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Press Release

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[NYC Transit](#)

IMMEDIATE

TRANSCRIPT: New York City Transit Interim President Sarah Feinberg Provides Update on Response to COVID-19

MTA Files Emergency Regulations to Strengthen Code of Conduct

Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) officials today provided an update on the agency's ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the MTA announced the filing of new emergency regulations to strengthen its Code of Conduct applicable to all customers.

The following changes have been put in place:

- No person is permitted to remain in a station for more than an hour.
- During a public health emergency declared by the state, no person can remain on a train or on the platform after an announcement that the train is being taken out of service.
- Wheeled carts greater than 30 inches in length or width, including shopping and grocery carts, are banned.

A full transcript of New York City Transit Interim President Sarah Feinberg's remarks is available below:

Sarah Feinberg: Thanks for joining us today. I want to provide an update on the homeless crisis and then we'll take any questions you have as well. We're pleased that the city has finally agreed to dedicate resources to address this issue. It is making a world of difference already for our customers and our employees, many of whom have felt fear and anxiety over the past few weeks. So I want to thank them for stepping up.

I want to be clear: the status quo has been completely unacceptable to us and it's my job to ensure that everyone who rides our system feels safe when they're riding with us, feels secure, and that our workforce feels safe and secure. Safety and security is an integral part of our mission.

So here are a few updates on progress we've made over the last 48 hours. The City deployed approximately 40 NYPD officers to World Trade Center Station on Monday evening. They were joined by 10 social service providers and 6 MTAPD officers. Working together, the team removed more than 100 riders who were remaining on the trains at the end of the line. And most importantly, those individuals were connected with the health care options and social services they need and deserve. During this time, access to the station was restricted for a short period of time while we cleaned all the train cars, the platforms and the station. Again, that was Monday night.

Last night I went up to the 96th Street Station on the Q line with my colleague Pat Warren. There we had about 20 NYPD and 7 MTAPD officers, and 10 social service workers. Again same process, train comes into the station, individuals who were on the train leave the train, cleaners entered the train and cleaned the train, and those who need social services and other services are offered them. Again, access was restricted during this time and social services were provided.

I spoke with several New Yorkers last night about their plight. I know others did as well. This has been a heartbreaking experience for all of us, this is not something new that we've been working on. This has been something we've been working on, at least under my tenure, for many months and something that the MTA has been working on for many years.

Individuals sleeping and living on trains is unacceptable for a lot of reasons but foremost, it's unacceptable because people deserve better lives than that. And I'm grateful and pleased that the city has stepped up and agreed that this is their responsibility to address this crisis and to provide services to these individuals. It is completely unacceptable to live in a city where an entire population of people have been left to fend for themselves when they need mental health care and they need housing services.

I want to make clear the nature of the program we've been working on to date. Again as I mentioned, this is an end of line, homeless outreach program that the MTA has been working on since I believe July -- my notes say August but I believe since July -- in which we go into end of line stations with MTAPD officers and with outreach workers and we offer social services and anything we can to those who remain on the train. Sometimes we're taken up on it and sometimes we aren't.

This has been a nightly effort on part sometimes at 4 stations, sometimes at 8, sometimes at more. Every single night we are out there. In the last few days we've been joined by NYPD, which again has been extremely useful to have more people in the field and more hands on deck to address it. But on Monday, they were in one station. Last night, they were certainly in the station I was in, I'm told they were in 10 stations last night. What we need is for them to be in all of our stations. We need them to be in all 41 end of line stations, which is where we have the biggest issues. I've asked the Mayor to do this, we're awaiting word. But that is the most critical thing we could use at this moment. And we need them to commit to doing this long term.

We are in a particularly problematic moment because we are in this health crisis and so this is a focus for our particularly for essential workers, for those who are using our system, and I think it's raised the level of anxiety related to this. But this is something we were seeing long before the pandemic, and it's

something we will see beyond this wave and into the second wave and subsequent waves and into the future. This needs to be a long-term commitment and not just something to get us through the most recent cold spell, or until the weather breaks, or until we can get through this hump.

In the context of this crisis, we've also made the following changes to strengthen our Code of Conduct. The changes are as follows:

- No person is permitted to remain in a station for more than an hour.
- During a public health emergency declared by the Governor, no person can remain on a train or on the platform after an announcement that the train is being taken out of service.
- Wheeled carts greater than 30 inches in length or width, including shopping and grocery carts, are banned from our system.

I'm sure there'll be questions and I'm happy to take them, but in closing, the bottom line is the city needs to do better. The residents of this city deserve better and the city needs to do better. We cannot leave the most vulnerable to suffer quietly in a tunnel or on a train, and our workforce – the men and women who work at New York City Transit, who show up every single day to move essential workers, to operate buses, to operate trains, to clean stations, to clean train cars -- should not be left to clean up the mess that the city refuses to contend with. Our customers should not have to board a car that's being used as a shelter. Our essential workers on the frontlines of this pandemic should not have their commutes adding to their stress during this difficult time.

Thank you and we'll take your questions....

A closing thought on homelessness. So I just want to thank the city again for stepping up. The efforts in the World Trade Center station on Monday night and the efforts at 96th St and other stations last night and the ongoing efforts across the city that are expected tonight and throughout the week are incredibly helpful because it means that we are able to have enough people in these stations to really seamlessly and I think graciously and respectfully offer services to those who need them.

I am really grateful for their leadership here and look forward over the coming days to making sure that we are coordinating seamlessly and easily, but little wrinkles along the way about whether a platform is closed or a whole station is closed really pales in comparison in my opinion to the fact that the two entities are working together now, so I'm grateful for that.

A link to the full news conference can be found [here](#).