

In The Matter Of:
DeKalb County Virtual Town Hall Meeting

Coronavirus / COVID-19
April 9, 2020

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DeKalb County Virtual Town Hall Meeting
Concerning Coronavirus and COVID-19

April 9, 2020

6:30 p.m.

From the Manuel Maloof Auditorium
Decatur, Georgia

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APPEARANCES AT THE MALOOF CENTER:

- Mr. Michael Thurmond, CEO DeKalb County
- Mr. Frank Ski, Moderator
- Ms. La'Keitha Carlos, Chief of Staff, DeKalb County
- Dr. S. Elizabeth Ford, DeKalb County Board of Health
- Dr. Anastasia Brown Alvarado, MD, Viewpoint Health and Family Ties Inc.
- Dr. Demaree L. Trammel, MD, DeKalb Community Service Board

APPEARING VIA ZOOM:

- Dr. David Ross, ScD, president and CEO of The Task Force for Global Health
- Dr. Patrick O'Carroll, MD, MPH, FACPM, FACMI, The Task Force for Global Health, Health Systems Strengthening Sector

APPEARANCES ON VIDEOS SHOWN:

- Mr. Jack Lumpkin, Director, DeKalb County Public Safety
- Mr. Jeff Parker, General Manager and CEO, MARTA
- Ms. Diamond Lewis, Moderator and presenter
- Ms. Liane Levetan, Former CEO, DeKalb County Government
- Mr. Larry Johnson, DeKalb County Commissioner

1 (Town Hall began at 6:30 p.m. with a video
2 feature displaying photographs from the DeKalb
3 community and the sound of Andra Day's Rise Up
4 audio.)

5 (Time noted 6:36, start of Town Hall.)

6 CEO THURMOND: Good evening. I'm Michael
7 Thurmond, the CEO of the DeKalb County, and I'm
8 honored and privileged to welcome you to a COVID-19
9 Task Force Town Hall, which is hosted by our DeKalb
10 County COVID-19 Strategic Task Force.

11 I'm proud to stand here today as the
12 elected representative of the 750,000 residents and
13 citizens of our great county. Yes, we will rise up
14 together to confront this insidious enemy that has
15 come into our neighborhoods and to our homes and to
16 our county, that's invaded our great nation, and
17 that's causing pain and sorrow all across the face
18 of this earth.

19 But I am convinced beyond all reasonable
20 doubt that as we rise up together there is no
21 challenge too great, no mountain too tall, no valley
22 too deep as we rise up together, our first
23 responders, and our hospitals, and our medical
24 clinics, and our waiting rooms, our sanitation
25 workers, our police officers, firemen, all of the

1 men and women rising together because we know that
2 united there is no challenge too strong, no problem
3 too complex, no wall too tall that we cannot climb.
4 There is no nothing that we cannot do as Americans
5 united together.

6 So, please, as we distance ourselves, let
7 us grow closer in our commitment and our love for
8 one another; as we distance ourselves, as we must,
9 let us come closer as a county, as a people, as a
10 world. Let us rise up together north DeKalb and
11 south DeKalb, Black, White, Red and Brown,
12 Christian, Jew, Muslim, Hindu, true believers,
13 agnostic and the atheist rising together to face
14 this challenge that is no respecter of person or
15 position or political affiliation, no respecter of
16 socioeconomic status, no respecter of sexual
17 orientation, let us rise up together and face the
18 challenge, to overcome the challenge.

19 So, once again, my fellow DeKalb County
20 residents, my fellow Georgians, and those who are
21 tuning in from around our nation, and even around
22 the world, welcome as we rise up together.

23 I'm honored to have been given the
24 opportunity to appoint a DeKalb County COVID-19 Task
25 Force, and this town hall meeting is hosted by them.

1 This Task Force was formed in response to
2 a public health and economic emergency that is
3 spreading across our county, our state and our
4 nation. And the goal of DeKalb's Task Force is to
5 provide professional, technical and strategic
6 counsel during this critical time.

7 It is important to note that we have
8 brought together the very best and brightest that
9 our county has to offer, and this Task Force will
10 include leading medical professionals, who you will
11 hear from this evening; scientists; Mr. Steve
12 Bradshaw, the presiding officer of our Board of
13 Commissioners as well as two other commissioners;
14 representative of DeKalb School District including
15 Acting Superintendent Ms. Ramona Tyson; the DeKalb
16 House and Senate delegations; DeKalb's public safety
17 leaders, business and civic leaders because this is
18 a two-pronged crisis. One is health, but we're also
19 in the midst of an economic crisis.

20 As we heard just today, 6.6 million more
21 Americans were placed and forced out of work. And
22 most importantly this Task Force will include human
23 service professionals. So I'm happy to represent
24 them. I'm happy to represent Commissioner Steve
25 Bradshaw, the presiding officer, and our Board of

1 Commissioners, and I'm proud to say that I represent
2 the best county not just in the state of Georgia but
3 in America because we are rising up together.

4 And now I have the -- and I would like to
5 allow you to learn more about our COVID Task Force.
6 And you will see in the following video that these
7 are men and women of distinction, of merit,
8 dedication, and commitment to our community. So
9 please meet the members of DeKalb County's COVID-19
10 Strategic Task Force.

11 (Video playing.)

12 (Narrator voice): DeKalb County's
13 COVID-19 Strategic Task Force is up and running
14 helping steer the county safely through this fast
15 moving pandemic driven by science and medical
16 expertise, the Task Force brings together
17 professional, technical, and strategic minds to
18 counsel on ways to best protect the health, safety
19 and economic wellbeing of DeKalb's more than 750,000
20 residents.

21 (On video) CEO THURMOND: We have some of
22 the most talented and dedicated public servants in
23 our county already committed to serve and support
24 and lend their talent to this effort.

25 (Video narrator) Formed by DeKalb CEO

1 Michael Thurmond on March 23rd through executive
2 order the COVID-19 Task Force held its inaugural
3 meeting virtually via teleconference April 1st. The
4 Task Force is comprised of local experts, business
5 and civic leaders as well as top medical
6 professionals.

7 (On video) DR. S. ELIZABETH FORD: We're
8 trying to identify ways that we can manage this
9 pandemic but also keep folks safe.

10 (On video) ANN HANLON: I'm so proud of
11 the team that's been assembled here and the hard
12 work we're doing.

13 (Video narrator) The Task Force also
14 consists of three members of the DeKalb County Board
15 of Commissioners including the Board's presiding
16 officer, representatives of the DeKalb County School
17 District, the DeKalb House and Senate delegations
18 and DeKalb Public Safety leaders.

19 JACK LUMPKIN: Through our public safety today we
20 have more folks on the street than what it was this
21 time last year.

22 MARTA'S JEFF PARKER: We will continue to
23 make sure that we fully understand the
24 recommendation of the public health and continue to
25 work with our jurisdictional partners like DeKalb

1 County.

2 CHIEF JUDGE ASHA JACKSON: We don't want
3 our citizens to be afraid to access justice, but
4 we're not requiring the burden of them coming to the
5 courthouse to receive justice.

6 (Video narrator) These experts are
7 helping provide practical apolitical advice on many
8 aspects of the County's response to the pandemic,
9 including how to safely continue essential County
10 services, how to cope with the emotional and
11 physical challenges of isolation, how we can protect
12 ourselves, our families and so much more.

13 FORMER CEO LIANE LEVETAN: We have an
14 enemy that we know it's around, but we can't touch
15 it. And I want to again thank you, Michael
16 Thurmond, for what you continue to show, leadership.

17 (On video) CEO THURMOND: This is not an
18 event. This is a journey. This is a critical step
19 in DeKalb County's effort to respond in an
20 appropriate way.

21 (Video narrator) For additional
22 information on the ongoing lifesaving actions of
23 DeKalb County governments' and the COVID-19 Task
24 Force visit DeKalb Countyga.gov/coronavirus.

25 (Video portion concludes.)

1 CEO THURMOND: And I would personally like
2 to thank the men and women who responded in a very
3 affirmative and enthusiastic way to the call to
4 serve on our COVID-19 Task Force. I appreciate and
5 acknowledge your commitment. And I share with those
6 throughout our county that these men and women will
7 be at the forefront of developing the strategies and
8 policies from a health perspective as well as an
9 economic development perspective as we respond, as
10 we rise, and as we get DeKalb not only healthy, but
11 also back to work in the near future.

12 And now I would like to introduce our host
13 for this evening, and it's a true pleasure for me to
14 stand here and introduce a man who I have admired
15 and who is a long-time friend and an amazing,
16 amazing community servant and leader.

17 Our moderator this evening is none other
18 than Mr. Frank Ski, a nationally renowned radio and
19 television personality, motivational speaker, disc
20 jockey, journalist, producer, as well as a
21 philanthropist working to help children, and most
22 importantly, and I know this from my own personal
23 experience, most importantly he is a devoted father.

24 He's also, as we know him as, the host of
25 the V-103 Morning Show with Frank Ski. And he's

1 worked in radio and music and acting for more than
2 30 years. In 2002 the Honorable Reverend Jesse
3 Jackson presented Frank Ski with the Distinguished
4 Journalist of the Year award on behalf of the
5 Rainbow PUSH Coalition. Mr. Frank Ski founded the
6 Frank Ski Kids Foundation to provide financial
7 assistance in low income youth and youth serving
8 agencies to expand opportunities for young people
9 throughout not just the metro Atlanta but throughout
10 the state and throughout our nation. Hundreds, and
11 I repeat hundreds, of young people have benefited
12 from the positive opportunities that the foundation
13 provides each year.

14 And although philanthropy is his life
15 work, Frank takes time to enjoy some healthy
16 indulgences as well. His personal interests include
17 SCUBA diving, deep sea fishing, international
18 traveling and wine collecting. I have been to some
19 wine tastings at his house, and we'll talk about
20 that off camera.

21 But once again, Frank Ski, we are honored
22 for you to be with us this evening. We thank you
23 for your service, and we welcome you to the Maloof
24 Center, the Maloof Building, to the heart of our
25 government, and we thank you once again. Mr. Frank

1 Ski.

2 FRANK SKI: Good evening everyone that's
3 listening tonight. We truly hope that you are
4 enlightened and informed as we continue our evening.

5 Now, new to this tonight is you the
6 residents of DeKalb County and others will be able
7 to ask questions. All you have to do to ask a
8 question, we'll give you the number that you need to
9 call coming up in just a little bit. You can also
10 go to DeKalb CountyGA.gov/coronavirus. We will also
11 be taking your questions there.

12 Participating tonight in our virtual town
13 hall, Dr. S. Elizabeth Ford, the District Director
14 and Chief Executive Officer of DeKalb County Board
15 of Health since 2005; Dr. David Ross, the president
16 and CEO of the Task Force for Global Health;
17 Dr. Anastasia Brown Alvarado, a board certified
18 adult and child and adolescent child psychiatrist at
19 Viewpoint Health; Dr. Patrick O'Carroll, the head of
20 the Health System Strengthening system of the Task
21 Force for Global Health; also Dr. Demaree Trammel, a
22 psychiatry specialist with DeKalb serving the board.
23 Dr. Trammel graduated from Duke University.

24 You will also learn this evening how you
25 can protect the mental health of your children,

1 which is one thing we haven't really spoken about
2 too much. How do you cope with not being allowed to
3 visit your sick or dying family members? How can we
4 inform past this COVID-19 for what's coming up in
5 the future? What medications and supplies should
6 you have on hand this evening? And certain racial
7 and demographic groups that are less susceptible to
8 contracting the virus.

9 Very interesting is here in DeKalb we were
10 the first to come up with the numbers that the
11 nation is now speaking on. And I say that again.
12 We were the first to identify the disparity between
13 African-Americans overwhelmingly being more
14 susceptible not only to catching the virus, but
15 dying from the virus.

16 So without further adieu, we begin.
17 Tonight I would like to introduce to you all tonight
18 Dr. Elizabeth S. Ford. Yes.

19 DR. FORD: Good evening.

20 FRANK SKI: Would you like to make some
21 comments this evening?

22 DR. FORD: Sure. I apologize. So I just
23 sort of want to provide an update on the current
24 scenario as it relates to COVID in Georgia and in
25 DeKalb County specifically.

1 Since last we spoke a few weeks ago we are
2 now over 10,000 cases in Georgia, 379 of which have
3 died. DeKalb on Saturday was 709 cases. Now we're
4 up to 742 cases just in our county alone. So I
5 would imagine before next week we'll hit the 1,000
6 mark just in DeKalb alone. We have 12 deaths.

7 And we'll talk a little bit later, I am
8 sure, about the racial disparities we collected in
9 terms of the disparities between Black and White in
10 this county. This remains an ongoing issue.

11 I think that we will continue to see
12 numbers climb. I'm delighted that we now have a
13 statewide shelter in place order that allows us to
14 better control motion of people so that we can be
15 more aggressive about the social distancing and
16 physical distancing recommendations so that we can
17 stop the spread of this virus.

18 FRANK SKI: All right. Thank you very
19 much. Also Dr. David Ross is joining us via Zoom
20 this evening. Dr. Ross.

21 DR. ROSS: Hi, can you hear me?

22 FRANK SKI: Yes, we can.

23 DR. ROSS: Okay. Great. Well, thank you
24 for having me participate on this panel and on the
25 Task Force. I want to thank our county CEO Michael

1 Thurmond for having the foresight and courage to put
2 this together, to have the foresight and courage to
3 have imposed a lockdown, I think the first county in
4 the state, and as such is leading.

5 I also want to thank Dr. Ford for all that
6 you have been doing. You are deserving of an
7 enormous bonus. I will just say that. Thank you
8 for all you have done and continue to do. And thank
9 all of your staff, the Public Health, DeKalb Board
10 of Health, staff are just amazing, and going far
11 above and beyond what could be expected, and all the
12 citizens of DeKalb should be pleased.

13 I'll just say one thing about our work at
14 the Task Force for Global Health. We work in over
15 150 countries, and as such we are attuned to the
16 spread of this virus across the globe. And it is a
17 fact that while we learn a lot working around the
18 world we can always try to bring what we learn
19 globally back to help local public health. And as
20 we learn from others, we will try to bring those
21 lessons back to DeKalb.

22 But I also want to point out that all that
23 we are learning in DeKalb County are lessons that we
24 will be able to teach and pass on to the countries
25 that we work with around the world. So those of you

1 in county government, county services, the work
2 you're doing, we hope to learn from you and learn
3 what has worked, what could be done differently, and
4 pass those lessons on to the rest of the world. So
5 you actually are part of a global effort to contain
6 this disease, and ultimately eliminate it. Thank
7 you.

8 FRANK SKI: Thank you very much. Right
9 now we're going to be introduced to Dr. Anastasia
10 Brown Alvarado, a board certified adult child and
11 adolescent child psychiatrist.

12 DR. ALVARADO BROWN: Thank you, and good
13 evening. Thank you, Mr. Thurmond, for the
14 invitation to participate on this panel.

15 As a psychiatrist, my focus is on our
16 mental and emotional health, so although we're aware
17 of the impacts that COVID-19 has on our physical
18 health with our daily existence having changed right
19 before our eyes, we've had to adapt to a new normal,
20 and that impacts our mental and emotional health.

21 We're managing grief and loss and
22 disappointments and economic instability and just
23 uncertainty. And with all of these stressors, we
24 have to consider our mental health as we are in such
25 uncertain times.

1 So you may experience anxiety or worry or
2 depression or frustration with everything going on
3 around us. You might see it in yourself, you might
4 see it in your loved ones, your spouse, your
5 children.

6 And these are normal emotions for us to
7 experience during a stressful situation. But while
8 we're taking precautionary measures such as the hand
9 washing, the physical distancing that we must do in
10 order to flatten the curve with this virus, we also
11 need to take measures to protect our mental and our
12 emotional health as well.

13 And so when I'm talking with my patients,
14 I'm still seeing patients via telemedicine, which is
15 a platform we're all having to get used to with
16 doing things electronically and through the web, I
17 remind them that it's okay to feel how you're
18 feeling right now, and give yourself some time to
19 make adjustments to our new normal.

20 While we're practicing physical
21 distancing, we still can remain socially connected.
22 We're still in this together. So we can use social
23 media. We can use the phone. We can text. So we
24 can practice physical distance and still be socially
25 connected. We can incorporate routine and schedule

1 so that we still feel like we have control over some
2 aspects of our lives so that we have some normalcy
3 to everything that we do.

4 And that can include taking care of our
5 physical health as well. So getting outside
6 exercising, keeping active, watching our nutritional
7 intake. And practicing self-care. So just
8 developing a self-care routine just once a day to
9 incorporate something that just kind of indulges us
10 a little bit.

11 Avoiding hearing too much. So we're
12 getting a lot of information, new information every
13 day, but sometimes there is a little overexposure
14 that happens with individuals, and that can promote
15 anxiety as well. So I always recommend
16 disconnecting if you need to, and just giving
17 yourself a break from all of the news that's out
18 there.

19 And then, lastly, if you need it, if you
20 notice that, you know, you have had prolonged or
21 severe, you know, mental health or emotional health
22 symptoms that you're experiencing seek help. We're
23 still out here, we're still seeing patients, we're
24 available to you, and we want to be there for you.

25 FRANK SKI: All right. Thank you very

1 much. Also this evening, I do want to give you-all
2 the number if you would like to call in with your
3 questions. The number is 404-371-2400. That's
4 404-371-2400.

5 Now via Zoom we have Dr. Patrick
6 O'Carroll, the head of the Health System
7 Strengthening sector of the Task Force for Global
8 Health. Dr. O'Carroll.

9 DR. O'CARROLL: Good evening. Thank you.
10 It's an honor to be on the Task Force.

11 I think I guess I'd like to reflect on
12 some of the comments I have already heard starting
13 with CEO Thurmond telling us that we should rise up
14 together. He's exactly right. And also Dr. Ford's
15 comments that we're approaching 1,000 cases in
16 DeKalb County.

17 It's worth knowing that this is a
18 challenge to all of humanity. Across the United
19 States it's not 1,000 cases. It's over 432,000
20 cases as of today. Almost 15,000 deaths. Across
21 the whole world it's greater than 1.5 million cases
22 and almost 90,000 deaths across the whole planet.
23 So we're truly looking at a planetary threat.

24 But at the end of the day we have to do
25 what CEO Thurmond says. We have to take this

1 community by community, and each community,
2 including ours, has to find a way to rise up
3 together.

4 And unlike some threats we face, sometimes
5 war, sometimes other pestilence and disasters, this
6 is actually a challenge that calls on each of us to
7 contribute to the solution.

8 So while there is enormous pain, and an
9 enormous burden to be shared economically, as well
10 as medically, over the next few months and in the
11 past few weeks, it's also true that each of us has
12 an opportunity to protect our families, to protect
13 ourselves, and also to be part of protecting our
14 community and stopping this epidemic in its tracks.

15 So that is different from many of the
16 epidemics I worked on in the past.

17 FRANK SKI: Also this evening we have
18 Dr. Demaree Trammel, a board certified psychiatrist
19 with a combined seven years of practice at the
20 DeKalb Community Service Board.

21 DR. TRAMMEL: Good evening. I would also
22 like to thank you for this opportunity, CEO
23 Thurmond. Thank you, Frank Ski, and other panelists
24 this evening.

25 As Dr. Alvarado indicated, as we are all

1 trying to make sure that we're keeping ourselves
2 safe from infection, we are also mindful, or need to
3 be mindful, that this, this coronavirus is causing a
4 lot of anxiety and fear in the general population.
5 Most of us have some moments when we're thinking,
6 you know, did I wash my hands? Did I touch
7 something? So it is normal, and it's natural to
8 have some fear and some worry.

9 But fear, and worry, also is a survival
10 mechanism. It tells us that we need to take
11 precautions, that maybe we need to change our
12 behaviors. So not all fear and worry is necessarily
13 bad.

14 So we do want to try to focus on what we
15 can do. Certainly in this pandemic that we are in,
16 we feel helpless in many cases. We feel like we
17 have a loss of control. Many of us are suffering
18 financially. We may have issues with childcare.
19 Just trying to get a mask or toilet paper nowadays.

20 But there are things that we can do
21 besides, you know, washing hands, our hands, using
22 masks. We want to do the things that are helpful
23 and healthy for us really all the time, but
24 particularly now.

25 If ever there were a time for the use of

1 social media, this is the time. So make use of our
2 ability to call friends and family, to use texts.
3 We can do videoconferencing. Because one of the
4 concerns is that our social or physical distancing
5 can also lead to isolation, and isolation is
6 certainly something that leads to depression,
7 despair. So we want to be able to make sure that we
8 are staying socially connected even when we are
9 practicing physical distancing.

10 As Dr. Alvarado indicated, if we find that
11 we're having difficulty sleeping, concentrating,
12 just not being able to attend to our daily
13 activities, not being able to work or do homework,
14 then that is a time to try to seek some assistance
15 from a professional, while also, hopefully, relying
16 on our friends and family members and clergy for
17 support.

18 So as we have said, I think, a few times,
19 we will get through this. This is something that is
20 scary, but it is temporary. And with our measures
21 that we are taking to keep ourselves healthy and
22 getting support from others when we need it, we'll
23 get through this and this will pass.

24 FRANK SKI: Let me start with the first
25 question with you, Doctor. This morning we were

1 asking the question what on the radio, what are
2 people suffering from the most? And the biggest
3 thing was single people being alone, that they had
4 never experienced the type of loneliness that they
5 were having. Even Gayle King spoke about it on
6 national television, that normally she's busy. She
7 has a lot of friends outside, and it's okay, she
8 comes home to decompress, and it's fine when she
9 comes home and she's alone. But now that she's been
10 at her house alone so long, and people are calling
11 in that they have been there so long by themselves,
12 there is a different type of psyche that's going on.

13 Can you address that?

14 DR. TRAMMEL: That is a unique challenge
15 for the single person. I would say also
16 particularly in the elderly, many of whom may be
17 widowed. That is when we definitely do want to use
18 technology, use whatever means that we have to try
19 to connect to those who may be at a distance, but
20 also are sources of support.

21 We do want to take care of ourselves, make
22 sure that we're sleeping; hopefully not turning to
23 drugs and alcohol for comfort.

24 Exercise is just great for our mental
25 health and overall wellbeing. So that's something

1 that also I would emphasize as being important. And
2 we are allowed to go out and take a walk. We just
3 have to maintain our distance. But being out in
4 nature, being able to enjoy some of the things
5 outside that, you know, can give us peace.

6 FRANK SKI: Okay. Dr. Ford, let me ask
7 you this we've been asking in all of our counties
8 for people to practice social distancing, not to be
9 in large groups together. But as I travel around
10 through the county and Atlanta metro, I see a lot of
11 African-Americans aren't really paying attention to
12 that message as they should. When you go into
13 certain places you still see business as normal as
14 if they almost don't believe it yet.

15 How are you addressing that?

16 DR. FORD: So let me just say this. So we
17 get the COVID numbers twice a day. So I get them in
18 the morning, and they come again at 7:00
19 o'clock p.m.

20 So I just got today's new numbers. So
21 from this morning to tonight the state is up
22 219 cases from this morning. DeKalb is up 67 cases
23 from this morning.

24 So if that's not reason enough for
25 everybody to be staying in the house, I'm not sure

1 what else we need to share.

2 In terms of people of color, when COVID
3 first came out I heard all kinds of different
4 stories, and I am sure you've heard them, too, that
5 this is not a Black person's disease, you know, we
6 were immune somehow because it started in China and
7 then was in Europe.

8 None of that is true.

9 And when we talk about these numbers, when
10 I'm telling you almost 11,000 cases, that's cases
11 that have been tested. That's not including the
12 people who are just isolating at home, or who may be
13 symptomatic and just haven't had an actual test.

14 So our numbers are probably double or
15 triple those numbers. So when we say that you need
16 to stay in the house, that means every single body.

17 Now, there is some extenuating factors
18 with folks, and we understand that. Everybody
19 doesn't have the luxury of the job that allows you
20 to shelter in place because some folks have to get
21 out and go to work every day.

22 And so in recognizing that, this is why we
23 have masks. This is why we ask people to put your
24 mask on when you leave the house. Make sure you
25 wash your hands. Make sure you distance yourself

1 socially.

2 If you are going to work, you should be
3 going to work in an environment where you can still
4 stay away from other people.

5 But this rumor that Black folks are not
6 getting this disease is absolutely inaccurate. And
7 we'll give you some specifics on that.

8 FRANK SKI: All right. Let me go back to
9 Zoom and speak with Dr. David Ross. There was a
10 question. And the question is: Is it possible for
11 a person to prepare your body to lessen the effects
12 of the illness if you contract the coronavirus.

13 DR. ROSS: Okay. Can you hear me?

14 So I am not the medical expert (audio
15 difficulty) to answer your question. But from all
16 of the evidence that I have seen, the answer is no
17 in the sense that there aren't supplements or other
18 things that you can take to prevent you from
19 becoming infected.

20 What you can do is be as healthy a person
21 as possible.

22 (Audio difficulty.)

23 Are you getting this echo?

24 Okay. I'm sorry. It's echoing badly in
25 my ear.

1 But what I would like to say to the
2 audience is that you should -- this is a wake-up
3 call for all of us to be as healthy as possible.
4 Because when you receive -- when you become infected
5 with a respiratory infection like COVID, you -- it
6 challenges your health in many ways. And if you're
7 a smoker, you're at extra high risk. If you're
8 overweight. If you have diabetes. These are risk
9 factors that make it more likely that you will
10 become very ill and possibly succumb to the illness.

11 Are there supplements, though, that you
12 can take that prevent this? To the best of my
13 knowledge the answer is no. I'd defer that also to
14 the other panelists to see if they would agree with
15 me.

16 DR. FORD: I think just having a good
17 strong immune system is the best way to prevent most
18 illnesses. And some of these rumors about extra
19 vitamins, no, your overall general health is what
20 determines your ability to overcome the disease if
21 you are unlucky enough to catch it.

22 So we're just encouraging everybody to
23 stay as healthy as you can, which is why it's
24 important, as Dr. Trammel mentioned, to be outside
25 and get a little bit of exercise.

1 I think we've been seeing a lot of folks
2 snacking up because they are stuck in the house, and
3 that's not helping the process. So we want people
4 to continue to try to find ways to be active, and be
5 mindful of what you put in your mouth.

6 FRANK SKI: All right. Let's go to
7 La'Keitha Carlos.

8 MS. CARLOS: Thank you, Frank.

9 We have a question from our viewing
10 audience. How can you prevent picking up the virus
11 from surfaces such as takeout containers, pizza
12 boxes, or grocery items?

13 FRANK SKI: Dr. Ford, would you like to --

14 DR. FORD: So the data on how long that
15 virus lives on surfaces is still a little
16 inconclusive. The ranges have gone from hours to
17 days. We are recommending pretty aggressive
18 sanitation for everything, sanitizing your counter
19 spaces, anything that you touch, even your car door,
20 your steering wheel. So it's not a bad idea to just
21 drive with a pack of wipes so that you can just
22 clean down surfaces.

23 I think that most pizza boxes, for
24 example, are probably even sitting out for a while
25 and so are very -- less likely to be infectious.

1 But I think a good healthy level of precaution is
2 not a bad idea for anything.

3 FRANK SKI: All right. La'Keitha, we have
4 another question?

5 MS. CARLOS: This is a question on
6 testing. Where is the testing taking place, and are
7 you able to describe the process?

8 DR. FORD: So the test site -- well, there
9 are quite -- probably a few test sites throughout
10 the county, but the formal DeKalb County Board of
11 Health test site is in an undisclosed location for
12 reasons to protect the privacy of those folks that
13 are coming for a test. People are still profiling
14 people who are -- they are suspicious of being
15 positive. And so for that reason, we're trying to
16 protect the privacy of folks.

17 So what we are asking people to do is if
18 you are symptomatic, if you are referred by a
19 physician, you can call our number 404-294-3700 and
20 push option 1.

21 Your physician can refer you.

22 You can also be referred. If you are
23 having symptoms and feel like you have been exposed
24 in some way, we will also try to get you tested in
25 that manner.

1 The test itself is a little invasive. It
2 is what we call a nasopharyngeal swab, which means
3 it goes in your nose and down your throat. But
4 that's the best way to get the best specimen to send
5 to the lab.

6 I actually know someone who had the
7 nasopharyngeal swab, and they said it's literally
8 three seconds of discomfort and then you're done,
9 and well worth it to have your test.

10 Right now results -- and that may be a
11 question that comes up later -- results in the
12 county are taking anywhere between -- well, in the
13 state, anywhere between three days and seven days
14 right now, which is also why I don't want people to
15 think that, you know, a negative test today means
16 anything because you may be positive a few days
17 later.

18 We have some testing opportunities coming
19 toward us that will allow us to do rapid testing and
20 we will be able to get our results in a half-hour,
21 which will definitely be a game changer. And we
22 will be able to expand the testing capacity, because
23 when we were here the last time that was one of the
24 frustrations is that we had such a limited number of
25 tests available we cannot test everyone that wants

1 to be tested. And so we had specific priority
2 groups, for example, our first responders, who would
3 be number one on the list to be tested, and our
4 healthcare workers.

5 Once we have more test kits available,
6 then we'll be able to expand those folks that are
7 tested, and will be -- we would publish the number
8 at that point, and anyone could come and make an
9 appointment.

10 FRANK SKI: All right.

11 DR. FORD: And we'll be expanding our
12 testing site to a northern site as well starting on
13 Monday.

14 FRANK SKI: All right. Want to remind you
15 again the number to call in with your questions
16 404-371-2400. Let's go to a video question.

17 (Video question playing.) Hi, I'm Rachel
18 Hennigan. I live in Decatur. And I'm curious about
19 what the county is doing to help parents support
20 their children's mental health during the crisis.

21 FRANK SKI: Dr. Alvarado, would you like
22 to take that one?

23 DR. ALVARADO: So far as children's mental
24 health, it starts at home. So far as parents are
25 concerned just watching your children's behavior,

1 noticing if there is difficulty with their sleep, or
2 they have been moodier, or more irritable or the
3 like.

4 So if you start to notice behavioral
5 changes, sleep changes, or just, you know,
6 frustration, anxiety, they seem to be very tense or
7 on edge all of the time, it starts at home just
8 noticing their behavior.

9 The second is is sitting down and talking
10 to them and finding out well, what is it that's
11 going on, what kind of questions that you have.

12 I find a lot from my patients that they
13 have not had a sit-down discussion with their
14 parents about COVID-19. They know their life has
15 changed, but they don't understand what's going on
16 with the virus. And just like us adults, kids want
17 answers to questions.

18 So there are resources. You can go to the
19 CDC's website, CDC.gov. You can actually go to PBS
20 Kids. You can go to the American Academy of Child
21 and Adolescent Psychiatry and find resources to help
22 talk to your children about the virus, what it
23 means, and why it's impacted their lives.

24 And then if you want to look on a more
25 local level, DeKalb County, as every county across

1 the state of Georgia, has a local mental health
2 center. So you can always go and find or contact
3 your local mental health center if you feel like
4 you're not able to manage their symptoms, or manage
5 what's going on with them.

6 As Dr. Trammel works at DeKalb County
7 Community Service Board, which is DeKalb County's
8 Mental Health Center, I work for the Gwinnett,
9 Rockdale and Newton Mental Health Center, which is
10 Viewpoint Health, and there is a mental health
11 center across the state in each county. So you can
12 go there as far as resources are concerned.

13 FRANK SKI: All right. Thank you very
14 much. Let's go back to Dr. O'Carroll, who is
15 joining us by Zoom. Dr. O'Carroll, Regional Health
16 Administrator for the U. S. Department of Health and
17 Human Services. Why are we seeing -- if you can
18 answer the question, why are we seeing the disparity
19 between the numbers for African-Americans versus
20 others?

21 DR. O'CARROLL: That's a very important
22 question, and it's one, as you know, (audio
23 difficulty.) There it goes again, I hope you can
24 hear me all right.

25 It's only recently come to light, as you

1 indicate, some of that data coming right here from
2 DeKalb County.

3 There is some reasons we can anticipate.
4 It's generally true that people who are of limited
5 income, they have less access to healthcare, they
6 have less access to good quality food, less access
7 to the ability to exercise in safe neighborhoods,
8 and a variety of things that lead to conditions that
9 put us at risk.

10 But I would hasten to say that there is a
11 great deal of need for research into this area now
12 to really understand what these factors are and how
13 it plays into it.

14 I suspect a great deal of it has to do
15 with preexisting conditions, not only conditions in
16 the person but in their community, and in their
17 social determinants of what makes us healthy or
18 unhealthy.

19 And the truth is we've known about these
20 things for a long time in public health, and have
21 called on our society to do better, but this
22 pandemic is really bringing it out for everyone to
23 see, that not everyone in this country has equal
24 access to health for a variety of reasons. And I
25 think this is an area that will be a very important

1 thing to research.

2 FRANK SKI: And Dr. O'Carroll, before you
3 go, another question. Some people are speculating
4 that as the temperature heats up here in Georgia,
5 the DeKalb, Atlanta metro, that we'll see less
6 cases.

7 Has there been any research on that, on
8 the temperature and the effects of the virus?

9 May not have heard me.

10 DR. ROSS: I lost my audio again.

11 DR. O'CARROLL: Yeah, me too.

12 FRANK SKI: Dr. Ford, have you heard
13 anything about that?

14 DR. FORD: I have not. You know, I think
15 that was part of when they were saying that it
16 wasn't prevalent in Black countries, in African
17 countries, that was a temperature-related issue.
18 But now we see this globally. So I'm not sure
19 there's a connection. That would be great if that
20 were true.

21 FRANK SKI: For -- and we've got to ask
22 this question because we're getting it a lot -- for
23 people who fall in the category of essential
24 services that are coming in contact with a lot of
25 people during the day, what should their routine be

1 when they come back home going back into their
2 families? Anyone?

3 DR. FORD: Well, the Board of Health
4 specifically has a very strong policy because part
5 of my responsibility is not only to protect the
6 community, but to protect my staff.

7 And so we have just really consolidated
8 services, for one thing. We have very limited
9 services being provided right now, primarily WIC and
10 other critical services.

11 What happens is in order to be even
12 allowed entry into a Public Health building, you are
13 screened at the door for temperature. We take
14 your -- infrared thermometer to make sure you are
15 not febrile. If you have a fever, you are turned
16 away. If you have any symptoms, you are turned
17 away. And that includes staff and clients.

18 We are making sure that all staff are
19 provided with protective equipment, PPE, so that
20 they have gowns, masks. All our clients are offered
21 masks.

22 The testing site where we're actually
23 collecting specimens have a whole armor on to make
24 sure they are safe. So we're trying to make sure
25 that folks that are essential at least are protected

1 when at all possible.

2 We're trying to allow people to telework
3 if they have the type of job that lends itself to
4 that kind of function. And then if you don't, we're
5 trying to make sure that while you're in the
6 building that you are practicing appropriate
7 physical distancing, even if you do have to be here.

8 FRANK SKI: So my question was more in
9 line to let's take, for instance, the average worker
10 that works at a grocery store --

11 DR. FORD: Okay.

12 FRANK SKI: -- during the day, and there
13 is hundreds of people coming into the grocery store.
14 What is the process, you know, that they are asking
15 for when they go home. Is there a process that they
16 should do before they come back in contact with
17 their family?

18 DR. FORD: Okay. I gotcha.

19 So, you know, keeping track of my hospital
20 colleagues and the types of things that they're
21 doing, some of them are actually disrobing in the
22 garage pretty much before they walk in the house, or
23 definitely -- first of all, you should never be
24 leaving in your work clothes from the hospital
25 situation anyway.

1 But if you are being exposed, you should
2 make sure that you try to have a clean set of
3 whatever clothing you're going to wear into the
4 house.

5 Make sure that before you hug your kids
6 and all those types of things, before you make
7 contact with folks who have not -- who have been in
8 the house all day that you pretty much, if you can't
9 shower at least do a great hand scrub before you
10 touch anybody or anything in the house.

11 FRANK SKI: Okay. Social distancing.
12 Some people are having a hard time dealing with the
13 social distancing part.

14 They social distance, but then when they
15 get back home into their nucleus one of the biggest
16 things that has started to come up -- and I'd like
17 to ask each of you this question -- that started to
18 come up is there are a lot of couples now that are
19 realizing that they don't do well together for that
20 long of a period of time. They are saying that a
21 lot of lawyers are getting calls for separations
22 because people are in the house far too long than
23 they expected.

24 I know it's kind of chuckling, but we read
25 a big article yesterday that's saying the amount of

1 divorce proceedings and filings will go up.

2 What can people do in their only to remain
3 sane and to deal better with each other? What would
4 your suggestions be?

5 DR. TRAMMEL: I would say that one of the
6 things that they can do is to try to carve out a
7 private space and a private time as much as possible
8 in the home. You know, perhaps there can be an
9 agreement, you know, "from this set of time to
10 another time I'd like to have the living room, I'd
11 just like to watch my program, perhaps you can watch
12 in the bedroom."

13 So keeping still a sense of personal
14 space. That's another reason why getting out,
15 getting outside can also be helpful.

16 And when you consider that, you know, even
17 under the best of circumstances when families are
18 together a lot we can get on each other's nerves, so
19 now in a setting in which there is heightened
20 concern, worry, even agitation, that makes it all
21 the more likely that people can let their emotions
22 get away with -- from them.

23 And as you indicated, yes, unfortunately,
24 this is a situation that can breed more domestic
25 violence apparently. And in general when people are

1 together in the home for a long time, there is a
2 higher risk of domestic violence.

3 And what's difficult about that is that
4 the victim is also holed up with their abuser. So
5 it's going to be important that we also have
6 resources for those who are experiencing domestic
7 violence particularly at this time.

8 But, yes, it's -- it becomes a challenge.

9 FRANK SKI: All right.

10 CEO THURMOND: Frank, could I --

11 FRANK SKI: Yes, sir.

12 CEO THURMOND: As relayed at the County
13 level, our State Court Solicitor, Solicitor Donna
14 Coleman-Stribling, has implemented a strategy with
15 the support of the commissioners and myself called
16 Not in my DeKalb.

17 Also our Chief Judge of the Magistrate
18 Court Beryl Anderson, they have all put together
19 resources to help potential not just people, victims
20 of abuse, but potential abusers You're Not Alone.

21 And please access these local services, as
22 well as with the DeKalb County Police Department.
23 We have a group of men and women in the department
24 who does nothing but focus their attention on
25 helping to protect and prevent abuse in our homes.

1 One thing I want to followup on, Frank, if
2 you will, is it unusual for spouses to feel stressed
3 and anxiety at this point? You said something
4 earlier about fear and anxiety, that's normal. So
5 is this a normal response to this very traumatic set
6 of circumstances we're living with as it relates to
7 spouses and husbands and wives and others in a home?

8 DR. ALVARADO BROWN: I mean, absolutely.
9 I mean, it's a natural human response to respond to
10 a stressful situation with a heightened sense of
11 anxiety. I mean, it's kind of our natural instinct
12 kicking in, so -- but we're, unfortunately, we're
13 kind of fighting an unknown something. We can't see
14 it.

15 So our protective instincts are
16 heightened, stress reaction does start to rise
17 during a stressful situation, but we're,
18 unfortunately, just fighting a virus that we can't
19 see, which I think makes it difficult.

20 And back to Frank's point from earlier
21 where people are like, oh, they are not taking it
22 seriously because we're fighting something we can't
23 see. If we're fighting something we can see, then
24 it makes sense. It's like, okay, I understand why
25 you're panicked. I understand why you're stressed.

1 But we're stressed and panicked, but we are still
2 fighting something. We're still having that
3 heightened sense of anxiety.

4 And you also have to look at the fact that
5 when we're in these contained spaces for longer
6 periods of time, I mean our day-to-day schedules
7 we're usually probably at home with our loved ones
8 for, you know, maybe seven, eight hours, I mean, you
9 know, hours at a time.

10 We spend many times more time with our
11 coworkers than we do with our loved ones on a
12 general day-to-day. But now we're spending all of
13 our time with our loved ones. And when you have all
14 of that time with one person, whether it's your
15 spouse, or whether it's your children, there is some
16 heightened frustration and irritation or anxiety
17 that can come about.

18 And like Dr. Trammel says, finding some,
19 you know, niching out some time for yourself to pay
20 attention to you and do some self-care for you is
21 really important.

22 So that could mean going outside and doing
23 some physical activity. That could mean maybe I
24 just need to -- my house isn't set up that way where
25 I can kind of escape into a space for myself, so

1 maybe I just go out to the car for a second and take
2 a breather and give myself 15, 30 minutes, just to
3 spend time, listen to music, have some time for
4 myself so I can collect myself and be a better
5 spouse, a better mother, a better father for my
6 kids, or for my spouse.

7 And it's helpful to everyone in the house,
8 honestly, because when we each give ourselves
9 individual time it helps with when we do come back
10 together and have maybe some structured family time
11 where we can get to know each other better, and get
12 to really spend quality time with each other.

13 That also is something I recommend like,
14 hey, set scheduled time where you guys can actually
15 a family activity, movie night, game nights, things
16 like that where you're actually coming together and
17 enjoying each other's company and not just sitting
18 around.

19 FRANK SKI: All right. Let's go to
20 another question. La'Keitha Carlos.

21 MS. CARLOS: Okay. What would lead --
22 this is a question for our doctors, perhaps Dr. Ross
23 or Dr. Ford. What would lead to a recurrence of
24 COVID-19 in the fall or later?

25 DR. FORD: You know, this is a novel

1 virus, and so we're still learning so much about
2 this disease, and so I don't know what would cause
3 that. There has been talk about that. I'm dreading
4 that because I am sure by the time the fall gets
5 here we will just be recovering from what's going on
6 right now, and I'm not sure whether the community
7 can sustain another bout of this.

8 So we're hoping that natural immunity
9 starts kicking in, or better yet, that a vaccine
10 gets developed so that if we do have another up peak
11 -- first of all, it would be a very different virus
12 because, you know, everything mutates. So I hope
13 that that's not an option. I hope that we at least
14 get a year before we start to see this resurface.

15 FRANK SKI: You were speaking on that, and
16 I got this question the other day. In the beginning
17 they were saying this is similar to the flu. But
18 what we've seen is the aggressiveness when someone
19 gets it is different than the flu. So it's kind of
20 -- is it the same? Or it's different? Because with
21 the -- we're seeing people that are getting it and
22 five days later they're dying.

23 DR. FORD: Yeah, this is very different
24 from the flu. First of all, it's novel. So it's
25 brand new. So not a single person on earth had

1 immunity to this before it came out. So that means
2 everybody is susceptible, and, you know, different
3 immune systems respond differently.

4 And so what we're seeing is, you know,
5 some very healthy people are coming in that hospital
6 and not coming out. And so that's not what we're
7 used to seeing. We have thousands of flu deaths
8 every year in the United States alone. But those
9 are usually pretty high-risk populations.

10 And so to see a disease that seems to be
11 coming all across, you know, the different age
12 groups, although we still have groups that are more
13 susceptible, I think that's what's kind of thrown
14 everybody is that these aren't the usual group of
15 people that we would expect to get sick. And so
16 this makes this very different from the flu. And
17 the flu has a vaccine, even if it's not 100%
18 effective, it does provide some coverage. We have
19 nothing to defend ourselves against this.

20 FRANK SKI: La'Keitha, another question?

21 MS. CARLOS: So we spoke earlier about the
22 identification that African-Americans have been
23 contracting the virus at a higher rate than others.
24 But we haven't talked about why those rates of
25 infection are higher, and why is the death count

1 higher in the African-American community.

2 DR. FORD: So I'm going to give you the
3 numbers that we had. So, much to my surprise when
4 we -- when I asked about this over the weekend we
5 did not have racial data collected for all cases.

6 Interestingly enough, the only racial data
7 we had were on the cases that we were actually
8 investigating. So, in other words, if you were just
9 positive, the form that is being collected did not
10 ask your racial background.

11 And so what we're pulling from DeKalb were
12 the cases that we ourselves directly investigated.
13 So out of the 700-some-odd cases, we only had 125
14 individuals who identified any type of race.

15 So of those 125, 24 were White, 92 were
16 African-American, and nine were Other, which breaks
17 down to 74% Black, 7% Other, and then the rest
18 Caucasian.

19 Among deaths it was 1-to-4 of White to
20 Black. So for every one White death, there were
21 four people of African-American descent that died.

22 Why is that? There is a number of
23 different reasons. We -- it's already been
24 discussed at some level about our increased rates of
25 chronic disease, certainly, and chronic diseases do

1 impact your immune system. But I think that's too
2 simple.

3 I think that we know, studies have shown,
4 that people of color are treated differently when
5 they come to a doctor. That's fact. And so when
6 you have symptoms of something that may look like
7 the flu, you may not get the same level of direct,
8 you know, attention to say, okay, well, maybe this
9 is a little something extra. They may say, well,
10 you know, you just kind of stay home and try to
11 manage this.

12 And what we have found with COVID is it
13 goes from 0 to 60. So if you -- if you're one of
14 those that stayed home and all of a sudden your
15 symptoms ramp up, you may not make it to the
16 hospital in time. That's number one.

17 Number two is the fact that -- and people
18 say this jokingly, but I got it because I have a
19 son. A Black man can't walk out of the house with a
20 mask on his face, you know, in every setting and
21 feel okay about that. And so that's a whole 'nother
22 situation.

23 I mean, people are forming masks from --
24 everybody doesn't have a surgical mask, and so if
25 you tie a bandanna around your face in certain

1 neighborhoods, that might be so not well received.

2 Also, there are folks that don't have the
3 luxury, as I said before, of sheltering in place.

4 If you're the breadwinner, you have to go out and
5 earn a living. And so every time you leave your
6 house and come back in your house, unless you are
7 disrobing, like I said, you're exposing your family
8 to the outside. And so that happens every single
9 day. There's a -- so there is a lot of different
10 factors that are contributing to why we're seeing
11 the increase in numbers.

12 Also, when we had limited tests, you had
13 to be referred by your primary care physician in
14 order to even receive a test. Everybody doesn't
15 have a primary care physician. Everybody doesn't
16 even have insurance. And so what happens to the
17 people that aren't insured that are symptomatic?
18 How -- where were they supposed to go to get a test?

19 And we already know that we're
20 overrepresented, and when I say "we", I mean people
21 of color in terms of not having insurance in the
22 nation.

23 So it's not just a, Well, we all have
24 chronic diseases and that's -- our immune systems
25 are weaker. There are a whole lot of other outside

1 factors that are contributing to this disparity.

2 FRANK SKI: All right. Let's go to
3 another video question.

4 (Video question playing.) Hi, this is
5 Tammy Weiser. I was wondering why some people got
6 more sick than other people when they get the COVID?

7 FRANK SKI: All right. Do we have Dr.
8 O'Carroll available maybe to answer via Zoom?

9 DR. O'CARROLL: Unfortunately, we don't
10 know a great deal about this disease, and we're
11 learning every day.

12 Let me share some things with you to put
13 this in perspective. According to the CDC as many
14 as one in four people who get infected won't have
15 any symptoms at all.

16 And this is one of the reasons it's very
17 challenging to control this disease if when people
18 are walking around and they feel perfectly healthy,
19 they imagine they couldn't possibly infect anyone
20 else, and some of these people may be spreading
21 infection without even knowing it.

22 And that's what's behind CDC's most recent
23 suggestion that when you go into a supermarket or
24 you go into a pharmacy, which you should do only
25 when you need to, you should wear some kind of

1 facial covering. It's really not to protect you.
2 It's to protect everybody else in case you're
3 spreading the disease. Of course, if everyone else
4 is wearing that, then they are protecting you from
5 if they have the disease.

6 So quite a number of people who get this
7 will have either no symptoms, or very minimal
8 symptoms and it will just resolve.

9 And then there is a small subset of people
10 who will start to feel poorly, and about seven or
11 eight days later they'll start to get worse, and
12 they'll get a heaviness in the chest or a little
13 difficulty breathing. And as Dr. Ford said, it
14 could then suddenly accelerate.

15 Why does that happen in some people and
16 not others? We don't know the answer to that. Many
17 times you could point to a chronic underlying
18 condition, but there are some people with chronic
19 conditions who recover just fine.

20 So I'm afraid there is still a great deal
21 we have to learn about why certain individuals have
22 this response to COVID, and others have no symptoms
23 whatsoever.

24 FRANK SKI: La'Keitha Carlos, another
25 question?

1 MS. CARLOS: So we have a question from
2 Facebook. A lot of parents are spending lot of time
3 with small children who may not be able to
4 communicate their mental and emotional needs in the
5 same way that older children can. And so the
6 question is, is there any advice on recognizing
7 anxiety in small children, and how can you deal with
8 that?

9 DR. ALVARADO BROWN: Yes. So from the
10 oldest to the youngest of us, yes, anxiety can
11 manifest, you know, and it -- it's a lot of times
12 for children because of a lack of routine, a lack of
13 schedule, changes in their schedule or routine, or
14 actually picking up on anxiety from their parent.

15 So the first thing that I talk to parents
16 about is monitoring your own anxiety and your own
17 worry, and kind of getting that in check before, you
18 know, being around your kids, or saying certain
19 things that might trigger your children, or just
20 kind of noticing your behavioral changes as well.
21 And if you need to address that with someone, please
22 do that.

23 As far as specifically things in young
24 children who may not be very verbal, we look at
25 things in play. So what are they doing as they're

1 playing, because they're still going to be doing
2 those things.

3 So if you notice that there is a change
4 and they're becoming more aggressive in their play,
5 with their siblings, or even with you or with anyone
6 else in the home, if you notice that they are more
7 tearful, or they just seem to have a behavioral
8 change as far as like more irritability. So not
9 just a general irritability you might see if they're
10 sleepy or they're hungry, but it's something that's
11 more sustained or prolonged.

12 So you're noticing like day after day
13 they're very cranky for hours at a time, or they're
14 -- they have become more aggressive whenever they
15 are playing, or whenever we're doing things, or all
16 of a sudden, you know, they are hitting or doing
17 things that they wouldn't do before.

18 If you notice their sleep pattern has
19 changed, they are waking up in the middle of the
20 night and they were not. They are wanting to -- I
21 mean, a lot of kids do want to get into the bed with
22 their parents if they're afraid or they're scared,
23 but you notice that they are getting up and they're
24 talking about nightmares or scary dreams, or they
25 are crying in their sleep, things like that. So

1 just be mindful of little behavioral changes.

2 FRANK SKI: CEO Thurmond.

3 CEO THURMOND: And this is for our two
4 psychiatrists who are here. What would you
5 recommend or suggest for public policy officials
6 like myself and my colleagues? There's been clear
7 and concise direction about executive orders,
8 shelter in place, stay in your home, physical
9 distancing. What are some of the things we could do
10 at a public policy level to address some of the
11 emotional and psychological damage that's being done
12 that might mitigate some of the challenges that
13 you-all have suggested from a public policy
14 perspective?

15 DR. TRAMMEL: Well, I would say that
16 having resources readily available, and, thankfully,
17 we do have community service boards. We do have
18 hotlines, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

19 But I think it has to become more the norm
20 that we talk about mental health concerns, as
21 opposed to, you know, when we get to it.

22 So as we as a state recognize that mental
23 health issues are prominent at baseline, but
24 particularly in times like this, having public
25 service announcements might be helpful. This sort

1 of forum when experts come together to advise state
2 leaders and local leaders, those things can be
3 helpful. Making, when I say resources, also making
4 available screening tools and opportunities. People
5 need insurance, or if they don't have insurance they
6 need to have a way to have access to mental health
7 services.

8 You know, not everyone who has a mental
9 health problem is going to have a chronic mental
10 health problem. They may just need assistance for a
11 little while. But having the opportunity to access
12 those services is very important.

13 FRANK SKI: All right. Let's go, if we
14 can. We have Commissioner Larry Johnson, who is
15 with us via video. Commissioner Johnson.

16 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Hello, DeKalb
17 County residents. I'm DeKalb County Commissioner
18 Larry Johnson. I'm chairing this year's U. S.
19 Census, and I want to make sure that you're counted
20 in each and every way.

21 Right now each person in DeKalb is worth
22 about \$2,400 if we complete our census. This will
23 give us \$1.8 billion for the next ten years. This
24 will help pay for our roads, our bridges, our
25 sidewalks, help us with our children for our school

1 lunches, help our seniors who may need repairs in
2 their homes. It's all about making a difference.

3 Right now we have a 45% response rate. We
4 have to get that rate up because we want to make
5 sure that everyone is counted in DeKalb. It only
6 takes ten minutes, 10 questions. You can do it
7 online. You have gotten it in the mail. We want to
8 make sure that you fill it out.

9 And here's some more information that you
10 need to make sure that our census and you are
11 counted. If you don't have the form, you can go to
12 My2020census.gov, My2020Census.gov, or you can go to
13 our website that's listed DeKalbcounts2020.org,
14 DeKalbcounts2020.org. But we need you to fill it
15 out. Thank you and be safe.

16 FRANK SKI: Thank you very much,
17 Commissioner Johnson.

18 I'd like to introduce a video for you-all
19 because everyone counts, and like Commissioner
20 Johnson said we have to make sure we get the funding
21 needed for our schools, affordable housing, roads,
22 bridges, and much more.

23 Diamond Lewis and the DCTV team have put
24 together this informative video about being counted
25 in DeKalb.

1 (Video playing.)

2 (On video) Moderator: The 2020 census is
3 here, and even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic
4 millions of households have already responded. The
5 census counts every person living in the 50 states,
6 District of Columbia and five U. S. territories. A
7 full and accurate count ensures we receive our fair
8 share of funding for new schools, healthcare,
9 transportation, housing, parks and so much more.

10 (On video) CEO Thurmond: I'm DeKalb
11 County CEO Michael Thurmond, and I want to make sure
12 you are counted in the 2020 census. It's critical
13 for our future. The census determines how key
14 resources and political power are distributed.

15 Our fair share of more than \$650 billion
16 dollars in federal funding is at stake.

17 (On video) Larry Johnson: Making sure
18 you're counted in the 2020 census is important
19 because your children need this.

20 (On video) Diamond Lewis: The 2020 census
21 is easy, important, and confidential. You have
22 three options for responding: Online, by phone, and
23 by mail. It's DeKalb's future, and it's in our
24 hands. You can learn more by visiting
25 DeKalbCounts2020.org.

1 (On Video) CEO Thurmond: Make sure
2 everyone is counted.

3 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: I challenge you to
4 make sure that your neighbors, your friends and
5 family are all counted.

6 (On video) Diamond Lewis: Make sure we're
7 all counted in the 2020 census. #countmeindekalb.

8 (Female and child resident):
9 #countmeindekalb.

10 (Male resident): #countmeindekalb.

11 (Male and female resident):
12 #countmeindekalb

13 (Multiple residents) #countmeindekalb

14 (End of video.)

15 FRANK SKI: The census is very important
16 from a financial standpoint. Explain to the
17 citizens of DeKalb what that means, what those
18 numbers mean, and what they equal so that they
19 understand how important it is.

20 CEO THURMOND: Excellent question, Frank.
21 It's about -- first it's about dollars and cents.
22 As Commissioner Larry Johnson pointed out, it's
23 about \$2,400 per person of the 750,000 residents.
24 That's if our residents and citizens are properly
25 accounted for in the census.

1 It's also about political power in terms
2 of representation at the federal, state and local
3 level. As was pointed out, and the census, we're in
4 the middle of this pandemic, but this is one thing
5 you can do in the safety of your home, online, fill
6 out the form, as Commissioner Johnson stated, who,
7 by the way, is leading the effort here in DeKalb
8 County. Ms. Delores Crowell sits on the statewide
9 Census Committee. And we are committed to making
10 sure that every DeKalb resident and citizen gets
11 counted. And it's especially important for public
12 education.

13 As you know, I spent some time working
14 with the DeKalb School District, and every child
15 that presents himself or herself must be given the
16 right to a public education.

17 You don't have to be a quote, unquote,
18 citizen, or the parent doesn't be, doesn't have to
19 be, in order for that child to be presented and
20 enrolled in our schools. So if we don't count
21 everyone, then we are short in terms of money needed
22 to provide the education and training needed for
23 every child in our community.

24 FRANK SKI: Let me ask you this. I have a
25 couple of questions for you.

1 On Tuesday I was delivering food to some
2 senior citizens building. My mother is a senior and
3 lives in a building. And most of the senior citizen
4 buildings have been closed off because of the
5 sensitivity of our older population, but at the same
6 time there is so many things that they are lacking
7 in there.

8 What has the conversation on the county
9 level been about helping our seniors?

10 CEO THURMOND: Thank you, Frank. First,
11 let me thank you for your ongoing efforts. Even
12 before COVID, you were out there serving our seniors
13 and supporting them.

14 Through Damon Scott, who oversees our
15 senior citizens program here in DeKalb County, we
16 are feeding, serving 1,000 seniors every day since
17 the beginning of this pandemic.

18 Through Meals on Wheels and through our
19 own employees, we are making sure that our most
20 vulnerable population receives the nutrition needed.
21 And that's 3,000 seniors. I said 1,000. Let me get
22 it right now. Mr. Williams corrected me. 3,000
23 seniors every day. And we're very proud of that.
24 And we deliver meals to homes and we support our
25 Meals on Wheels program.

1 But let me add one more thing. The two
2 most vulnerable populations, of course, are seniors
3 and our children. Working with the DeKalb County
4 School District we are also at nine rec centers
5 along with the school district are providing snacks
6 in the afternoon for children.

7 And as you know, and as all of the
8 professionals, when school is open oftentimes the
9 only really nutritious meal many of our children
10 receive every day is through the public schools.

11 And so with school being closed, we've
12 worked with the DeKalb School District
13 Superintendent Ramona Tyson, and they have over 30
14 sites. And we are very, very proud that nine of our
15 career centers -- Chuck Ellis, who's the Parks
16 director here, has been very focused and committed
17 to making sure that we do everything we can to
18 provide food for our children. Because, you know,
19 mental health and physical, if you don't have food
20 it's almost impossible to teach a child in a way and
21 to train a child in a way that might benefit them
22 going forward.

23 FRANK SKI: And the last question, because
24 you alluded to it as well, is the school. They have
25 implemented a kind of statewide plan on the testing

1 that will not be done. I know that some of my older
2 kids from their school, the whole grading system has
3 been changed.

4 The parents that are listening now or
5 watching right now, what do they have to look
6 forward to as far as how we're going to deal with
7 these kids not being in school?

8 CEO THURMOND: And now I'm wishing
9 Ms. Tyson was here. They're on spring break. She's
10 normally here. But let me say, she's done a
11 phenomenal job.

12 And what I want -- parents, first of all,
13 should contact their children's teachers and
14 principals at the schools of which they're
15 attending. I know a tremendous amount of investment
16 has gone into online learning. And, Ms. Tyson, I
17 talk to her at least once or twice every week, she's
18 a good friend.

19 So contact your school, your teacher, your
20 principal. If you're not satisfied then elevate it
21 to the regional superintendent, and even to the
22 superintendent's office at the central office there
23 on Hugh Howell.

24 But I believe from what I've read DeKalb
25 County is very, very invested in making sure that

1 children are not negatively impacted by the impact
2 of this virus, and the fact that they won't be able
3 to complete the school year.

4 And one of the things that I was talking
5 to a friend -- and I'm going back, and I'm so glad
6 these two ladies are here, I'm glad the doctors are
7 here -- but I think about the seniors who won't have
8 a senior prom or a graduation.

9 And how can parents -- and I'm asking --
10 help, and you know, do what we can. And not just
11 parents, but also relatives and friends? Because
12 that's a special moment in just about every child's
13 life.

14 So what can we do to help children over
15 this challenge that they are going to face in the
16 next few months with no prom, no graduation?

17 DR. ALVARADO BROWN: So it's a struggle
18 dealing with disappointments. I think we all are,
19 you know, there is proms, there is dances, there is
20 recitals, there is graduations, there is weddings.
21 There is a lot of different things that have had to
22 be postponed or cancelled because of this pandemic.

23 And I think our seniors, they're aware of
24 what's going on. It doesn't mean that they don't
25 have hurt feelings, that they are not angry, that

1 they are not saddened by the fact that they don't
2 get to have the same type of experience that those
3 who came before them did, or those that come after
4 them will.

5 So the first thing I would say is just
6 allow them to acknowledge that disappointment, and
7 allow them to feel what they are feeling as far as
8 is concerned, yes, we're dealing with a pandemic and
9 we're dealing with grief and death. But, yes, this
10 is something that was important to them.

11 So allow them to feel that, that feeling
12 because I think sometimes people feel guilty about
13 feeling disappointed and feeling angry that they had
14 that loss when we're dealing with such a huge issue.
15 But it's okay for them to feel that way.

16 And then after that when moving forward I
17 recommend finding a way, finding an out-of-box or
18 creative solution, to being able to still celebrate
19 them. So just because they are not going to be able
20 to walk across the stage, or have that moment,
21 doesn't mean that they still can't be celebrated.

22 And I've seen some fantastic creative
23 ideas on social media of parents celebrating their
24 kids. I've seen a father take his daughter to the
25 prom, and they had a prom at home where they had

1 dinner and a meal. And he posted the videos on
2 social media so that their family could be involved
3 and see her all dressed up with her corsage and her
4 dress and having a special prom moment with her dad.

5 I've seen those who have celebrated their
6 seniors by making sure that they are still going to
7 have banners and signs and things in the yard and
8 posting, things like that. And you could possibly
9 have a family caravan of cars go past the house just
10 to honk and celebrate your senior. It doesn't mean
11 just because we're physically distant that we are
12 disconnected. So we can still celebrate.

13 FRANK SKI: Let's go to a video question.

14 (Video question playing.) Hi, my name is
15 Sander Hoffman. And my question is why is it that
16 younger people are at less of a risk to the
17 coronavirus?

18 FRANK SKI: Dr. Ford, is that statement
19 true, first of all?

20 DR. FORD: I was going to say I don't even
21 -- I would not say that's true. And that's part of
22 the problem we have is that the youth believe that
23 they are at less risk.

24 What we said from the start was that they
25 may be lucky enough to have a milder course, but we

1 never said that the risk was less.

2 I think that what we're finding in the
3 young population is that they tend to be more of
4 those asymptomatic carriers that were described
5 earlier, and so they are in some ways our most
6 worrisome group because they are walking around
7 symptom free, but they may be passing the virus on
8 to other individuals that have weaker immune
9 systems. So they are one of the groups we worry
10 most about.

11 FRANK SKI: All right.

12 CEO THURMOND: Frank, excuse me.

13 FRANK SKI: Yes, sir.

14 CEO THURMOND: I just got a text from our
15 interim school superintendent with an answer to your
16 question.

17 FRANK SKI: Technology is amazing, isn't
18 it?

19 CEO THURMOND: So this is from our
20 superintendent Ms. Ramona Tyson in response to Mr.
21 Ski's question.

22 (Reading) We will release end of year
23 information for all parents on Tuesday April 14th.
24 It will include decisions on grading for pre-K
25 through 12, graduation, end of year dates, final

1 phase of digital learning, summer learning
2 opportunities, reimbursements, et cetera.

3 FRANK SKI: Okay.

4 CEO THURMOND: And she also said "I'm
5 watching, it's excellent," so.

6 FRANK SKI: All right. There you go.

7 Let's go to La'Keitha Carlos with another
8 question.

9 MS. CARLOS: As far as goes on stocking up
10 on things to prepare you for the quarantine, what
11 medications or supplies should residents have during
12 a quarantine? What should you already have in your
13 home, or as you are going to the grocery store and
14 right now, what should you keep in your home?

15 FRANK SKI: Toilet paper. No, just
16 kidding.

17 DR. FORD: No, that's a true thing.

18 FRANK SKI: Just kidding. Just kidding.

19 DR. FORD: So if you can find anything in
20 the grocery store right now, I'd be highly
21 impressed.

22 FRANK SKI: Yes.

23 DR. FORD: I had a just a plain ol'
24 migraine and could not find acetaminophen to save my
25 life, and it took me three stores before I actually

1 just found some.

2 Part of the reason for that is because
3 we've been hearing that NSAIDS are not recommended
4 for treating fevers at this point because it's
5 thought that they decrease the immune response. So
6 what people are doing is cleaning out the Tylenol,
7 and the acetaminophen off the shelves. So if you
8 can find some, keep it.

9 Good old aspirin still works for fever.
10 But anything that addresses your aches and pains but
11 doesn't suppress your immune system. Stay -- so I
12 hate to use brand names but just stay away from
13 Ibuprofen, any other types of NSAIDS, if you can,
14 avoid them.

15 But fever reducers, decongestants are
16 great. We're also in allergy season. So you might
17 want to think about making sure that, you know, the
18 symptoms you might think are COVID may actually just
19 be good ol' pollen. So just stocking up on those
20 kinds of things. I'm always a big fan of vitamin C,
21 orange juice, fluids.

22 Stay away from the junk food because there
23 is lots of reasons why that's not going to be good
24 for you, or at least in moderation. But mostly just
25 fluids and good healthy fruits and vegetables. I

1 have seen a lot of people now starting their own
2 gardens because it's so hard to find fresh produce
3 right now.

4 FRANK SKI: All right. I have got another
5 question for Dr. Carroll via Zoom, Dr. O'Carroll
6 that is.

7 In the midst of this pandemic we've heard
8 so many different versions of how the virus is
9 transmitted, is it airborne, is six feet of
10 separation enough? How long does the virus stay in
11 the air when a person that has it comes past?

12 DR. O'CARROLL: Those are very good
13 questions. Let's start with the absolute most basic
14 thing. You can't get infected with COVID or
15 coronavirus disease if you're not exposed to the
16 virus. So start with that.

17 And how do you avoid being exposed to the
18 virus? Well, as far as we can tell with the current
19 epidemiology, the way this is spread is typically
20 person to person, or person to a surface that we
21 then touch and accidentally touch our face and
22 infect ourself in that way.

23 The idea, the thought is that if somebody
24 sneezes or coughs and you're within about three feet
25 of that person, you could very well inhale the

1 droplets that come out that may be too small to see
2 just as you're passing by, that person by. One of
3 the many reasons CDC has suggested people walk
4 around with these cloth masks for a while, just in
5 case you have a cough you didn't see coming as you
6 were passing someone walking around, or you're
7 walking to the grocery store.

8 They don't stay suspended in the air for a
9 long time. Typically droplets spread diseases. The
10 droplets are too heavy to stay in the air for more
11 than a few seconds and they settle.

12 So going outside and breathing the air is
13 perfectly fine if you keep six feet distance from
14 people, then you should essentially avoid being
15 contaminated by the virus.

16 Now, again, when people cough and those
17 droplets settle, they may settle right on the
18 checkout machine at the grocery store or on the
19 handle of the door that they're using to open the
20 door when they cough or sneeze, and then you come by
21 a few minutes later.

22 And this virus does live for at least a
23 few hours and sometimes up to certain -- up to days
24 on certain surfaces. Apparently it lives on
25 cardboard for a few days, which is why some people,

1 when they get a package, will set it aside, wash
2 their hands after putting it in the corner and then
3 not touching it for a couple of days because the
4 virus will eventually die, even -- you may never
5 know whether there was or was not a virus on that,
6 but better safe than sorry.

7 So, again, it's nothing mystical about
8 this. We'll know more as the epidemiology becomes
9 clearer. But you can't get disease if you're not
10 exposed to the virus, and if you keep separated from
11 these folks who may have disease even if they don't
12 know it by six feet they are very unlikely to infect
13 you.

14 And if you get it on your hands, that's
15 one vehicle for getting infected, which is why hand
16 washing becomes so important.

17 FRANK SKI: Thank you.

18 I have got another question: (Reading
19 question) I am on the board of a small Decatur
20 condo complex with 30 residential units. We did
21 some research about whether or not to allow a maid
22 service to disinfect the common space, or whether to
23 allow -- or to inform residents to disinfect it on
24 their own and practice social distancing. We did
25 post a sign and ultimately decided to have the

1 service come in to clean and disinfect. Is this the
2 right thing to do?

3 Dr. Ford?

4 DR. FORD: Well, I think any type of
5 disinfection is always a great thing to do. You
6 know, again, though, disinfecting is a moment in
7 time. So that's something that has to be done
8 constantly.

9 So, you know, if you do that, that doesn't
10 mean you're good for the rest of the season. You
11 still need to continue this, practice all those
12 other precautions because people think once you wipe
13 down a surface, you can just keep touching it. So
14 it has to be a constant thing.

15 FRANK SKI: Okay. Let's go to La'Keitha
16 Carlos again with another question.

17 MS. CARLOS: There's been a lot of
18 discussion about people who have been COVID
19 positive, and recovered from the virus being able to
20 help those who are later diagnosed as COVID
21 positive.

22 So the question is from someone who was
23 diagnosed in March as COVID positive and was very
24 sick for 22 days and then later tested negative for
25 the virus. His question is: Where can I donate

1 plasma that can be used to help extremely sick
2 COVID-19 patients?

3 FRANK SKI: Maybe that's a Dr. O'Carroll
4 question, or Dr. Ross.

5 DR. O'CARROLL: Yeah, I don't actually
6 know the phone number for it, but I do know that the
7 CDC has said that there is no reason to stop
8 donating blood. The donations of blood are critical
9 to our modern healthcare all over the country, they
10 remain critical today.

11 So donating blood in general whether or
12 not you're post COVID disease positive or not is
13 still something we can do.

14 I think in this case I would recommend
15 calling the Red Cross or other places where you
16 might normally donate blood and ask them what their
17 procedures are.

18 I suspect that as the epidemiology and the
19 research changes day-to-day, their policies may also
20 be changing day-to-day. So rather than giving a
21 blanket answer, my recommendation would be first
22 congratulations for thinking of that. That's a
23 wonderful thing to think of. And then I would say
24 reach out to a blood donation center like the Red
25 Cross or some place else that might take blood and

1 see what their policies are.

2 MS. CARLOS: So the question on social
3 media has been that it's been posed is because there
4 have been hospitals that have reached out to their
5 communities asking for those who have recovered from
6 the virus to donate to emergency rooms plasma.

7 Is that a real -- is that a thing, and
8 have studies shown that plasma from patients who
9 have recovered being -- to be helpful? Dr. Ford?

10 DR. FORD: I hope that's true. You -- one
11 would assume that if you were fortunate enough to
12 recover you would have some antibodies against
13 COVID. So at this point I think what's happening is
14 that as folks become ill, more sicker and sicker
15 we're trying everything.

16 And so I don't think there is any harm in
17 that. If your plasma will help, if you have
18 antibodies, I think that's -- that's wonderful.
19 That would be something that still needs to be
20 researched, though.

21 FRANK SKI: All right. Let's go to
22 another video question that was sent in.

23 (Video question playing.) Hello. Yes, my
24 name is Paula Smith. I'm currently a resident of
25 DeKalb County. And my question is what are you guys

1 planning on doing in reference to the influx of
2 people who are looking at becoming homeless because
3 the landlords are not forgiving rent payments, but
4 yet we're not able to go back to work? Thank you.
5 Bye-bye.

6 FRANK SKI: CEO?

7 CEO THURMOND: Thank you. And let me
8 acknowledge the work of Chief Judge Asha Jackson who
9 has issued an executive order on the heels of an
10 order that was issued by the Chief Justice of our
11 State Supreme Court Mr. Harold Melton, who is also a
12 DeKalb County resident, that all evictions have been
13 frozen for 60 days.

14 And Chief Jackson has issued an order.
15 For people who want additional information, call our
16 311 center so that you can get a copy of Judge
17 Jackson's order that freezes those evictions because
18 the last thing the Judge, and she's spoken to this,
19 want or need, or we need as a county, is for people
20 being thrown out on the street at this time. So
21 that's the result of Chief Jackson.

22 Also Chief Magistrate Judge Beryl Anderson
23 is also working to protect individuals so that they
24 can maintain a roof over their head during this
25 critical time.

1 FRANK SKI: There's been a lot of
2 questions, CEO, about the homeless population in
3 general. How is the County dealing with that
4 situation amidst this pandemic?

5 CEO THURMOND: By far our most vulnerable
6 population, no question about it. Mr. Allen
7 Mitchell oversees our effort to assist and support
8 the homeless in DeKalb.

9 Initially even before the national
10 emergency was declared by President Trump through
11 Mr. Allen's direction and working with our nonprofit
12 partners we provided sanitation packets, too, into
13 the homeless camps and the people on the street to
14 encourage them to be more careful about at least
15 sanitizing their hands and addressing their hygiene.

16 We've also began to negotiate emergency
17 housing for people who might be positive COVID so
18 that we can get them into a location not just to
19 improve the opportunities for their health, but to
20 limit their interaction with other populations.

21 We're very proud that DeKalb County has
22 received a \$1.7 million grant within the last two
23 weeks that will be used in multiple ways to assist
24 and support whether it's housing, food and shelter,
25 and to work with the Department of Public Health.

1 If we come into contact with a person who
2 may exhibit signs, flu-like symptoms, they are
3 reported to the Department of Public Health. And
4 Dr. Ford's staff has been very, very conscientious
5 and focused on providing them with as much medical
6 intervention as possible.

7 FRANK SKI: All right. Let's go to
8 another question. La'Keitha Carlos.

9 MS. CARLOS: We have a question for
10 Dr. Ross. With all of your experience fighting
11 sicknesses around the world, can you offer any
12 guidance on when will it be a good time to interact
13 with the public again and do less social distancing
14 in the community?

15 DR. ROSS: That's the \$64,000 question
16 everybody asks, everybody wants to know is when will
17 this be over when can I go out?

18 What we see globally is this disease is
19 spreading everywhere. It has now even reached
20 fairly rural populations in a number of African
21 countries. This is an airborne transmissible virus,
22 and it will continue to spread until there is a
23 vaccine.

24 I think to -- I think it's best for people
25 to be prepared that this disease may wane in the

1 summer, and I say "may" because it's not an absolute
2 fact that it will. It probably will be back with us
3 in the fall for sure. And it will remain with us
4 until there is a vaccine and we have a vast majority
5 of the public vaccinated against it.

6 So when will you be able to go out? I
7 think our County Executive and the Governor of the
8 state will make announcements when they feel that
9 the data show that the rate of new infections, new
10 cases, has declined so low that we appear to be
11 ahead of the transmission.

12 But it probably also means that when
13 people go out, even over this summer, I would bet
14 you're going to see mostly people being recommended
15 to stay apart, socially distant, to wear masks, to
16 continue to do sanitizing of their hands and their
17 surfaces in their houses because this virus has not
18 gone away.

19 FRANK SKI: All right. I have another
20 question for CEO Thurmond. This week end we're into
21 Holy Week. There's been a lot of discussion and a
22 lot of debate with people really wanting to go to
23 church, or stay home. And I know you're very
24 involved in the church community. What would your
25 advice be to the members of and the citizens of

1 DeKalb County?

2 CEO THURMOND: Well, I have been so proud
3 of our faith leaders who I have had the opportunity
4 to speak with and to pray with, and they pray for me
5 and for our county during this challenging time.

6 Pastor Bryant at New Birth, and Dr. Watley at Saint
7 Philips, and Reverend Flippin and Reverend
8 Dr. Jasper Williams have all rallied together.

9 And, you know, obviously Easter is just
10 one of the most looked forward, one of the most
11 anticipated of all the celebrations in our church
12 and worship opportunities, but that won't be
13 available to us this year. But, you know, we can
14 still pray. Whatever your faith is, whether it's
15 Christian or Jew or Muslim or Hindu, we still can
16 pray.

17 And whether we're in church with our --
18 and what the psychiatrist said, we can still get
19 dressed up Sunday morning if we choose. And many
20 parents, as I thought about what you said, parents,
21 it might be a good idea. I'm not the psychiatrist,
22 but let's get the kids dressed up come Easter
23 morning. Let's take the family photograph. You can
24 still hide the eggs in the front yard, and you can
25 still be thankful for all that we do have. In the

1 midst of the trials and the tribulations, the death
2 and the sickness, we can thank whoever we pray to
3 for the blessing of the life that we do have.

4 And so let's not -- because you know,
5 Easter is still Easter. He's still -- and, matter
6 of fact, that message may be more powerful this year
7 than any year ever before, right? Because he did
8 get up. And COVID is a disease, but there is no
9 disease more debilitating than death. And if you
10 can overcome death, you can overcome COVID. So
11 let's all celebrate Easter this year.

12 FRANK SKI: All right, Pastor Thurmond.

13 Let's go to La'Keitha Carlos with another
14 question.

15 MS. CARLOS: This is a question about
16 short-term assistance for those with mental health
17 issues or episodes. In reality, if you have a child
18 or an adult who lives with you that needs mental
19 health assistance, there is no place available for
20 them other than taking them to the hospital. And
21 since we are advising people not to go to the
22 hospital to reduce their level of exposure, is there
23 a place for people to go for short-term assistance
24 with mental health issues?

25 DR. TRAMMEL: Well, there are community

1 mental health centers that as Dr. Alvarado said and
2 at the DeKalb Community Service Board as well, we
3 are offering telehealth visits. So that is
4 definitely a resource. It's a matter of calling for
5 an intake appointment.

6 I would remind individuals who may work
7 for a larger company that employee assistance
8 programs are a resource. NAMI, the National
9 Alliance on Mental Illness, they have -- the website
10 is NAMI.org. That is a wonderful resource for
11 information about mental health issues. They even
12 have a guidebook for COVID-19. So there are some
13 online resources as well.

14 I guess the most important thing is that
15 there are resources. It's just a matter of -- if
16 it's even looking online, most of the counties, I
17 believe all of them, are connected with a Community
18 Service Board or Community Mental Health Center of
19 some sort. And those are particularly helpful for
20 individuals who may or may not have insurance.

21 So definitely do not get -- give up hope.
22 There are aids and resources available.

23 DR. ALVARADO BROWN: And just to
24 piggyback, the State of Georgia has a crisis line
25 for those who have mental health needs. The Georgia

1 Crisis and Access Line is open 24/7. It is staffed
2 by licensed social workers and licensed mental
3 health professionals. That number is
4 1-800-715-4225. And you can call that number at any
5 time and they will direct you to where you need to
6 go.

7 CEO THURMOND: Can you repeat the number
8 one more time?

9 DR. ALVARADO BROWN: Yes. It's
10 1-800-715-4225.

11 FRANK SKI: All right. Thank you very
12 much.

13 And always remember to check in on your
14 family, even though you're inside, make sure you
15 pick up the phone and call your family members.

16 That concludes our question and answer
17 session for this evening's third COVID-19 Town Hall.
18 I'd like to introduce you again to CEO Michael
19 Thurmond.

20 CEO THURMOND: Thank you. But, Frank,
21 before you leave I just want to personally thank you
22 for finding time to come and to assist and support
23 us today. But more than that, you've just been an
24 all-star. You have been throughout your career. I
25 remember when you first came down from Baltimore to

1 Atlanta, and it's been an amazing journey.

2 FRANK SKI: Thank you.

3 CEO THURMOND: And we appreciate you so
4 much. You speak to millions of people every day and
5 you save lives, you inform, you empower. And we
6 just appreciate you so much.

7 FRANK SKI: Thank you so much.

8 CEO THURMOND: It's only because we're
9 physically distant, but let's give Frank Ski a round
10 of applause.

11 (Applause.)

12 FRANK SKI: Thank you.

13 CEO THURMOND: Thank you, Frank.

14 And to the Panel, thank you all so much.
15 You all have done a phenomenal job. Thank you for
16 volunteering to come and be with us.

17 Dr. O'Carroll, Dr. Ross, thank you for
18 your continued dedication, commitment to saving
19 lives and improving the health of our county, state
20 and nation. And Dr. Ross in particular, thank you
21 for being there for me. He's been an amazing
22 resource as I have tried to lead this county in the
23 midst of this unprecedented challenge.

24 And thank you to the people who made this
25 broadcast possible. This is our third town hall,

1 virtual town hall. But the people who made it
2 possible are people did not appear on screen
3 tonight, and I want to thank you for coming to the
4 frontline to having worked night and day over the
5 last two weeks to make this possible. Diamond Lewis
6 and her staff, John Matelski and the staff. Quinn,
7 Wallace, in communication and so many other people.
8 The CEO's office. You see Ms. Carlos, but also Zach
9 Williams and Delores Crowell, thank you so much.

10 Now, I promised them that this would be
11 the last one for a while, and I may or may not be
12 able to keep that promise. But thank you all so
13 much.

14 And thank you to my fellow colleagues at
15 DeKalb County Government. You're doing an amazing
16 job. You really are. And I'm just honored to stand
17 with you at this critical time.

18 I want to thank Commissioner Presiding
19 Officer Steve Bradshaw, Board of Commissioners, our
20 House and Senate delegation, the DeKalb Municipal
21 Association, our constitutional officers, judges,
22 thank you all for rallying to this flag at this
23 point in time.

24 We are going to rise up together to face,
25 and not just face, but to overcome this challenge

1 and we will emerge a stronger county, a stronger
2 state and a stronger nation. That's my commitment.

3 And I wish all of you well. Happy Easter.
4 For those who are celebrating Passover, I send you
5 my best wishes. To all faiths and religions, peace
6 be with you.

7 (Town Hall concluded at 8:18 p.m. with
8 the replaying of the opening video feature of
9 photographs from the DeKalb community and the
10 sound of Andra Day's Rise Up playing.)

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