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IMMEDIATE

TRANSCRIPT: NYC Transit Interim President Sarah Feinberg Appears on ABC's 'Pandemic: What You Need to Know'

New York City Transit Interim President Sarah Feinberg appeared on ABC News "Pandemic: What You Need to Know" with Amy Robach to discuss the future of New York City Transit post-pandemic.

A transcript of the interview appears below.

Amy Robach: Welcome back. As New York City approaches Phase 1 of reopening anywhere from 200,000 to 400,000 people will be returning to work all at once. So, one of the biggest concerns for New Yorkers are the subways safe? Well, here to tell us about some of the precautions the MTA will be taking is New York City Transit Interim President, Sarah Feinberg. Sarah, thanks so much for being with us and it's June 8th right now that Phase 1 of the reopening of New York City begins. Governor Cuomo has said reopening doesn't mean going back to how things were in the past, so how is the MTA preparing for this Phase 1 of reopening?

Sarah Feinberg: That's right, well it's good to be with you. So, the first thing to know is we've been planning for this reopening since the beginning---so we've been planning for this now for many, many weeks. The first thing that we've been doing is cleaning and disinfecting the system, so we now clean and disinfect the stations twice a day and we clean and disinfect all of the fleet of rail cars multiple times a day. So, we're doing everything we can to make sure that the cars in the stations and the buses that people will be getting on are as clean and safe as possible. We're also doing, taking a lot of other steps, making sure that we've got hand sanitizer on hand at stations. Masks will absolutely be required but we'll also have a few masks on hand for those who for that first day or two forget their mask at home. So we're trying to do everything we can to both make sure that the system is safe and clean as possible and also communicate with our riders about what they can do to keep themselves safe.

Robach: Yeah and Sarah as you point out, this is the first time in New York City history that the subway system shut down for those cleanings but it has certainly been hitting the papers here in New York. The homeless problem that has erupted in the wake of this coronavirus crisis, what are you doing long-term to try and deal with that situation?

Feinberg: Well look, the fact that we've got folks who need and try to take shelter in our system, I think speaks to a much larger problem that the city of New York and that many other cities are facing. But you know we run a transportation system, we run a transit system, and while we do our best to offer social services where we can, that's not what our job is and it's really not what we should be doing because that's not what we're good at, right? So we count on the city to provide the social services to those who are experiencing homeless and we make sure that all of the riders leave the system every single night. The system closes down, we surge into the system and do a huge amount of cleaning and then when we reopen at 5 a.m. the system is really clean and disinfected for everyone.

Robach: Sarah, as a loyal subway rider for all of these years, 15 years I've lived in this city, I know how busy it gets--yes, I'm a big fan, fastest way to get around the city-- but the morning and the evening rush hours, we're packed in very closely together on those subway cars. So even if masks are required for riders, are there officers that will be enforcing social distancing? How will you handle this, will you hand out free masks to those who don't have them?

Feinberg: Right, spoken like a true New Yorker who uses the system just like I do, you're right. New Yorkers are used to being absolutely packed like sardines into subway cars in the morning and in the afternoon rush. That's never ideal. So what we're going to be telling people is you've got to be vigilant about your mask usage and you should put as much distance between you and the next person, you and other passengers, as possible. Obviously, six feet is ideal, if you can't get six feet get three, if you can't get three get one. You know, look, I think it's going to take a while for ridership to really click back to where it used to be at so for a while it'll be easier to get that distance. But the key is going to be to be vigilant about your mask usage.

Robach: I'm curious what you think about the CDC recommendations, that workers should avoid mass transit like the MTA. What do you think about that?

Feinberg: Well, look, it just doesn't work in New York City. So if people in New York City decide not to use mass transit and everyone gets in a car instead, no one's getting anywhere.

Robach: Sarah Feinberg, thank you very much for joining us today and for all of your efforts during these times. We appreciate it.

Feinberg: Great to be with you.

