

8.24.20 Notes from the Governor's Briefing:

COVID:

- Lowest infection rate to date - 0.66%
- Gov. said infection rate has been "consistent, not an anomaly"
- 482 hospitalizations
- 120 ICU patients
- 54 intubations
- 7 lives lost on 8/23

REOPENING:

- Slight increase in cases/infection rate in Western NY
- New testing sites being set up at JFK & LaGuardia to speed up testing
- 34 violations issued by SLA over the weekend
- Gov. stated village of Westhampton drive-in concert series demonstrated good compliance and enforcement
- Gov. discussed success of MTA's daily disinfecting efforts, accelerated construction of L Train tunnel
- Eliminated another LIRR grade crossing and opened New Hyde Park Road to vehicle traffic two months ahead of schedule, part of Third Track project which will be completed in 2022

STORM RESPONSE:

- Gov. called utility companies' response to outages as "completely unacceptable"
- Gov. said he is proposing legislation to increase legal limit on penalties for companies that fail to adequately respond to outages, current law is \$100,000 or .02 of 1% of gross operating revenues
- Gov. stated utility companies currently see penalties as a cost of doing business
- Legislation will also create streamlined process for revocation of operating certificates for recurring failures
- Legislation will require a mandatory communication system during outages to give accurate restoration info to customers

SCHOOLS:

- Low-risk sports (tennis, soccer, swimming, field hockey, cross country) allowed in all regions beginning Sept. 21
- Guidance will be posted by DOH
- No travel practice/play outside a school's region until October 19th
- High-risk sports with physical contact can practice but not play

EXECUTIVE ORDERS:

- Five executive orders Gov. will be signing:
- Extending temporary illness option to elections not administered by BOE
- Mandate county boards to send mailing to voters notifying them of deadlines to request absentee ballots
- Directing BOE to create new envelopes to eliminate confusion over where to sign absentee ballots
- Requiring county boards to take necessary measures to expedite counting of absentee ballots
- Directing county boards to report staffing plans and any additional staffing needs to the state by Sept 20th so state can assist

Q&A:

- On whether DOH could challenge an FDA vaccine mandate:
- Gov. said once all facts are available, he will look into this

- On MTA deficit:
- MTA ridership down "dramatically", but operating costs remain the same
- Without federal aid, MTA will have to "find savings where they can"
- Gov. stressed federal government "failed"
- Lieber added that hiring freeze is in place, jobs will not be filled unless feds intervene

- On how regions are defined in reopening guidance:
- Gov. stated initial phased reopening plans include designated regions