

Cuomo: 'Anything anyone needs in Buffalo ... will be there'

In a new conference Sunday, Gov. Andrew Cuomo further explained his idea calling for the transfer of ventilators and personal protective equipment from upstate New York to the downstate area.

When he first announced this plan on Friday, several of Western New York's elected leaders and medical executives expressed concerns that the mandate could weaken treatment measures at local hospitals.

Cuomo was asked what he would say to the residents of upstate New York who are concerned a transfer of items would leave people here more vulnerable.

"I would say this ... the executive order, I'm adding a couple of other things to the executive order; I'm going to have to extend a few policies that are going to expire. The concept here, that people have to get is, nobody can handle this alone. Nobody," Cuomo said. "The people of New York City cannot handle this alone. The people of Nassau can't handle it alone. People of Suffolk can't handle it alone. People of Westchester can't handle it alone. People of Buffalo can't handle it alone. People of Albany can't handle it alone. Period. That is just a fact.

"This virus will overwhelm the resources of any single community. It's also true nationwide. Our wisdom here in New York - our mental wisdom, and our ethos - is we'll help one another. This surge flex, every day, we sit there allocating among hospitals, shifting gowns, shifting masks, shifting patients. Nassau needs this; Suffolk needs this; Westchester needs this. And that's the only way we're doing it, by shifting of those resources.

"We will come to a point where that wave will run right through the state. And we're going to have to do that for Albany, and Rochester, and Syracuse, and the North Country, and the Hudson Valley - that is going to happen. And I guarantee the people of this state that, as long as I'm governor of this state, we won't lose a life if we can prevent it. And we're not gonna lose a life because we didn't share resources among ourselves.

"Anything anyone needs in Buffalo, to fight this virus when it hits Buffalo, will be there. If it comes from Montauk Point, and I have to get in the truck and drive it from Montauk Point to Buffalo, it will be there.

"And that's the way we've governed this state, and that's the way we've operated. That was our mentality post-9/11. That's how the state has operated for the past 10 years. And that's how we will be going forward: Whatever any community needs, we will be there.

"Now, I understand the fear. 'Well, if I lend you my ventilator, what happens when I need the ventilator?' That was FDR and the garden hose, right? (A story the governor shared Saturday). First of all, smart is you don't want your house to burn down, don't let the neighbor's house burn down. When the fire hits the neighbor's house, it's in your self interest to put out the fire in the neighbor's house. Not only is it the right community/moral/ethical thing, it's the smart, practical thing.

"Why did Oregon send us 140 ventilators? Because they're very nice people. Yes. Gov. Brown is a great leader. Why else? Because



Gov. Andrew Cuomo delivered his daily COVID-19 coronavirus press briefing in the Red Room of the Capitol on Sunday. Cuomo announced the federal government is deploying approximately 1,000 personnel to New York. (Photo: Darren McGee/Office of Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo)

they see the fire spreading. And they say, 'Better we put out the fire before it gets to us.'

"If I'm sitting in upstate New York right now, and I see that fire coming up, I say, 'Let's go put that fire out, before it gets to us.' But even if the fire gets to you, every hose in this state that can be sent to you, because they don't need it, will be sent to you.

"And, all we're asking, is for ventilators that you aren't using now, and you don't foresee using in the foreseeable future. Right? I say to you ... 'Do you have any ventilators that you're not using, and you don't think you're going to need in the foreseeable future?'

"Yes, I do. I have 10.'

"OK; let me borrow two.'

"The 20% is what gets you to the 500 ventilators."

It was said 500 ventilators could

be taken for the downstate area - "taken" being the operative word, because Cuomo said the National Guard would be used to acquire and transport the breathing apparatus.

Cuomo was asked how many ventilators have been claimed at this time.

"None," he said. "I just wanted to know where they are, if we need them; right?"

"For planning purposes, we know where every ventilator is in the state of New York now. There are little dots, right? We know where every ventilator is.

"I want to know, as we're going through this, day to day to day to day - and we have, by the way, hospitals that get down to two or three ventilators. I mean, that's how tight a margin we're operating on. I want to know what's Plan B, what's Plan C, if we get to it. And where are

they?

"And then, look, it's a ventilator. We had one here. It's on a stand; it's on wheels. You can move them on a day-to-day basis. Nobody's gonna get caught short. It's not like you can't move ventilators from one place to the other.

"And you look at the (COVID-19 apex) curve. That's why I say, even nationally, you cannot do this any other way. I don't see any other operational model. It's, when a place is at the apex, all the firefighters run to the apex, with their hoses. And then the next place on the apex, you redeploy to that apex.

"New York City, the apex is either very, very soon, or we're on a plateau. Do what you can then, and then we redeploy.

"We talk about the family of New York, right? I must have said that 1 million times: 'Family of New York; family of New York.' Yes, yes, yes. What does 'family of New York' mean? Mutuality, cooperation, sharing benefits and burdens.

"OK; this is the time the family has to come together. This is the time. Not just out of spirit and love, out of necessity. You cannot handle this without your brothers and sisters. You can't."

On Saturday, Cuomo announced 1,000 ventilators have been donated to New York by the Joseph and Clara Tsai Foundation. That organization, together with the Jack Ma Foundation, also donated 1 million surgical masks, 1 million KN95 masks, and more than 100,000 pairs of goggles to the state.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown also said her state would donate 140 ventilators to New York.

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