shocked, folks were just  
22 coming around me. They wanted vaccinations.  
23 It was overwhelming, but I was pleased too  
24 because we do know that we face a challenge  
25 where certain portions of the population

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2 don't want the vaccine.

3 But here I was being confronted  
4 by folks who wanted the vaccine and I can't  
5 get it for them.

6 One woman has an appointment in  
7 March up in Binghamton to get the  
8 vaccination. People are willing to travel  
9 to get it. We've got to do the very best  
10 that we can to get the state to hear us.

11 I've actually contacted some of  
12 the state task force members, the folks on  
13 the social equity task force and spoken to  
14 them directly too about what our needs are  
15 here too. They are advocating because they  
16 live here, they live locally and they are in  
17 alignment with what we would like to do  
18 here. It is frustrating.

19 Then my next question is about  
20 teachers, right? We saw that whole  
21 districts were getting this opportunity to  
22 get vaccinated.

23 My phone was blowing up from  
24 locals ringing, ringing, ringing from local  
25 superintendents saying how can we get our

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2 teachers vaccinated. We are serving the  
3 most impacted communities and we are closing  
4 schools on a regular basis because our  
5 teachers are getting tested and coming up  
6 positive for COVID.

7 I applaud the county again,  
8 because I think you did Sewanaka, and I know  
9 you worked with me to help get Hempstead and  
10 also to get some vaccinations in the arms of  
11 teachers and faculty in Westbury and  
12 Hempstead as well.

13 Is there a plan for moving  
14 forward with teachers? Because Dr. Larry  
15 just said today that teachers are the  
16 priority this week.

17 Is there a plan to try and help  
18 other school districts be able to have the  
19 opportunity to get the shot in the arm?

20 MR. GIULIANO: Yes, and I can  
21 answer that because we are happy to say that  
22 starting actually yesterday and going  
23 through Monday we have set up likes for  
24 teachers from public schools and nonpublic  
25 schools and not just the teachers, for the

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2 paraprofessionals and the employees of all  
3 these school districts to go ahead and sign  
4 up for the majority of the doses that we  
5 have for the next four or five days.

6 A link opened two days ago.  
7 Thousands signed up. A link opened last  
8 night. Another one or 2,000 people were  
9 able to sign up to go ahead and obtain these  
10 doses. Communications were sent to BOCES  
11 and superintendents so they can alert all of  
12 their teachers in all the school districts  
13 that these links were open.

14 I know that they all filled up  
15 and so for the next four or five days we are  
16 going to be working most exclusively with  
17 those teachers to get them all vaccinated  
18 and get them back into the schools.

19 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Then my last  
20 and final question is going to be regarding  
21 this new group that I guess we have some  
22 local ability to localize the ability to  
23 make a decision here regarding taxi drivers  
24 I think it is; is that correct?

25 MR. GIULIANO: Again, we did

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2 hear, on our governor's live stream that it  
3 was going to be opened up to employees of  
4 restaurants and taxi drivers and Uber  
5 drivers and people of that nature.

6 We have not seen not seen the  
7 guidance on that. The guidance we are  
8 working under right now has not yet been  
9 modified or amended to include those  
10 individuals.

11 I can expect that should come  
12 down some point in the very near future but  
13 until we get that we are still not able to  
14 do that population. We expect that guidance  
15 to come out very shortly.

16 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: So my only  
17 question regarding that is, would that  
18 include Uber Eats or any of those types of  
19 food delivery services? If they are  
20 strictly Uber Eats or Grub Hub or what have  
21 you, I would think they should be considered  
22 and included because they probably have the  
23 most ability to transmit the disease  
24 insomuch as they are delivering food to  
25 dozens of homes in a day.

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2 If they are not included, I would  
3 ask we consider questioning the state about  
4 including them as well. All right. I'm  
5 going to end here. Again, thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN NICOLELLO: We have  
7 Legislator Kennedy, DeRiggi-Whitton,  
8 Birnbaum, Schaefer and Rhoads.

9 LEGISLATOR KENNEDY: Thank you,  
10 Chairman. Hi. How are you? It's been a  
11 long one.

12 I want to thank you for  
13 everything that you are doing in the health  
14 department. I wish I had the opportunity to  
15 thank Dr. Eisenstein as well. I know I  
16 personally along with a lot of other  
17 Legislators have been on the phone with him,  
18 calling him, talking, texting him at nine,  
19 10 o'clock at night, weekends, and I know he  
20 has been working around the clock and as I'm  
21 sure all of you have. It's been a very  
22 difficult time.

23 You have been handed a very hard  
24 hand to deal with. From the beginning we  
25 would say that it was really difficult, and

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2 then quickly, very quickly, I think less  
3 than six days we went from age 75 and over  
4 to age 65 and over. When, at that point, we  
5 were really having a difficult time keeping  
6 up with those that are 75 and older.

7 I know my mother-in-law is in the  
8 next group, the 65, and myself, my wife and  
9 my mother-in-law have been working around  
10 the clock we haven't been able to manage to  
11 secure an appointment.

12 In the state that's close, let's  
13 put it that way. It does seem like the  
14 dozens and dozens of phone calls, from  
15 people in my district, every one is facing  
16 the same problem, and it's mostly seniors  
17 that are facing this issue who have  
18 difficulty navigating the internet and it's  
19 just a lot and we're living in a time when  
20 it's scary and a lot of people are very  
21 scared.

22 Earlier Legislator Ferretti had  
23 said that New York City is getting more,  
24 about two percent more based on the  
25 population vaccines than we are here in

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2 Nassau County.

3 Then, also, I know that in the  
4 city they're restricting people from Nassau  
5 County to come in, and I know that just  
6 makes me question -- I don't understand how  
7 the mayor can get away with this. I wonder  
8 if you can help me here.

9 Why can a site within New York  
10 City, which was developed in partnership  
11 with New York State, restrict access based  
12 on residency when in a county, pursuant to  
13 New York State rules, Nassau was told that  
14 such behavior violates New York State rules.  
15 Do you know how they can get away with that?  
16 I don't understand. We can't, right?

17 MR. GIULIANO: No. We are, in  
18 fact, when we have residents from other  
19 counties, from Suffolk County, or from a  
20 city borough, we are vaccinating them. That  
21 has not been a large number, but they do  
22 show up and we are vaccinating them.

23 We are especially concerned of  
24 course with those that may live in these  
25 other places but actually specifically work

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2       here in Nassau County, we want to get them  
3       vaccinated. I don't have an answer to your  
4       question. That would have to come from the  
5       state.

6                   LEGISLATOR KENNEDY: Right.

7       Thank you. That is, of course, the problem  
8       from the state we've been dealt many  
9       difficult problems that need to be  
10      addressed.

11                   That, for one, I would just love  
12      to see the County Executive talking to the  
13      governor more often, more frequently, to try  
14      and make him realize that here on Long  
15      Island, Nassau County, that we are facing  
16      the same difficulties that they are in other  
17      parts of the state, and that we need,  
18      especially our senior population, who is  
19      really struggling, and the population  
20      disabled.

21                   Just last night I had an email  
22      from someone. She said, prior to the  
23      pandemic, her daughter had attended a  
24      Cerebral Palsy centers.

25                   Now, the woman, she, her mother,

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2 is a caretaker for her daughter and they  
3 have been housebound since the start of the  
4 virus.

5 She is upset that both her and  
6 her daughter may not be eligible to get the  
7 vaccine at this time since the governor has  
8 decided that local governments will now  
9 decide if there are enough doses for the  
10 disabled. That's one person but I'm sure  
11 there are many many people who have the same  
12 question, someone who is housebound for  
13 about a year now. I'm wondering what we can  
14 do about helping other people?

15 MS. ROSE-LOUDER: Well, the  
16 guidance just came out this week for us to  
17 start prioritizing those that fall under the  
18 auspicious of the Office of People with  
19 Developmental Disability. So we just  
20 started working on this challenging group.  
21 They present with a number of issues. Some  
22 are very high functioning and ambulatory and  
23 we can serve them without -- as we do most  
24 of the other population. Some will require  
25 a different model to get them vaccinated.

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2 We are just starting to sort  
3 through that. This is a population that we  
4 don't have a lot of direct contact with  
5 because they are more monitored and managed  
6 by the state.

7 However, what we found is that  
8 they're not out there on their own. They  
9 have case coordinators they have connections  
10 with the health care providers that see them  
11 on a regular basis.

12 So, what we are exploring now is  
13 tapping into that resource that is already  
14 out there for this population. Not to  
15 reinvent the wheel, but if we have a person  
16 who sees their healthcare provider on a  
17 regular basis, that may be the best way to  
18 get the vaccination to that individual.

19 For those that are in congregate  
20 housing, some of them have already been  
21 getting vaccinations through some of the  
22 local pharmacies, others have not.

23 So we are just starting so sort  
24 through that group because obviously they  
25 just came online and just became eligible,

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2 but we are finding there are resources out  
3 there that may be able to assist us in  
4 making sure that that population is getting  
5 their vaccinations.

6 LEGISLATOR KENNEDY: Okay. Good  
7 to hear. I would hope that we keep them in  
8 the forefront of our mind.

9 I also received -- someone  
10 reached out to my office, this person is  
11 under the age of 65 but they have several  
12 underlying conditions. Any time he goes to  
13 sign up for a vaccination because of his age  
14 he is restricted from signing up, but he has  
15 these underlying conditions.

16 I'm just trying to figure out how  
17 has this been working for -- because there  
18 are many people with underlying conditions  
19 and would be -- that would enable them to  
20 get the vaccination. I'm trying to  
21 understand how that is happening that  
22 there's nothing to check when someone is  
23 signing up for an vaccination.

24 MR. GIULIANO: At this time there  
25 is no eligible category for someone with

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2 conditions like that that we'll use that  
3 universal umbrella of immune compromised for  
4 some reason. It isn't a drop down, it isn't  
5 a category, and it isn't something that we  
6 are prioritizing, we have the ability to do  
7 as a priority group. We are waiting for  
8 some guidance to come down on that. Until  
9 it does, and until the state system opens  
10 that up as a category, that's not a  
11 population we are authorized, as much as we  
12 want to work with them, we can't do that  
13 just yet.

14 LEGISLATOR KENNEDY: I hope once  
15 again that's one of the things that we can  
16 obviously push for the governor to take an  
17 active roll in.

18 I know that in some places, New  
19 Jersey, for instance, there were locations  
20 where there are hot lines manned by  
21 volunteers, I think young adults, mostly  
22 college kids, who take calls and help the  
23 elderly to secure vaccine appointments.

24 I was wondering if that's  
25 something that we consider doing in Nassau

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2 County; if not, maybe that would be  
3 something that is beneficial especially to  
4 those that are having a difficult time  
5 navigating the internet.

6 MS. ROSE-LOUDER: Well, what we  
7 discussed, and I will say again, we did  
8 redirect some of our staff to get trained so  
9 they can handle the influx of the calls.

10 The purpose of that, the plan,  
11 initially, was to serve our seniors, and to  
12 operate just as you say, would be our staff  
13 doing it, not young volunteers, that's a  
14 great idea, but we were taking our staff  
15 from our departments, having them trained  
16 and establishing a senior call-in center  
17 strictly for seniors to enable us to  
18 preregister them. That was our plan.

19 Of course we sort of halted that  
20 because we are unable to vaccinate seniors.

21 What I can say, taking from some  
22 of the comments here is that we consider  
23 enabling our additional staff that we  
24 devoted to the call center to continue to  
25 assist seniors, even though we are not

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2 authorized by state to vaccinate them, to  
3 maybe give them more direction, help them  
4 along a little bit better and we will take  
5 that into consideration. It's so clear to  
6 us as well as all of you that our seniors  
7 have been left out there without a lot of  
8 help.

9 We still have our Office for the  
10 Aging that is still assisting us on a daily  
11 basis, but specific to this issue and  
12 specific to vaccination, we will take  
13 another look there to see what else we can  
14 do, but we're cognizant of not sending  
15 people on a wild goose chase.

16 We want to be able to give them  
17 real information that results in something  
18 tangible which, in this case, would be a  
19 vaccine or a vaccination appointment at  
20 least that's close by that makes sense for  
21 that particular senior.

22 That's the challenge for us. But  
23 we will take another look at what we're  
24 doing there and how else we can help and  
25 what more we can do.

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2 That was our whole intention from  
3 the very beginning when we redirected the  
4 staff and get them trained to be able to  
5 help with the calls so we will take another  
6 look.

7 MR. GIULIANO: And if I can add  
8 to that, if I may, in doing that this has  
9 become a substantial and serious issue for  
10 the seniors. What little we can do we are  
11 doing, when we built this database to give  
12 people reminders for their second calls.

13 As part of the database, they are  
14 now able to communicate with those who can  
15 or a family member that can. We have an  
16 email box that is now set up that we take  
17 emails of all sorts of problems. What we  
18 can do for them, and what we've instructed  
19 our, what we call INR staff and our call  
20 enter staff to do, we at least direct them  
21 to where the links are again for many of  
22 them, or another family member will assist  
23 them where there are links for them to try  
24 to sign up albeit it can't be with us but  
25 with other locations in the surrounding

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2 communities that are for seniors and there  
3 is a seniors call-in number, it's a state  
4 number. We give it out to everyone who asks  
5 that of us or emails to us.

6 We have people that actually go  
7 through the email box every single day and  
8 clear it out and try to answer as many  
9 questions as possible. It's the least we  
10 can do and it's at this point the most we're  
11 able to do for them.

12 LEGISLATOR KENNEDY: Thank you.  
13 And I know there are many many young people  
14 across this county who want to help and if  
15 it could be something that people who really  
16 want to help can be brought together to make  
17 some kind of an effort, any amount of help  
18 would be great for those seniors because,  
19 like you said, there's so many people, so  
20 many.

21 Sometimes it's just to hear an  
22 answer, to hear a voice, to be able to know  
23 that somebody is working for you because  
24 that's also a very difficult thing when  
25 people call my office and they say I cannot

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2 get to speak to a person. I'm so frustrated  
3 and I'm at my wit's end. People are so  
4 upset. We've heard it from everyone. It's  
5 the same thing across the board, across this  
6 whole county.

7 Then, as each one has expanded to  
8 the next group, it's just making it more and  
9 more difficult. But thank you.

10 One thing that struck me as soon  
11 as this all started that could not -- a  
12 couple could not sign up together. Curious  
13 why that is. I had several people call my  
14 office and say, I made an appointment and my  
15 wife's appointment is three weeks from now.  
16 We're at Jones Beach and three weeks later  
17 and a week later because the other one and  
18 three weeks after that.

19 I can't understand how we can't  
20 get these senior couples who need to go and  
21 being together would be a tremendous benefit  
22 and it's just not good for them to be out  
23 numerous times, so I'm just wondering why we  
24 could not do that when we haven't been able  
25 to do so since.

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2 MS. ROSE-LOUDER: It certainly  
3 makes sense and it's the most efficient way  
4 and more convenient obviously for those  
5 seniors to come together to the site as a  
6 couple.

7 If we're authorized to vaccinate  
8 more seniors, that's something that we will  
9 do because it doesn't make sense to do it  
10 any other way. As long as they are both  
11 eligible, it's the most efficient way and a  
12 convenience for the seniors.

13 If we get to that point where we  
14 are able to get more vaccine and authorized  
15 to vaccinate seniors, we can make that  
16 happen. That makes perfect sense.

17 LEGISLATOR KENNEDY: That would  
18 be great. Thank you.

19 One other question. In my  
20 district, it seems all along the South  
21 Shore, it's very difficult, and I know  
22 Massapequa Park is part of my district, we  
23 were in the yellow zone there, worked their  
24 way out, and I know all along the south  
25 shore, Freeport was in a difficult position

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2 as well, but it doesn't seem that the south  
3 shore pretty much across the board that  
4 there are sites for vaccinations and that  
5 would be an ideal place to shoot for, it's a  
6 large population, very simple up and down,  
7 Merrick Road, Sunrise Highway.

8 I'm just curious, is that  
9 something that's been thought about? I'm  
10 curious, I know that there were a couple of  
11 sites, one of the Northwell and Massapequa,  
12 that one was not being used, but I think one  
13 in Syosset -- I can't find it right now, but  
14 anyway I'm just curious about that. Is that  
15 something that we can see possibly?

16 MS. ROSE-LOUDER: I don't know.  
17 I know obviously as Dr. Larry said earlier,  
18 we had a plan and the college was part of  
19 that plan and Yes We Can Center was part of  
20 that plan.

21 I don't know that we envisioned  
22 where we are right now and our ability to  
23 set up additional pods.

24 I know that we are constantly  
25 reevaluating that, and we will take a look

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2 at what is the best location for us to pool  
3 our resources so we can get to the greatest  
4 number of people.

5 So the south shore is -- I hear  
6 you, I guess the nearest site to them would  
7 be at the college. But we can talk about  
8 that with Dr. Larry and the whole team as we  
9 go forward on whether or not we can and will  
10 be opening up pods and where are they and  
11 what makes the best sense for all our  
12 residents.

13 MR. GIULIANO: Right. I think  
14 that we've actually considered things like  
15 that. We are cognizant that we're a county,  
16 and their size-ability to the county.

17 I think right now we're limited  
18 by the fact that the vaccine dosage is only  
19 so much that we are running two pods right  
20 now and we're running through all of our  
21 vaccine right now. We have to double down  
22 that as well as the staffing it takes to  
23 open up another pod with now what is limited  
24 vaccine.

25 I think what we are waiting for

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2 the greater availability of vaccine to do  
3 more things that we would like to do.

4 LEGISLATOR KENNEDY: Thank you  
5 and thank you for answering the questions.  
6 I would just like to ask the County  
7 Executive to just please push the governor  
8 to help us here in Nassau County and I know  
9 that you have a very good relationship with  
10 our governor and to utilize that would be  
11 fantastic for all the residents in Nassau  
12 County. Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN NICOLELLO: Legislator  
14 DeRiggi-Whitton, then Legislators Birnbaum  
15 and Rhoads.

16 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: Yes,  
17 thank you. I have to think it's actually  
18 even further up from the state. It seems  
19 like the federal government didn't really  
20 have a plan in place and now they're trying  
21 to catch up.

22 I do think New York has really  
23 been pushing to try and get as many as we  
24 can. I believe that County Executive Curran  
25 is aware of the lack.

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2 I just did quick math. So if we  
3 relied on what we're getting now, just what  
4 the county is doing, it would take almost  
5 eight years to get our residents vaccinated.  
6 If you go back and look at the polio vaccine  
7 in 1955, there is no comparison. They were  
8 ahead of us in the game.

9 I understand it's a numbers  
10 formula situation and I hope if Johnson and  
11 Johnson comes out, we don't have the same  
12 issues, that maybe we can go to the senior  
13 centers and homeless shelters and go to all  
14 the places that we have to go to.

15 I'm hoping that this is going to  
16 happen in the next four weeks. I just have,  
17 planning ahead, because we were all hit by  
18 surprise with the pandemic, and no one had  
19 testing, no one had -- hand sanitizer,  
20 everything, went out to the door quick.

21 How are we with our supply of  
22 syringes; do you know? Especially those  
23 that might accommodate the extra dose?

24 MS. ROSE-LOUDER: I don't think  
25 that that's an issue for us.

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2 We have been procuring. We are  
3 limited in how much we can procure. I mean,  
4 when you're seeing the paper work come  
5 through, we're like, why are we doing it  
6 this way? I ask the question, why are we  
7 not buying in greater bulk?

8 We are prohibited in doing that  
9 from the vendors. So they are controlling  
10 how much goes out. But we haven't had any  
11 issue in procuring and getting it and  
12 getting it delivered to us in plenty of time  
13 so that we have a sufficient amount of  
14 supply for the vaccine.

15 As we get more vaccine, obviously  
16 the syringes have to come with it. We are  
17 watching that very closely.

18 While we are unable to buy in the  
19 biggest bulk we would like to, so far we  
20 have not had any issue with it.

21 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: So  
22 far meaning the numbers that we are  
23 dispensing as of today?

24 MS. ROSE-LOUDER: Yes.

25 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: If

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2 Johnson and Johnson comes out, I really  
3 think we are going to be given hopefully a  
4 good amount. Are we going to be prepared  
5 for that? Do we get the syringes based on  
6 the doses we're given or is it a completely  
7 separate process?

8 MS. ROSE-LOUDER: We do get  
9 syringes with the doses, but we have secured  
10 additional syringes because, as  
11 Dr. Eisenstein, explained discovered that  
12 with a smaller syringe, that we could get an  
13 extra dose out of it. So we have a  
14 sufficient amount of supply of syringes  
15 because we have been buying additional to  
16 what we've been given.

17 MR. GIULIANO: I will add to  
18 that. Our planning people look at that  
19 every day. It's not just putting needles in  
20 arms which is the most important thing right  
21 now, it's knowing that they have all the  
22 things they need to do that.

23 So there is someone looking at  
24 supplies on an every day basis and they're  
25 taking inventory on an everyday basis and

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2 we're able to get those when we see that we  
3 need another supply of something. We are  
4 staying ahead of it, at least a week ahead  
5 of it if not more.

6 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: I  
7 hope so because we don't want to get all the  
8 vaccine all of a sudden and not have the  
9 syringes. That will frustrate people  
10 further.

11 Also, I went into Walgreens  
12 yesterday. The manager actually asked me,  
13 assistant manager, if I knew what was going  
14 on with the pharmacies. He didn't even know  
15 what was going on. He said the website had  
16 crashed because it was out on social media  
17 that Walgreens -- again, we are living in an  
18 age where communication and technology  
19 should hopefully come in in a better way  
20 than it has so far in my opinion.

21 I just think we really have to be  
22 more organized with the information just to  
23 stop the chaos that people are feeling.

24 I know it's not Nassau County  
25 Board of Health that's responsible, but I

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2 wish we had a better plan for disseminating  
3 the information.

4 My final question is, right now  
5 if I wanted to make an appointment in the  
6 Bronx, would I be turned away?

7 MS. ROSE-LOUDER: I'm sorry. I  
8 don't know the answer to that question.

9 MR. GIULIANO: I don't know the  
10 answer specifically either.

11 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: So  
12 New York, five boroughs, are banning Nassau  
13 County residents as of right now. Is it  
14 state run sites or is it all of them?

15 MS. ROSE-LOUDER: I'm sorry. I  
16 don't have that information for you.

17 CHAIRMAN NICOLELLO: I believe  
18 it's the state run sites are open to anyone.  
19 It's just the city sites when you use the  
20 portal stops it actually stops you from  
21 making an appointment unless you live in the  
22 city or work in the city.

23 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON:  
24 Because I do know that someone made an  
25 appointment in the Bronx recently and also

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2 Binghamton, I have residents also going up  
3 to Binghamton.

4 Again, I'm hoping when the  
5 supplies come in and we're prepared with the  
6 syringes, hopefully the locations will have  
7 a big turning point at that time. Thank you  
8 again.

9 MR. GIULIANO: Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN NICOLELLO: Legislator  
11 Birnbaum on remote.

12 LEGISLATOR BIRNBAUM: Yes. Hi.  
13 Can you hear me?

14 CHAIRMAN NICOLELLO: Yes.

15 LEGISLATOR BIRNBAUM: Thank you  
16 for answering all these questions. I know  
17 it's taking quite a while and many of mine  
18 have been answered already.

19 I'm just wondering, is it  
20 possible to supply some kind of estimation  
21 for when our Nassau County sites will be  
22 getting to the senior population based on  
23 all of the other groups that are before  
24 them?

25 MS. ROSE-LOUDER: We have been

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2 barred by the state from vaccinating  
3 seniors. This has been a bone of contention  
4 for us since that happened. We have been  
5 pushing back and asking for authorization to  
6 vaccinate our seniors.

7 So it's a daily request that we  
8 make. But we are bound by what the state  
9 mandates tell us and who we should  
10 prioritize week to week.

11 Unfortunately, to date, after  
12 last week, we don't have any further  
13 authorization to vaccinate our seniors. So  
14 it's not a matter of when we will get to  
15 them but when they allow us to.

16 We are capable of vaccinating our  
17 seniors. We have the infrastructure in  
18 place to enable us to be able to do that,  
19 but we are not authorized to vaccinate our  
20 seniors.

21 LEGISLATOR BIRNBAUM: I  
22 understand that, but I'm just saying, given  
23 the populations that you have to vaccinate  
24 first, have been able to calculate the  
25 amount of people that go before the seniors;

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2 if there were no other changes, no other  
3 groups added?

4 MS. ROSE-LOUDER: We still would  
5 have to be authorized by the state to allow  
6 us to vaccinate the seniors. But I would  
7 imagine if all else was exhausted, that  
8 authorization would come through.

9 I don't know the answer to that  
10 question because there are many many  
11 eligible residents at this point that we are  
12 unable to get to. So I don't have an answer  
13 to your question.

14 We have not made that calculation  
15 because it's so speculative. It depends on  
16 many many factors, supply being one,  
17 eligibility, and amount of people in each  
18 category. I'm sorry, I don't have a better  
19 answer for you.

20 LEGISLATOR BIRNBAUM: Okay. My  
21 second question has to do with Northwell  
22 Health. They are our partner. You work  
23 with them in creating the different pods,  
24 correct?

25 MS. ROSE-LOUDER: They are the --

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2 go ahead, I'm sorry.

3 LEGISLATOR BIRNBAUM: If you work  
4 with Northwell Health in selecting areas  
5 where we can create the pod and they have  
6 their own limited amount of places, I  
7 believe they only have three Northwell  
8 Health facilities that I've seen, Lake  
9 Success, Hewlett and Syosset, is it possible  
10 to implore them to open up more sites where  
11 they could be inoculating people?

12 MR. GIULIANO: Northwell makes  
13 those decisions for themselves. They are  
14 the hospital system but they are also the  
15 hub, and we get a supply of vaccine from  
16 them.

17 While we have partnered with them  
18 in terms of our earlier vaccination pods and  
19 they have supplied some personnel to help  
20 us, as they open up more pods, they are  
21 using their personnel and there's less and  
22 less supply of their employees to us as with  
23 us and we are pretty much standing up our  
24 vaccination clinics right now with health  
25 department employees and employees of other

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2 agencies of this county and members of the  
3 MRC, almost exclusively at this point, and  
4 so -- those are conversations I know that  
5 Dr. Eisenstein does have with Northwell and  
6 the Northwell hub and we will -- I will take  
7 this back to him.

8 I do believe he is engaged in  
9 those kinds of conversations looking to try  
10 to stand up more pods to do the larger  
11 populations to do more individuals.

12 But at this point this is where  
13 we stand, what we are able to do as an  
14 eligible entity because we do take our  
15 direction from the state.

16 LEGISLATOR BIRNBAUM: Right. But  
17 I'm just wondering because we are their  
18 partners, they are the ones that are  
19 assisting the county, why we can't work with  
20 them to set up more sites throughout Nassau  
21 County since they are actually the largest  
22 healthcare system in the state and they're  
23 based right here in Nassau County. To me, I  
24 just expect more from them.

25 I would also ask for more COVID

1           COVID Vaccination Hearing/2-4-21  
2   test sites. We do have to do the  
3   vaccinations but we also have to be  
4   cognizant of the fact that there are many  
5   people still in need of testing sites and  
6   instead of shutting testing sites, there was  
7   one up here on Community Drive in Great  
8   Neck, they should be keeping them open and  
9   having additional testing sites at the same  
10   time.

11                   My final question is also in  
12   lines of what a former colleague was saying  
13   about having South Shore sites. I would  
14   considering argue that we would need some  
15   northwestern sites in Nassau County because  
16   there are senior citizens who live in this  
17   area and they can't travel a half hour, 45  
18   minutes, to go to a local site.

19                   I agree with the fact that  
20   husbands and wives should be able to  
21   schedule together. It's really unfortunate  
22   that they have to make two trips, where ever  
23   they get the appointment, one is in one  
24   location and one is in another, and that's  
25   for the lucky ones.

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2 But I think going forward I think  
3 we should have a system in place where the  
4 seniors who can't make an appointment on  
5 their computer that actually call and you  
6 can work with husband and wives to schedule  
7 at the same time. Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN NICOLELLO: Legislator  
9 Ford has a question and then Legislator  
10 Rhoads.

11 LEGISLATOR FORD: Thank you very  
12 much. I will be rather brief. I just want  
13 to echo the sentiments of my fellow  
14 legislators in regards to our seniors and  
15 especially with the pods.

16 I'm just curious, when you reach  
17 up to the governor, especially in regard to  
18 our seniors, the vaccination distribution,  
19 are all of the commissioners of health in  
20 agreement that the seniors should be the  
21 first ones to be vaccinated or do we just  
22 leave it or you just wait to see what the  
23 governor has to say, or do our commissioners  
24 agree with the governor to just keep opening  
25 up the eligibility slots?

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2 MR. GIULIANO: I do know that on  
3 the calls that Dr. Eisenstein is on, with  
4 respect to the New York State Association of  
5 County Health Officials, all the health  
6 officials and all the health directors, they  
7 do each the sentiment to continue to have  
8 vaccine for seniors and how important it is  
9 for seniors as a vulnerable population.

10 I do know that the NYCHO [sic],  
11 the acronym for the organization has reached  
12 out, to echo that view, and so there is a  
13 lot of agreement with trying to get a way to  
14 work, work its way to the senior population.  
15 That is something that consistently comes up  
16 on those calls.

17 LEGISLATOR FORD: Is it possible  
18 then to maybe perhaps ask our commissioners  
19 of health as well as our various county  
20 executives to then jointly write a letter to  
21 the governor saying that this should not be  
22 political, that we should defer to the  
23 medical experts, the ones that know best?  
24 In my mind, considering the problems that  
25 we've had with our nursing homes, and now,

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2 once again, I find that seniors, all of our  
3 seniors are at greater risk.

4 My heart breaks for them because  
5 I get calls. We get emails from people who  
6 are desperate. A lot of these people are  
7 elderly women that have nobody and alone, so  
8 I really urge you, and I'm going to ask my  
9 Legislators to join us and maybe we should  
10 write a letter, a stern letter supporting  
11 our medical directors and saying it's time  
12 we defer to your experience and your  
13 opinions in regard to vaccinating our  
14 seniors.

15 I'm very happy that that's going  
16 to be reconsidered, that hotline for our  
17 seniors. I think it's very important that  
18 we keep lines of communication open  
19 especially for our most vulnerable, and what  
20 we can do is, even for the seniors, even  
21 though we cannot help them register for  
22 their vaccinations, at least we can start a  
23 registry of who is looking to be vaccinated,  
24 and who may have some issues at home.

25 So this could be a database that

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2 we can use and then -- I had offered that I  
3 would be happy to volunteer at a later date  
4 and to be able to reach back out to the  
5 seniors to make sure to find out, did they  
6 get their vaccinations, are they still  
7 having problems?

8 It's just to make sure that these  
9 people do not feel that they have been  
10 kicked to the curb and totally left in the  
11 dark on everything.

12 I think sometimes with their  
13 loneliness, especially with this winter  
14 being isolated, to be able to get some  
15 friendly calls or calls of concern from  
16 different people. I think that would go a  
17 long way, especially for their mental  
18 health.

19 In regard to the pods, I too am  
20 very angry that are no pods. I'm down on  
21 the South Shore. The city of Long Beach is  
22 a very diverse population. I know that the  
23 closest county pod is Nassau County  
24 Community College. But if memory serves me  
25 correctly, there's no direct line that goes,

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2 a bus line that goes from Long Beach, from  
3 the barrier island to Nassau Community  
4 College.

5 I would urge you that as we open  
6 up more pods, I agree with Legislator  
7 Birnbaum, let's reach out to Northwell, we  
8 can go to Mt. Sinai, let's start working  
9 with our medical facilities in expanding the  
10 number of pods especially when more and more  
11 vaccines are coming. Because I do think  
12 that we're not serving all of our  
13 populations as well as we can be.

14 But I also want to say, thank you  
15 for all the fine jobs you are doing. I  
16 really appreciate all the efforts.

17 CHAIRMAN NICOLELLO: Legislator  
18 McKevitt.

19 LEGISLATOR MCKEVITT: Yes. I  
20 just have one issue which, again, you  
21 probably do not know the answer no but ask  
22 for your advocacy on. I have a parent with  
23 multiple sclerosis, obviously very very  
24 concerned about it, with children going to  
25 school, so if you know anything you're aware

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2 of, advocate the fact that multiple  
3 sclerosis patients be on the list, get those  
4 vaccines sooner rather than later.

5 CHAIRMAN NICOLELLO: We actually  
6 had another similar comment, individual with  
7 asthma and Diabetes Type II, seeking to get  
8 an appointment, specific assistance with  
9 people who have underlying conditions,  
10 immune compromised, to advance up the  
11 priority list, are you aware of that? Is  
12 there anything specific for someone who has  
13 a condition like that?

14 MS. ROSE-LOUDER: There isn't at  
15 this time. However, I think Dr. Larry  
16 Eisenstein did tell us this morning it is  
17 something that they repeatedly bring up in  
18 their calls with the Governor's Office with  
19 the state about getting some guidance for  
20 this population.

21 Obviously these are people that  
22 are very vulnerable at risk and we are  
23 concerned about them.

24 So while they appear to be  
25 eligible, we haven't gotten any guidance on

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2 how to handle this population. I know that  
3 Dr. Eisenstein is working on that and as  
4 soon as we know, he will be making that  
5 announcement and let all of you know, you  
6 probably will know before I know because I  
7 know he speaks to you all every week, so he  
8 will let you know and all our residents know  
9 that they are now eligible and we'll start  
10 working on getting them to a pod.

11 CHAIRMAN NICOLELLO: Thank you.  
12 Legislator Rhoads.

13 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Just a quick  
14 follow-up questions and lot of what I was  
15 going to ask I know has been covered by  
16 other legislators.

17 It sounds as though -- obviously  
18 there is clearly a distribution problem and  
19 it seems as though the state has been coming  
20 out very slowly with solutions to some of  
21 the known problems that have been brought to  
22 their attention by the county. Again,  
23 talking about the preexisting conditions,  
24 this is a guidance issued -- rather, this is  
25 a directive issued by the state that

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2 individuals with preexisting health  
3 conditions were eligible to receive the  
4 vaccine, yet, it's been over a month and no  
5 guidance has come down from the state.  
6 That's not the county's fault, that's the  
7 governor's fault. No one can vaccinate  
8 those individuals.

9 So many of the letters we have  
10 here and comments that we have here is  
11 frustration from those residents that are  
12 eligible for the vaccine but can't seem to  
13 sign up for it anywhere because there's been  
14 no guidance issued from the state. I wish  
15 the governor would spend a little less time  
16 on book deals and Emmy award celebrations  
17 and more time on trying to figure out some  
18 of these solution.

19 But we have a role to play in  
20 this process as well. We were speaking  
21 about the list potentially for seniors that  
22 want to get the vaccine rather than them  
23 continuously having them try to get onto the  
24 website to make appointments, a list for  
25 seniors to say they want a vaccine and be

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2 contacted when an appointment is available.  
3 That might not be a bad idea for it to be  
4 done for all eligible groups, it might be a  
5 easier way and it might be a way to solve  
6 some of the frustration if people can get  
7 confirmation that they're on the list and  
8 when vaccines become available for their  
9 particular group, they will be contacted  
10 with an appointment.

11 Is that something that can be  
12 brought up to the state? I know all of  
13 these scheduling for these appointments is  
14 controlled by the state website.

15 MR. GIULIANO: I will attempt to  
16 answer that even with a better answer, yes,  
17 that can be brought up to the state but the  
18 county has taken, in working with IT and  
19 authorization from county officials, we took  
20 it upon ourselves, understanding that there  
21 have been problems with the CDMS system,  
22 that's at clinical data management system  
23 from the state, with all these problems and  
24 all the limitations that have happened with  
25 it, we endeavored an approach to the IT

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2 department to create basically what is our  
3 own system.

4 This started off with first an  
5 appointment system for second doses and we  
6 are now, when I say "we," IT, is building a  
7 system for all first dose appointments and  
8 what is the endeavor of the administration  
9 and the health department is to create a  
10 pre-registration list of all these people  
11 and all these categories so we know who they  
12 are and where they are and know how to reach  
13 them. This is what we are attempting to do  
14 right now.

15 That platform is being built  
16 right now because we do want to know who  
17 they are and where they are, that way at a  
18 moment's notice, when we are ready or when  
19 we get the vaccine or when we get the  
20 authorization, we can go directly out to  
21 them, contact them, and have that kind of  
22 immediate interaction with them. So we've  
23 undertaken ourselves to do, yes.

24 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Do we have  
25 any ideas when that potentially might be

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2 online? Because the issues are obviously  
3 now. It's wonderful that the county is  
4 being proactive in trying to create that  
5 database, but obviously we have 18 million  
6 people statewide is our total population,  
7 with the guidance issued by the governor,  
8 probably 13 or 14 million of which are all  
9 eligible to receive the vaccine all trying  
10 to get a limited number of appointments.

11 Including our own residents, that  
12 frustration is there now. Those problems  
13 are there now, that fear is there now. So  
14 the sooner we can get that online the  
15 better.

16 When do you think that we'll be  
17 able to put that out to our residents as a  
18 way for them to be able to get themselves on  
19 a list?

20 MR. GIULIANO: I know that they  
21 are in the middle of beta testing that  
22 system.

23 I think the answer is we are  
24 hopeful that it's shortly. I can't give you  
25 an exact date but it's something that weeks

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2 ago that we took to undertake ourselves.

3 But they had to build an appointment system  
4 first before they went there.

5 It's not just that it needs to be  
6 a system that's then going to take all this  
7 information ultimately, first dose, second  
8 dose, all the system communicates within  
9 itself, and then it's able to take that  
10 information, all of that information, all of  
11 these first doses and second doses has to go  
12 into the state database system for  
13 immunizations and we are in the process of  
14 doing that third piece of it as well, so we  
15 can force that information into the state  
16 system and be completely off the state  
17 registration system. So we're doing all of  
18 this simultaneously.

19 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: It's  
20 frustrating because the state has known for  
21 ten months. We didn't know exactly when we  
22 would be at this point as far as when the  
23 vaccines were going to be rolled out, but we  
24 knew at some point in time there was going  
25 to be a vaccine distribution program. It's

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2 just stunning that these problems wouldn't  
3 have been anticipated that there would have  
4 been a fix for those problems and really  
5 it's local jurisdictions that are being left  
6 to come up with solutions to problems they  
7 didn't create and can't necessarily solve on  
8 their own.

9 I understand the frustration from  
10 the department. Taking that, we spoke about  
11 Mayor DeBlasio restricting access to Nassau  
12 County residents and residents from outside  
13 of the city of New York to the city run  
14 vaccination sites.

15 We have adversely impacted  
16 communities too. Legislator Kennedy  
17 mentioned that Freeport was a community that  
18 was pretty hard hit by COVID.

19 The notion that New York City  
20 should be treated differently because of  
21 their density of population and because of  
22 adversely impacted communities, we have  
23 those adversely impacted communities of our  
24 own. We have those adversely impacted  
25 populations of our own. We have residents

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2 that are in need as well.

3 This is more of a comment than it  
4 is a question. Nassau County has seven  
5 percent of the states population but when we  
6 are receiving 2,800 doses of vaccine a week  
7 which is what we received for the last two  
8 weeks, despite the fact that we have seven  
9 percent of the population, we are only  
10 receiving about one percent of the vaccine.

11 Say what you want about Mayor  
12 Deblasio, and I have plenty of negative  
13 things to say about Mayor Deblasio,  
14 including about this particular issue, but I  
15 will say Mayor Deblasio is out there  
16 fighting for the residents of New York City.

17 It's up to our County Executive  
18 to stand up and fight for the residents of  
19 Nassau County and right now I don't see  
20 that.

21 While Mayor Deblasio is willing  
22 to take on the governor, I don't see that  
23 our County Executive Laura Curran has been  
24 ready to stand up and take on the governor  
25 on a regular basis to fight to get Nassau

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2 County residents what they deserve. That is  
3 a disservice to our residents that I hope  
4 will be corrected by the administration.

5 I think that -- the fact that the  
6 federal government now is going to be  
7 sending directly -- it's my understanding  
8 that the federal government now is going to  
9 be sending vaccine directly to some of the  
10 larger pharmacies as opposed to it coming to  
11 the state, an acknowledgment that the  
12 state's distribution plan has failed.

13 But instead of just talking about  
14 failures, we need to be advocating for our  
15 residents to be part of the solution, and I  
16 hope the County Executive will be part of  
17 that.

18 For example, there seems to be an  
19 abundant supply of vaccine in other parts of  
20 the state.

21 The notion that Nassau County  
22 residents can sign on and make an  
23 appointment in Rochester doesn't seem to  
24 make much sense. If they have extra vaccine  
25 in other parts of the state that are less

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2 densely populated, why is that vaccine not  
3 coming here to Nassau County, Suffolk  
4 County, Long Island region where we have  
5 such a large population.

6 But we really need to be doing  
7 and, in my view, the administration needs to  
8 be doing a better job.

9 I can call the Governor's Office  
10 all day long. He's not taking my call. But  
11 I'm pretty sure that the County Executive  
12 might have the governor's cell phone number.  
13 I'm pretty sure if she picked up the phone  
14 and called him to talk about this issue and  
15 to advocate on behalf of Nassau County  
16 residents, that he would take that call.  
17 Because he's taken that call on many other  
18 issues over the course of the last three  
19 years.

20 So we need our County Executive  
21 to join us in the Legislature in advocating  
22 our residents be treated fairly in making  
23 sure we get our fair share of the state's  
24 resources because it doesn't seem to be  
25 happening now.

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2 But I appreciate your testimony  
3 and appreciate the amazing work that the  
4 health department has been doing in response  
5 to this pandemic and in trying to make sense  
6 out of a process which is flawed to say the  
7 least.

8 MR. GIULIANO: I will say this in  
9 a very short response just to point some  
10 things out.

11 We are told from the state that  
12 the doses, that the vaccines that are handed  
13 down, or apportioned by population of the  
14 locality.

15 I don't know that New York City  
16 is in that matrix. I know New York City  
17 gets their doses directly from the CDC. We  
18 also know that New York City is funded  
19 directly by the CDC unlike other counties.  
20 So there are those kinds of things that are  
21 built in that I thought would be important  
22 to point out to the Legislature.

23 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Yes. They  
24 get their doses directly from the CDC, but  
25 their doses are counted towards the state's

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2 allotment.

3 So when the state is saying it  
4 receives 250 to 300,000 vaccine that  
5 includes what's going to New York City, and  
6 if it's being apportioned by percentage, and  
7 New York City's population is not being  
8 considered in that apportionment, that's  
9 what the issue is.

10 Again, our residents are being  
11 disadvantaged adversely by that.

12 The reality is, we have seven  
13 percent of the population. We are getting  
14 only one percent of the vaccine that's being  
15 received by the state. That's an inequity  
16 that needs to be corrected and where it  
17 seems that supply is the issue, look, we can  
18 put a vaccination site on every street  
19 corner, if you don't have the vaccine to  
20 hand out, it's not going to matter.

21 We need to get our hands on more  
22 vaccine and if there's more vaccine that's  
23 out there that we should be receiving as a  
24 county, we should be standing up for our  
25 residents. Everybody should have an equal

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2 playing field to play on.

3 If New York City is getting more  
4 vaccine per capita than the Nassau County  
5 residents and is also restricting Nassau  
6 County residents from being able to receive  
7 that vaccine, either that needs to change,  
8 or we need to be able to put the same  
9 restrictions in place to protect our Nassau  
10 County residents.

11 Everybody should be playing by  
12 the same rules. In my opinion there should  
13 be no restrictions. Whoever can sign on and  
14 whoever can get the vaccine can make an  
15 appointment and go get the vaccine.

16 But there needs to be a level  
17 playing field and everybody has to be  
18 playing by the same rules. That's what's  
19 fair, but thank you I appreciate it.

20 LEGISLATOR WALKER: Thank you.  
21 Any other Legislators have any comments or  
22 questions.

23 (No verbal response.)

24 I thank you so much for being  
25 here this morning and for answering all our

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2 questions. Again, thank you for all you are  
3 doing and we couldn't be more proud of our  
4 Nassau County Health Department. So thank  
5 you.

6 Just so everybody is aware,  
7 committees will start at 1:30.

8 (Whereupon, the Hearing on the  
9 Covid-19 Vaccination Process adjourned at  
10 12:27 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, FRANK GRAY, a Shorthand Reporter and  
Notary Public in and for the State of New  
York, do hereby stated:

THAT I attended at the time and place  
above mentioned and took stenographic record  
of the proceedings in the above-entitled  
matter;

THAT the foregoing transcript is a true  
and accurate transcript of the same and the  
whole thereof, according to the best of my  
ability and belief.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set  
my hand this 22nd day of February, 2021.

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FRANK GRAY