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MCN BI-WEEKLY CALL WITH THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

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>> JON PRATT: Good morning, welcome to this morning's call. I'm Jon Pratt, executive director of the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits and we're grateful to sponsor this opportunity to hear directly from administrative leaders, today including the Lieutenant Governor plus Human Services Commissioner Jodi Harpstead and Commissioner Rebecca Lucero of the department of Human Rights. We have over 500 participants registered for this fourth briefing with the Governor's office. When this call was announced, we put out a call for questions and MCN's public policy director Marie Ellis and Minnesota Budget Project director Nan Madden organized the questions and shared them with the Governor's office and Marie Ellis will present them during the last half of the event. You can also chat questions or comments in although we certainly with this number of people we won't be able to get to them all. We have up to one hour for this call so our agenda is to first hear directly from the Lieutenant Governor about the current situation, activities over the past week. Nan Madden, director of the Minnesota Budget Project and I will give an

update on some nonprofit and community impacts and what we've heard from our members and policy issues that will affect the nonprofit sector and communities nonprofits served, Commissioners Harpstead and Lucero will provide comments. Commissioner Harpstead will give an update on changes in DHS's work during the pandemic and Commissioner Lucero will provide information about the Department of Human Rights work and issues that have been brought to them. The final section will be the Q & A using the questions submitted previously. Thank you again Lieutenant Governor Flanagan for being available for these calls, over to you.

>> LT. GOVERNOR FLANAGAN: Thank you so much, Jon. I'm really grateful to be able to join you this morning and to share some updates and to be able to answer some of your questions. In the beginning of all this, the Governor and I asked Minnesotans to stay home to help buy some time to build up the capacity in our healthcare system and to take care of Minnesotans who need to be hospitalized due to the COVID virus and I'm really proud of Minnesotans and how folks rose to the challenge. We've stayed home, hundreds of thousands of people have sewn masks, made sacrifices and have gained significant ground in our ability to respond to the inevitable wave of people getting sick. As you've seen, we've laid out over the past week how we're making progress in securing those masks, ventilators and hospital beds and the resources that are really key to responding when large numbers of people are hospitalized with the virus. We partnered with leaders in the private sector so we could find, purchase, transport and store large quantities of supplies like ventilators, masks, and gloves in a way that we have never done before as a state enterprise. We've also secured an alternative care site which will provide additional hospital bed capacity for non-COVID patients in order to save hospital ICU beds for those most severely impacted by the virus and thanks to a partnership between Mayo and the University of Minnesota our testing capacity has been growing each day and this will be a key component in our ability to move forward in responding to this crisis. We view that time that Minnesota has bought us effectively and are more prepared each day to test and trace and care for folks who are in need. But I also want to acknowledge that the price that Minnesotans have paid for this time is high. With each

day, we have a deeper understanding of how the preparation for responding to the public health crisis is impacting communities and we have a longer list of things we must take on now to counter the impact on our children, communities of color, the indigenous communities, refugees, immigrants, our seniors and residents who are experiencing homelessness. For example, we ask teachers and students and parents to embark on distance learning through the end of the school year because we could not figure out a way to keep people safe in a school setting. But with that, safety has come isolation, loss of learning time and a clear exacerbation of the inequities that already existed in our education system, which many folks on this call know about too well. That's why I joined the Governor and the commissioner of education Mary Katherine Ricker to lift up the impact on our children's mental health and children of color to announce efforts in distance learning program to keep kids connected and increase resources. But as we all know, that won't be enough. We ask businesses to close and employees to stay home if they were nonessential or could not operate in a way that would keep workers or customers safe, but with that, business owners are at risk of losing their businesses and hundreds of thousands of workers are out of jobs and that's why we rushed to push out unemployment benefit payments and small business loans. We also know that individuals in congregate care settings are more vulnerable to getting infected and that many people who live in shelters have underlying health conditions that make them more susceptible to getting very sick. That's why we're working closely with cities and counties and foundations to identify ways to increase shelter capacity so people experiencing homelessness can socially distance to avoid getting sick or isolated if they are sick. However, as we come to understand the physical and economic impact of the virus, it is imperative that we understand the impact on different races and ethnicities and communities. That's why we are working to disaggregate the data being collected from everything from testing to deaths to unemployment insurance payments. We've been tracking the impact of the virus so that we can see when a community is disproportionately impacted and are sharing that data on our COVID website. And ultimately it's because we measure what we value and we want to be able to work in partnership with community and target effectively. Equally important

to tracking data by race is engaging impacted communities and crafting the plan for recovery. That's why we've launched the community resiliency and recovery work group so people a team of people can engage the community in crafting culturally appropriate response to the crisis. Commissioner Rebecca Lucero of department of Human Rights is the chair of that work group and she will provide more information on how the community will guide us on building our resiliency and planning our recovery from this crisis. I think we've all heard this that folks want to return or get back to normal, and for many of us, normal includes too many inequities as being an acceptable goal for our collective future. Instead I know that I am and I anticipate that many folks on this call are interested in committing to empowering communities to persevere through this crisis and build a future economy that is equitable where we don't get back to normal, we get back to better because normal wasn't working for so many of us. I know that nonprofit leaders share that vision and I'm very grateful for the partnership of the philanthropic community in making that a reality. What I want to say here is that during my time as the Executive Director of the Children's Defense Fund, during my time in the legislature and now during my time as Lieutenant Governor I can't tell you how incredibly frustrating it is, and I know many of you share this sentiment, that there are people in leadership and people who serve in the legislature who did not see the folks who were most vulnerable before this pandemic, do not see them now, and likely will not see them when it has come to an end, and so this the work we see before us, the callus responses I've heard from folks, the answer that simply no without seeing the humanity of real people is the stuff that keeps me up at night, that fuels the fire in my belly and also brings tears to my eye. As we are working here, I appreciate these calls because ya'll are my people but also we're going to need you especially in the last two weeks of the legislative session to push as hard as we possibly can to make the invisible visible to decision makers. So with that, Jon, I'll hand it back over to you.

>> JON PRATT: asked specifically, could we address inequity issues on one of these calls in this series, as some people have observed we're all in the same storm, but we're not all in the same boat, and how people get treated and what services and resources they have access to is

completely unequal. We want to -- Nan Madden and I want to give a little update on some of the additional issues facing nonprofit and for those people on this call we have a lot of COVID-19 resources at MCN's website and are tracking some of the ways nonprofit organizations of service providers and community advocates and employers in this economy are affected. Since our last call, we went through sort of the second round of the payroll protection loans, many nonprofits were left out of the first round, some were successful in this next round. There are several key issues, I'll say a little bit more about, and we have a briefing this Friday which will include is Kay Barr from Propel Nonprofits talking about the application process, what we know about it so far for forgiveness and how the math will work on those PPP program loans. We've also engaged in continued advocacy on unemployment insurance. There's over 1,000 nonprofits here in Minnesota that were not included in sort of the full support from the CARES Act, only included 50 percent, and they are the direct reimbursers, and this is an issue we brought up with DEEP and the Minnesota congressional delegation along with many of our national partners. We're also exploring nonprofit specific relief for organizations with more than 500 employees who left out of the payroll protection plan, the Federal Reserve has their Main Street loans which does not include nonprofits, and they've announced that their intention to create some kind of a Main Street loan facility that will be available to nonprofit organizations recognizing that nonprofits are also key employers, key economic contributors in the nation. MCN has conducted a pulse survey of Minnesota nonprofits, got over 500 responses in partnership with the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis and will be releasing results on May 8 looking at what level of disruption are nonprofits and the communities they serve experiencing, what are some of the resources that went into this and how do they anticipate both the impact and how long the recovery will take? We're doing a briefing Kari Aanestad, the MCN's director of advancement will be sharing those results. Kate Barr from Propel Nonprofits will talk about how Phase II of the PPP loan program has worked, how banks have made it accessible and also about the forgiveness aspects. Susie Brown will be giving an update on the MCF's disaster recovery fund which now totals \$11 million and we'll also hear from Terri Thao

from Nexus Community Partners about what sort of does the recovery look like, how can it be equitable, how can it include everyone. We've also issued the fourth edition of the grants directory special edition, getting free resources out to nonprofits about funding opportunities, both the disaster recovery fund but also quite a few Minnesota funders have stepped up and we'll hear, have more specifics available online through that directory. So Nan? Over to you, Nan.

>> NAN MADDEN: Thank you, Jon. Sorry it took me an extra click to unmute. And thanks to everyone for joining us today. For those on the call less familiar with the Minnesota Budget Project, we are part of the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits that does research and advocacy to identify and advance public policies so that all Minnesotans can thrive regardless of who they are or where they live and we particularly work in the areas of tax, budget and economic policy. I want that thank Governor Walz, Lieutenant Governor Flanagan and your administration including Commissioners Harpstead and Lucero. We at MCN have been calling for an inclusive response to the pandemic that addresses both the health and economic security needs of all Minnesotans and I know your administration has been guided by similar themes. We agree with you that there's more work to be done to ensure that every one of us is getting the support they need to stay healthy and make ends meet and as you said lay the groundwork for a better Minnesota when we get through this. Some of the things we are focusing on getting done before the end of the session include enacting the emergency payment for the very low income parents and children participating in MFIB and very much appreciate the administration's leadership on that issue. Secondly ensuring that every Minnesotan has access to the healthcare and other resources that they need, we think that includes the state taking action to fill in the gaps that the federal government has made and leaves people out particularly immigrants and their families and we've really also really appreciated the actions you've taken so far to support the child care infrastructure in our state and look forward to working with you more to address underinvestment in child care. I know you have heard from MCN and other nonprofits about other critical steps to take in the upcoming weeks. We know that tomorrow the state will release an updated budget

projection which will give a sense of how state revenues have been impacted by the pandemic and related economic disruption, folks on the call looking for more information about that projection can find that on the Minnesota Budget Project website. But we strongly feel that the state's worsening revenue situation can't stop the state from taking the actions needed to ensure that all of our neighbors can get through these tough times, and that Minnesota has resources available to meet those pressing needs. We think it both reduces hardship and supports the economic recovery when we maintain funding for public services that Minnesotans count on and continue to take bold action to address the challenges before us. We think there's three important sources of revenues that will be needed to draw in on this time to make sure that priorities are being met. First of all, federal funding for states is an important part of the picture. We appreciate the administration's advocacy on the importance of federal funding to states and additional funding for states and we are working with nonprofits to get those voices into our congressional delegation as well. Secondly, it's coming time to tap into the budget reserve, Minnesota has done a good job building that up and it will serve us well in these tough times and lastly we think that fair revenues also need to be part of the resources we're drawing on. In the immediate near term, we can't afford to pass new tax cuts for those who are already doing well, and we also think it makes sense to ask those who are doing well still in this economy including profitable corporations and high income people to do their part and shoulder more of the responsibility for funding the essential investments that are needed so that we can all get through this crisis and get started on the recovery. So those are some of the things we wanted to share from our vantage point from what we're seeing in the community and from the budget angle that we bring to these discussions.

>> JON PRATT: ...Is level of nonprofit expertise in state government and a big part of that is people who have had experience working on both sides of the desk of serving the leadership positions in nonprofits and our next two commissioners we'll hear about clearly have served in many leadership positions in the nonprofit sector and it is so crucial to have that expertise now. So first we'll hear from Commissioner Harpstead.

>> COMMISSIONER HARPSTEAD: Thank you very much. Can you hear me?

>> JON PRATT: Yes.

>> COMMISSIONER HARPSTEAD: Good. Just checking that I'm unmuted. The Department of Human Services is doing lots and lots of listening to communities these days. I am doing lots of listening to communities, tribes on a regular basis, the NAACP last week, a whole group of PCA's on the front lines last week as well. And often after listening to groups in the evenings especially I'm ending up making decisions differently the next day as we go on through our daily work. Just this morning, for example, we've extended refugee cash assistance taking advantage of recently promoted federal authority that allows us to do that. We are also working with our at risk populations work group, that's the work group that's been stood up to really make sure we're taking care of people in nonmedical congregate care settings and people who are serving people in homes and we've been working to disaggregate our data, we've learned a lot from looking at the data, our senior team has learned a lot and our at risk populations work group has learned a lot about the staff in all of these settings as well as the people that they support and the differentials that we can see as we look back on historic funding and support for different kinds of services and we're learning a lot that we'll take with us as we get out of COVID and back to a new normal. Our internal equity work also continues in the department as we continue to do our external work. Our new equity officer is with us every day on our conversations about waivers, and that we're implementing and calling us to task when we brush over something lightly or forget a detail in terms of how this could affect different types of communities. Equity is woven into every single thing we're doing these days and all the decisions we're making under our waivers and recommendations under our executive order and we are beginning to imagine what we call the biggest possibilities of COVID, how we can come out of this in a way that's not the same as it was before and one of the things we have committed to is that the at risk populations we are talking about now, will be less at risk after COVID than they were going in. We're just learning so much every day, we're grateful to everyone who has reached out to us, counties, tribes, advocates and providers to tell us what the issues

are and the things are that we need to consider to help everyone to continue to serve all Minnesotans in the very best way through this emergency. Thanks again for inviting me to participate in today's call.

>> JON PRATT: Thank you, Commissioner. Next we have Commissioner Lucero from the Department of Human Rights. Welcome, Commissioner.

>> COMMISSIONER LUCERO: Hi. Good afternoon. Can you hear me okay?

>> JON PRATT: Yes.

>> COMMISSIONER LUCERO: Wonderful. Good morning, everybody, my name is Rebecca and it's such an honor to be here with you guys today. I just wanted to start with a note of tremendous gratitude to everyone doing this work every day. I feel like being a nonprofit leader is always so essential and such a challenge in normal times and extra challenging right now, and I just want to let you know how much I appreciate all that you're doing every day. Nonprofits are an essential part of the fabric of Minnesota and all this work that we're talking about we can't do without your tremendous partnership. So thank you for what you're doing. I am the Commissioner for the Department of Human Rights, and, you know, it is a unique time right now. COVID-19 is taking up a lot of our time and effort and energy and it's exposing what has always been true, that racism, xenophobia and oppression is pervasive and persistent and deeply built into the systems around us. Of course it's good that Minnesota has one of the strongest civil rights enforcement agencies in the country because we have a lot of work to do. And I want to hit on two specific points. The first has to do with discrimination help lines and anti-discrimination help lines that Governor Tim Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan launched on April 6. The discrimination help line's number is 1-833-454-0148, again, that's 833-454-0148. And this help line reinforces the state's efforts to protect the civil rights of Minnesotans and it allows those who experience or if you witness bias and discrimination to report those incidents to the Minnesota Department of Human Rights. We're seeing a lot of trends come out of that. I think the one that gives me the most hope is a lot of bystander interventions, for instance, somebody being yelled at and chased in a grocery store because they were Asian, by another customer, and a bystander stepping in and saying

hey, that's not what Minnesota is about. And making sure that the person who was being harassed felt welcome and comfortable to continue shopping in the store. So we're being able to provide training and outreach opportunities because of what we're seeing there. So please feel free to share that information if you go on our website, you can fill out a form and it's actually up there in seventeen different languages, so you can share it in different ways. And of course COVID-19 is having an impact on many different fronts, black and brown bodies have increased exposure to the virus because of work in low-paying jobs, which have always been essential but are now considered essential, which is resulting in increased exposure. So people of color and indigenous community have substantially higher rates of health inequities, carrying diabetes, high blood pressure and asthma compared to white Minnesotans, making us more susceptible to get infected and more susceptible to die from the virus, so we're seeing some horrific disproportional impacts of COVID across the state and across the country in shocking ways and we're also seeing it happening in some capacity across Minnesota. There are also results of COVID when it comes to basically this economic Tsunami that's already here for many families and head this way. I appreciated, Jon, your comment, Jon Pratt, your comment about how we're all in the same storm but in very different boats right now. I think it's 26 percent of people of color and the indigenous folks have applied for UI benefits and so we have a huge concern with the coming days and weeks ahead and that is why as Lieutenant Governor Flanagan mentioned on April 17 the Governor, Lieutenant Governor announced the formation of the interagency work group dedicated specifically to community resiliency and recovery. The work group's scope is to develop and implement near and long term strategies and guidance within the state to best support recovery and resiliency with intentional focus on black, Latinx, Asian community members, people of color, tribal Nations that share their geography within Minnesota, indigenous communities and immigrants including undocumented communities, mixed status families and refugees. And of course while this work group is specifically focused around race and national origin it's intended to bring greater justice to all of our complex intersectional identities. The work is intended to help develop systems that heal and

to help demonstrate how deeply interconnected we all are. So this is obviously work that will live well past this moment and so it's something that all of us will be part of, all the agencies, all businesses, all nonprofits will be part of so I really appreciate all the work everyone is doing to raise this and prioritize this and we'll be working on this in the days and weeks to come. I look forward to talking more about it through this session today. Thank you very much.

>> JON PRATT: Thank you, Commissioner. Marie Ellis is going to share some questions and comments that have come in over the past week. Marie?

>> MARIE ELLIS: Thank you. Hi, everyone, good to be with you again. Just want to flag something that Jon mentioned, all three of the elected and appointed officials joining us today have really strong ties to the nonprofit sector. Lieutenant Governor Flanagan and Commissioner Harpstead have both led nonprofit organizations and Commissioner Lucero used to be the public policy director here at MCN, so it worked out very well for me that she was appointed Commissioner. And I think all of our panelists are joining us by phone rather than computer so cannot see the chat so I wanted to flag for Lieutenant Governor Flanagan that you got a shot out from Meg Litz who says thank you, Lieutenant Governor Flanagan for naming why normal should not be our goal and I think a lot of us on the call share that sentiment. For anyone who is new to these calls, the questions that I will be asking came from all of you, sometimes we reword them to combine multiple questions on the same topic. If you have questions for next week's call, you can put them in the chat or use the SurveyMonkey that you'll find on the registration page for next week's call and that call -- sorry, I shouldn't say next week. The call in two weeks. That call will focus on issues most impacting greater Minnesota related to COVID-19. Now, today is May 4, which of course is Star Wars day. So I thought about submitting my own question about whether Star Wars can teach us anything about racial and gender equity but I decided we had more pressing things to discuss. So, you know, we'll leave that for social media. I have a couple follow-up questions actually from what you all were saying, but I'm going to start with the questions that we had prepared and if we have time I'll go back to those follow-up questions. So first question, for

any of you, is Minnesota seeing the same kinds of clear racial disparities in the numbers of confirmed cases and numbers of deaths as other places around the country?

>> LT. GOVERNOR FLANAGAN: I'm going to clear up just a couple things. One, Nan, thank you for being Nan and asking for and sharing with us the priorities of so many nonprofits around the state, we are aligned, we are with you, and so I think it's just going to be a matter of how we have an inside-outside game as we push these things within the capital and then I want to invite an opportunity as well to have Commissioner Bauerly from the Department of Revenue have an additional conversation with folks around the concerns around taxes because we share them. Marie I'll get us kicked off with a quote from Star Wars which is helpful here in this moment, we have hope, rebellions are built on hope. So with that, we are really concerned about the national data showing disproportionate impact on people of color and indigenous people and we know that we are likely in a similar situation in Minnesota as we are tracking this data, as we are working to disaggregate data, we are seeing that for example the infection rates among the African American community is higher than the general population and that trend is again what we are seeing nationally. Currently we do know that our own data analysis is being hindered by the lack of testing but as we ramp up through our new statewide testing strategy we should be able to get a better picture to help inform our response. But here is the deal, we don't need to identify a similar trend in Minnesota to know that we should start acting now, and we're currently disaggregating data by broad racial categories for both confirmed cases and deaths, and have some of the latest numbers we can share with you but again those are also available on the website. I don't know Commissioner Lucero if you want to weigh in here as -- Lucero, if you want to weigh in here as well, you've been leading much of this work, and if there's anything additionally you would like to adhere.

>> COMMISSIONER LUCERO: Yeah, I'll just add that transparency around data is one of the core values we're bringing to the table as part of this work group and so we're working as quickly as possible to pull information so that we know how best to respond. I think one of the ones that I'll just flag real quickly is around the tremendous amount of work by all of the employees in congregate care

facilities across the state right now and the disproportionate impact we're seeing there. In the congregate care facilities of the folks that are employed there, 19 percent of those employed are black and 43 percent have tested positive for COVID-19. So you can see where there's some areas where we are putting extra attention to try to make sure we're being responsive and that's where data can be really powerful in helping us with our response. We'll have more data like this and it will be available publicly so that we know what kind of policy changes need to be made and we respond.

>> MARIE ELLIS: When you say that those numbers will be made available publicly is that on the dashboard the state has, or will it be?

>> COMMISSIONER LUCERO: I think the COVID-19 website, it will be on the COVID-19 website and I think the dashboard part of that, yes, and I can also send it to you directly.

>> MARIE ELLIS: Perfect. Also you talked about the interagency work group. How can people follow along with what that work group is doing?

>> COMMISSIONER LUCERO: I'll go ahead and take that. As part of the dashboard there is a website specifically dedicated to that work group, and I will send you the link to that so you can follow along there, that's where we'll be posting a lot of the data and opportunities for people to know what's going on. Right now North Point is doing free drive-thru testing so that's a newly set up drive-thru so we'll put information up there so people can find it and share it as much as possible.

>> MARIE ELLIS: Great. Thank you. I'll look forward to taking a look at that. Next question, how is your administration talking to communities who are being the most impacted? We hear a lot of general talk about supporting communities of color and want to see more action.

>> LT. GOVERNOR FLANAGAN: Thank you for that question and thank you for continuing to push our administration to show up for communities of color and indigenous communities. And I think I want to just name that the community resiliency and recovery work group is in response to that very thing. I think we can say that we value equity but unless we put it into action and have a real structure and system with how we are gathering input, it doesn't mean a lot. So that is why we are here and why we are also

working with Commissioner Lucero to partner on this and with all of you. I think the first thing that I would say is that there's two problems here. The first is that we haven't actually done a good job communicating about some of the good work we've already done already, and the second is that communities need for us to do a whole lot more. We seriously ramped up a speed at which we're getting materials translated and are currently simulcasting our big announcement in Spanish and Hmong and are hopefully adding Somali very soon. We also are going to continue to push the legislature for policy getting us resources flowing directly into the communities, the end of session as all of you know is two weeks away so please join us in supporting bills, like Senator Franzen and Representative Gomez bill which would provide assistance to those missed by the existing state's federal efforts. So for our Minnesotans who are undocumented. The one time MFIP increase and of course the \$100 million in housing assistance and then I would just also say this, that we need your thoughts and ideas here as well. I don't feel comfortable with us simply leading the way. We need nonprofits to partner with us and to bring solutions that we can then work to implement either through the legislature or also on the state agency side. So I also wanted to just give an opportunity for Commissioner Harpstead to weigh in here as well and then also Commissioner Lucero can go into just a little bit more detail with the CRR working group. So Commissioner Harpstead?

>> COMMISSIONER HARPSTEAD: Yes, thank you so much. So first of all, our healthcare administration in addition to making sure that Minnesota Care and medical assistance beneficiaries would not have to go through any reenrollment throughout COVID, so anyone who started this period on those two health programs can remain on them throughout and not have to worry about renewing their eligibility. The healthcare administration is also holding weekly community calls to listen and understand additional needs. Those calls are on Thursday from ten to eleven and questions may be submitted in advance. Hopefully the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits can make sure people have the e-mail address to send questions in to that and to get information on those calls. The refugee program office is also hosting a number of interagency calls with DEED, Department of Education and MDH to the refugee provider networks to update and take

questions, those calls we held last Tuesday and include a translation in Swahili and on Friday in Onuoc and future calls in other languages are also being coordinated. So those are some of the things that we're doing in DHS to make sure we're listening and understanding the needs of the community. Thank you.

>> COMMISSIONER LUCERO: This is Rebecca. I would build off of the comments that Lieutenant Governor Flanagan around the importance of really lifting up this moment here at the end of session. I think that it's always challenging to know how to engage with legislators even during typical sessions, a COVID session is taking it to a new extreme right now. There are two weeks left and there is a lot of action that we would really like to see and that the Governor and Lieutenant Governor are really trying to show real leadership on and need the support of the Senate and the House to move bills forward on. So now is a time when you're sitting there saying how do I engage with the House and Senate, how do I engage with the Governor's office to be really -- to make sure that your values are being shared not just in this call today but also to legislators across the board, whether we're talking about rent subsidy bills, MFIP payments, equity and bonding which is a really important part of the bonding bill that's being discussed or I think that Franzen bill is Senate file 4540 which gets at a whole lot of folks left out of the stimulus package from the federal level so these are real specific actions we would like to see taken and would like to be part of and could really use your partnership and support on that. There are a few other things I just really want to get on there, 1200 sites that are testing across the state. Of those 1200 sites we're doing a deep dive in those 1200 sites to make sure they're in places that are actually accessible to communities and are really that people feel comfortable and can get to comfortably. For instance, if you are required to call in to get tested but the only language that it's available in is English, then it's not going to be accessible, so we're looking at it from the very beginning on the end to make sure that communities can access these sites. Those are things that we can control and we can control today and we're making changes minute by minute to try to make sure that folks can get the testing that they need. That's going to be an important part of the recovery is just even knowing what's

going on and as we do the work to ramp up testing, that's going to be important. And then of course we also have some upcoming information coming up about the budget and the community resiliency and recovery group is going to be looking hard at that in partnership with everyone to really make sure that as we're looking at the budget moving forward and I know this is something that Nan you touched on there, that we're making sure that we're talking about the budget and we're not doing anything on the backs of those that are the most vulnerable, that will be really important moving forward so you'll be hearing from us a lot on that in the coming weeks, for sure. Thank you.

>> MARIE ELLIS: Sorry about that. I stepped way for a minute. Okay, I'm not supposed to apologize. I step away for a minute. It sounded like my son was choke on something, but he's fine. Get the heart rate up. Thank you to all of you particularly for mentioning the bill authored by Senator Franzen and Representative Gomez, the Minnesota Budget Project and MCN both signed on as supporters of that bill. I think that question and talk about this interagency work group get us a little ways into the future, this next question really gets us further into the future. COVID-19 has illustrated that long-standing institutional and structural inequities cannot be addressed in a haphazard or piecemeal manner. What will you do to ensure an equity analysis is baked into the DNA of state government to ensure persistent inequities are combated?

>> LT. GOVERNOR FLANAGAN: So this question really gets to the core of why I do the work and I think why Commissioner Lucero and Commissioner Harpstead also do this work. The short answer is that we will need to keep making noise and pushing our state government to think differently and to do differently moving forward. So the long answer is that, you know, we've thought about this a lot and in a large complex system like state government it's full of people who are knowingly and unknowingly committed to perpetuating institutional racism, and it's going on take a lot of effort. Even as the Lieutenant Governor, you know, I work within a system that was not created by my community for my community or with my community, but in many instances was created to destroy my community and, you know, even now there's a statue of Newt Nelson outside my office who was the senator of the Nelson act, used to remove all indigenous people in Minnesota and place them at

White Earth. He was not successful, yet we still have a statue of him on the front lawn right used my office. So I just want to name it, the system is going to take a lot of us. We know that we are not just baking a whole new cake, but we're trying to change behavior that has decades of forward momentum. We have really strived to put leaders in place who are unafraid to acknowledge and address these inequities. Our chief inclusion officer Chris Taylor is work with our state agencies to create lasting environments for all employees and our administration wants to support bold action that is really grounded in engagement with community, and as we enter what is certain to be a really difficult time of reduced revenues, we are going to need all of us to push for holistic change and please know that we want to be partners in eliminating the persistent inequities that our state faces and to Commissioner Lucero's point previously there are going to be and there already are calls from Washington for us to be more fiscally disciplined and what that actually means is to cut the hell out of programs that supports the most vulnerable folks in the community and so we'll all need to be aligned to push back on that tremendously while also trying to center dismantling of racist systems and doing that in the face of folks who many of whom don't believe that racism actually exists. I want to name that and we are here for it and this is the work and we need the support of folks who are part of the coalition of nonprofits and folks who are working to dismantle these inequities to truly be our partners in this work and to help us figure it out and how to do it, how to do it well so that long after our administration is no longer in office, that we do have lasting change that we can point to and that we can see. And part of the way we do that is through this community resiliency and recovery work group as well as our community advisors who are part of that and many of whom I'm sure are already on this call.

>> MARIE ELLIS: Thank you. Commissioners, do you want to add anything? Otherwise, I can certainly move on to the next question.

(Pause) all right. I will move on.

The question of this one, this is a bold question, I'm a big fan of bold advocacy questions, right now I'm helping advocate for families and immigrants working in food processing facilities who are not being allowed to stay

home without a doctor's note, mothers and elderly people choosing to stay home to care for sick families or who themselves are seeking diagnosis are experiencing penalties for staying home. Is the Governor interested and available to talk to this community and can we connect with you -- and can we connect you to this contact to make this happen?

>> LT. GOVERNOR FLANAGAN: Yes. And, you know, we have also been doing a tremendous amount of work here, especially around, especially around the challenges that are being faced by workers at the GVS plant in Worthington and I just want to be very clear that we know that there are folks who are willing to take advantage of workers when we are not in a time of pandemic and we certainly now see and even being led by calls from Washington for folks to take advantage of workers during this time. And we have been crystal clear that we stand on the side of safety and health of our workers and making sure that we got a call from some workers in Worthington when the initial outbreak of COVID-19 started to happen, within an hour or commissioner of the Department of Labor and industry was on the phone with those workers making sure that they knew their rights, they felt protected, and that is really, really important to the Governor and I. We also have our public engagement staff Nico who has been working on this issue and we're absolutely willing to have conversations. I know the Governor has had conversations with folks and workers directly over the last couple of week as well and which certainly would welcome any additional conversations there. You know, it is ever more complicated especially what we find happening at JBS and at Nobles County because of the calls and the executive order coming from the president, and I just also want to say, I want to stop and also thank you for advocating with and for these families. There's been such amazing work that's been done to raise up the concerns of these workers. And specifically, the Governor spoke with leaders helping to organize workers in Nobles as well as their labor union and our administration as a whole has been regularly engaged with folks on the ground, worked hard to step up for robust testing this area quickly and as situations pop up, we want to make sure that we be continually similarly available. For example, even today our team from our office will be having a virtual meeting with folks on the ground in Stearns County, so a

long story long, the answer is yes and we want to be available and hear what's happening directly on the ground so we can respond quickly and promptly.

>> MARIE ELLIS: Excellent. I will send Nico's contact information along to the folks who asked this question.

>> LT. GOVERNOR FLANAGAN: Thanks.

>> MARIE ELLIS: We've got so many more questions but we're running out of time. Here is another big one. Asian Americans are being targeted with hate speech and threats. Will your office or has your office make a statement condemning this and what can the state do to reduce this harassment?

>> LT. GOVERNOR FLANAGAN: So we certainly have made several statements but that ask also means that we need to continue to make these statements. I want to start by saying, of course, that hate and fear have no place in Minnesota. Xenophobic racist language and behavior is totally unacceptable and I am deeply sorry for those who have experienced this directly. We stand with the Asian community and everyone deserves to feel safe and valued. In response to increased incidents many discrimination and bias, the Minnesota Department of Human Rights as Commissioner Lucero has mentioned before has launched a discrimination help line. Commissioner, I'm wondering if you could also just speak to this more. The Governor and I have certainly tweeted about this, made statements, but we absolutely can and will ramp it up. So Commissioner?

>> COMMISSIONER LUCERO: Yeah. This is definitely something that's a big priority for us to be paying attention to. Discrimination and bias and xenophobia is not new and COVID-19 is exposing a new way of being xenophobic towards the Asian community and there will be different ways as we move forward into the future, and that was the impetus for launching the help lines that currently exist right now. It's not the only thing that we're doing, however, so this morning is that I testified on behalf of Representative Hornstein's hate crimes bill that was before the judiciary committee and that would allow a mechanism for better tracking and training of bias motivated crimes and hate crimes that are existing because right now there's just not a good way of us to even understand the what the data is that is out there, we hear of individual stories but how are we actually working with community groups to understand what's going on on the ground and then implement

training and outreach to change what's going on. And that's the purpose of that. So there's a lot that we're trying to accomplish around this issue because it is such an important priority for this administration.

>> MARIE ELLIS: Thank you. Next one. How can state agencies, specifically DHS, center marginalized communities as they prioritize their work? And I'll just add as an addendum to that, Commissioner Harpstead, you mentioned the equity officer position at DHS. Can you also talk a little bit about what that position does?

>> COMMISSIONER HARPSTEAD: Yes. Thank you very much. I hired a new equity officer at the Department of Human Services about three weeks before we all went home for COVID. Dr. Karen McKinney comes to us from Bethel University where she's been engaged in work at the college but also doing consulting work in helping people become anti-racist organizations, and now she's come in, actually at the request of the equity leads that we had throughout the department in different places asking to ask someone to come in to organize a DHS-wide effort to train everyone in equity issues and help us all become smarter and more aware. So her specialty in the past has been anti-racism training. She's also working now to work with all of our employee resource groups and understand the work that's already going on about understanding the LGBTQ community and disability accommodations work and tribal state relations training and all of that, and she's putting all that together into a comprehensive plan to make sure that everyone at the Department of Human Services has an opportunity to learn more and to question our own bias and to understand the institutional racism that may exist in our work. We are learning a lot from her already. Our internal equity work continues while we are dealing with the COVID crisis, our employee resource groups continue to meet, and we are really examining everything that we do at the Department of Human Services through a racial equity lens, and I am pretty proud of how far we've come in a short time, lots and lots of work left to do and eager to continue to do that now and beyond COVID.

>> MARIE ELLIS: Thank you. My last question is a pretty specific one that just came in through the chat. When the stay at home order is lifted, will the peacetime emergency also be lifted? Some is COVID-19 funding expires 60 days after the peace team emergency is lifted and we're trying

to get a feel for what determines when that peacetime emergency is lifted.

>> LT. GOVERNOR FLANAGAN: Those are not mutually exclusive. That's a great question. I know, so just like no is the most important answer there. The extension of peacetime emergencies, the peacetime emergency, is essentially renewed every 30 days. We find ourselves in an interesting, I use that in the most Minnesotan way possible, conversation now about the bonding bill and the extension of emergency powers but I have to just say that we are laser focused again on the health and safety of Minnesotans, that includes making sure that people can get back to work safely but also that we can begin to also create infrastructure in our economy, that bonding bill is really critical to that and especially Commissioner Lucero lifted up the equity and bonding which we think is really important to center and as one of the really key ways that we can actually have tangible strategies to dismantle racist systems. So I'm just really, again, grateful for all of your advocacy in the last couple weeks here of session. But no, those are not mutually exclusive and we can also send additional information to you, Marie, to share with members so that folks can adequately prepare for their organization. Both in the coming to the end of the stay at home order but also as we anticipate when the emergency powers would end as well.

>> MARIE ELLIS: I think that will be helpful. When talking about inequity and bonding I often use the analogy that bonding is like a secret handshake and I think it's helpful for people to understand what it is.

>> LT. GOVERNOR FLANAGAN: That's right. There's essentially a bunch of good ol' folks who know how this works and there's a bunch of people who don't know how it works and to be honest, I didn't actually understand it until I became a legislator. That's a problem. So the more that we can have and essentially the equity and bonding just requires that as we're giving essentially giving folks dollars to do these projects, that they have to hire in an equitable way, which just seems like the bare minimum of a requirement, but we need your help in moving it through.

>> MARIE ELLIS: Well, we certainly agree and we had hopes as well that there could be some additional cash funding in the bonding bill for specific projects in BIPOC

communities but given the realities with COVID-19 that might not be possible but there are things like what you just talked about that certainly are still possible.

>> LT. GOVERNOR FLANAGAN: Keep pushing. In two weeks of the final moments of those deals a lot get done so keep pushing and asking for funding for the projects you believe in.

>> MARIE ELLIS: Indeed. Thank you. There are a lot of questions we received that we didn't get to. I will save them in case we have time in two weeks. But I do just want to note for folks who submitted those questions, often we want answers but we also want to make sure that the issues we're talking about are being noticed as issues. So to that end, everyone on the call has received all the questions that we put together. So if you submitted more questions about specific relief for undocumented immigrants or about homeless shelters or community health workers, guidelines at homeless shelters, know that those questions did make their way to our guests today but did not quite make their way onto the phone call. With that, I will end and turn it back to Jon. Thank you again for joining us today and for all of your communications to the sector, and may the 4th be with you.

>> JON PRATT: Well said, Marie. So thank you, everyone, for participating. Thank you, Marie and Nan. Thank you Lieutenant Governor and Commissioners Lucero and Harpstead. The MCN like other organizations has been affected by the end of large public events and stay at home orders. Unfortunately we have cancelled many of our conferences and finance conference went from 350 to 550 over the process of the stay at home order so some things can be done virtually and MCN aims to be sort of continue to be a strong support organization on the public policy side as well as cost savings through technical assistance and education. So let me mention these last couple events. May 8, this Friday, is our briefing with the results of the survey with the Federal Reserve and also hearing from Kate Barr about what has happened so far with the PPP loans. Then on May 22 we're doing a funding update on funding available for nonprofits through COVID-19 and then of course May 18 our next briefing with the Governor and Lieutenant Governor's office focused on greater Minnesota and I think we just sent out a link or in the chat was a link of how to register for that. So thank you everyone for

participating, and hope to see you again in two weeks.  
(12:33 p.m. CT)

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