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TRANSCRIPT: Acting MTA Bus President Craig Cipriano Appears on WCBS 880 to Discuss Memorial Day Weekend Service for Essential Workers

Acting MTA Bus President Craig Cipriano appeared on WCBS 880 with Michael Wallace as the agency is urging customers to plan alternative travel through the upcoming Memorial Day weekend. The agency will continue to run its limited Essential Service Plan implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

A transcript of the interview appears below.

Michael Wallace: With the holiday weekend coming up, the MTA is urging New Yorkers not to use its trains and buses for recreational travel. Craig Cipriano is the Acting Senior Vice President of Buses and New York City Transit and Acting President of the MTA Bus Company. Craig is joining us on our Newsline. Craig, these buses, as you stress, still for essential workers only?

Craig Cipriano: Yes Mike, so our bus operators have really been doing their part and again, it's so important during these times that we take doctors, nurses, first responders, back and forth to work, and we just can't risk overwhelming the system at this point. And we're really focused on getting our essential workers for New York City back and forth where they need to go.

Wallace: So you're concerned that too many people may hop on a bus to try to get to a park, or beach, and clog up the system too much?

Cipriano: Yeah, at this point we don't want to risk overwhelming our system. We really want to focus on providing our Essential Plan, and as the Governor, the Mayor decide or change the policy for the city to un-PAUSE, we'll be in a good place to support those decisions.

Wallace: How's it going on the buses lately? Are passengers adhering to the social distancing rules?

Cipriano: So I mean, public transit is a very challenging place to adhere to the strict social distancing rules. So we're really messaging hard for our customers to wear their masks. As you know, to protect our bus operators and our workforce, we went to rear-door boarding early on in the pandemic, we're providing about six feet of social distancing on our local buses and similarly on our express buses. As we look ahead, we're starting to see some increase in ridership and we'll be ready to support the city as we look ahead.

Wallace: We've seen some reports, Craig, that more people are opting for the buses over the subways. Are you seeing that, and are you equipped to handle that?

Cipriano: Yeah, we have seen a bit of an uptick in our ridership over the last few weeks, so we are seeing that. And again, one thing that is a cornerstone of the bus system is that we have the ability to be nimble, and we've been working closely with our labor partners to make sure that we have adequate bus service in and around our city to make sure that we can respond where we do see an uptick in ridership.

Wallace: Craig Cipriano, Acting President of the MTA Bus Company. We appreciate you joining us Craig, thanks.

Cipriano: Thank you Michael, stay safe.