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IMMEDIATE

TRANSCRIPT: MTA Chairman and CEO Patrick J. Foye Appears on WCBS 880 with Lynda Lopez to Discuss MTA's Ongoing Response to COVID-19

MTA Chairman and CEO Patrick J. Foye appeared on WCBS 880 with Lynda Lopez to discuss the MTA's ongoing response to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

A transcript of the interview appears below.

Lynda Lopez: Social distancing on mass transit, especially on subways continues to be a huge concern for city officials, as more MTA workers are being diagnosed with a COVID-19 coronavirus. MTA Chairman Pat Foye joins us live now on the news line. So Chairman Foye we know you recently had contracted the virus, so can you tell us how you're feeling?

Pat Foye: I'm feeling fine, apparently I've got a very mild case. I've been fortunate. 582 of my colleagues at the MTA have been confirmed positive, some of them are experiencing great difficulty. And we are all thinking and praying for all of our colleagues. And obviously, there have been a number of deaths. So this is not about me, but about the 582 colleagues who are confirmed, and in some cases, are going through a very difficult time.

Lynda Lopez: That's right. And we just noted that the CDC is now evaluating that guidance they gave about healthy people not needing to wear masks in public and the MTA was already evaluating that guidance, weren't they?

Pat Foye: Well, we weren't evaluating that guidance. We rejected it last week. Actually, the CDC is still advising for that matter, and the World Health Organization that masks be only assigned to doctors and nurses and God knows doctors and nurses need masks. But they were advising that everybody else not use masks and that masks could be harmful to the health of those people. Last week, we began distributing 75,000 masks a week. We did a joint announcement with the Transport Workers Union. And we're going to be increasing that number going forward for bus operators, train operators and others working on buses, subways, Long Island Rail Road and Metro North will get masks. We've given up on the CDC advice last week.

Lynda Lopez: Yes, which may be changing shortly anyway. As you mentioned, this is about the workers, the MTA workers who are being so tragically affected by this virus. What are you considering now as far as different measures, possibly screening for riders or reducing crowds in another way?

Pat Foye: Well, here's what we've done. We are messaging on our digital signage announcements on trains and buses. We believe that the crowding incidents have been sporadic, ridership is down 90% since the time pre-pandemic, and while there have been a couple of cases, in addition to messaging, we are working hard with the NYPD, with the MTA Police to control crowding and to tell riders that they ought to move to a different car, move down the platform or wait for the next train. It's a

very sporadic number of cases given the significant decline in ridership. But we're working hard to get the message out and working closely with the NYPD and the MTA Police.

Lynda Lopez: Are they finding it challenging or are people mostly complying?

Pat Foye: People are mostly complying as far as I know, no summonses have been issued. And I think the fact that the NYPD and the MTA Police are involved has helped control crowding. And we're very focused on this. We don't want the health of any customer or our employees to be endangered by the reduced service that we're running.

Lynda Lopez: MTA Chairman Pat Foye, thanks so much for joining us.

Pat Foye: Thank you.