

NYC virus tracing off to a bumpy start: report

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Jazz pianist Kenny Barron, center, plays the keyboards, with Dan Loomis on bass and Mark McLean on drums, as part of Make Music-New York in Brooklyn's Ditmas Park neighborhood during a Sunday series of in-person, socially distanced "porch concerts" for neighborhood residents as the coronavirus outbreak continued, Sunday, June 21, 2020, in New York. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)

New York City's effort to stop the spread of the coronavirus through contact tracing has been hampered by the reluctance of many people who are infected with the virus to provide information to tracers, [according to a report in The New York Times.](#)

The Times report said just 35% of the 5,347 city residents who tested positive or were presumed positive for COVID-19 in the first two weeks of the contact tracing program gave information about their close contacts.

Perry N. Halkitis, dean of the School of Public Health at Rutgers University, called the 35% rate for eliciting contacts "very bad."

"For each person, you should be in touch with 75 percent of their contacts within a day," Halkitis told the Times.

Dr. Ted Long, head of New York City's new Test and Trace Corps, defended the program Sunday and said 69% of the people who complete an interview provide contacts. "We think that's a strong start but we also do want to get that number up," Long told The Associated Press.

Long said the 35% figure cited by the Times represents a percentage everyone who the tracers reached, and some of those people, including some who have not had COVID-19 symptoms for weeks, don't have relevant contacts to provide.

Long said he believes the program, which started June 1, will be more successful when tracers start going to people's homes in the next week or two rather than relying on the phone.



Elijah Herring, left, plays the sax while joining jazz pianist Kenny Barron, center, and bassist Dan Loomis in the Ditmas Park neighborhood of Brooklyn, as part of Make Music-New York, entertaining neighborhood residents in a safe, socially-distanced manner during the coronavirus outbreak, Sunday, June 21, 2020, in New York. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)



Acclaimed jazz pianist Kenny Barron, left, speaks to those who turned out in the street for a live music concert played from the of the home of Ron Siegel, part of Make Music-New York in Brooklyn's Ditmas Park neighborhood during the coronavirus outbreak, Sunday, June 21, 2020, in New York. The concert was one of several staged in the street, in driveways or on porches or walkways leading to seven Victorian style homes in the neighborhood. Residents could enjoy live music while still practicing social distancing during a culturally-starved time. Mark McLean, on drums, listens right rear. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)



Roy Nathanson, right, plays his sax as his son Gabe accompanies him on trumpet on their balcony, part of Make Music-New York, in Brooklyn's Ditmas Park neighborhood during the coronavirus outbreak, Sunday, June 21, 2020, in New York. The Nathansons performed with eight other musicians in an outdoor concert for New Yorkers who could still listen while being socially distant. Similar concerts featuring jazz, rock and classical music were held simultaneously at six other Victorian-style homes in the area. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)



Lloyd Miller, wearing red at center, encourages the crowd to sing along to "Amazing Grace" at the conclusion of a music concert from the home of Roy Nathanson, part of Make Music-New York, in Brooklyn's Ditmas Park neighborhood during the coronavirus outbreak, Sunday, June 21, 2020, in New York. Local residents could listen to jazz, rock, classical and new music from the driveways, porches, walkways and balconies of seven Victorian-style homes while still social distancing. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)



Albert Marquès, right, plays keyboards along with other musicians in front of the home of Roy Nathanson as part of Make Music-New York in Brooklyn's Ditmas Park neighborhood during the coronavirus outbreak, Sunday, June 21, 2020, in New York. Live jazz, classical and rock concerts were played from porches and balconies and the driveways walkways of seven Victorian-style homes in the area, allowing New Yorkers to enjoy outdoor music while still being socially distant. This particular concert raised money for nearby restaurants and other businesses that have been shut down or providing only limited service for the three months. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)



People watch in the street as Eric Alabaster plays drum while accompanying nine other musicians during one of seven, simultaneous, live outdoor concerts at Make Music-New York in Brooklyn's Ditmas Park neighborhood during the coronavirus outbreak, Sunday, June 21, 2020, in New York. The concerts were a way for culturally-starved New Yorkers to enjoy music while still social distancing. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)



Lloyd Miller plays bass in the garden of Roy Nathanson's home as part of Make Music- New York in Brooklyn's Ditmas Park neighborhood during the coronavirus outbreak, Sunday, June 21, 2020, in New York. Miller joined seven other musicians at this concert, which was one of seven simultaneous live concerts for culturally-starved New Yorkers and residents of the Victorian neighborhood. This particular concert raised funds for local restaurants and other businesses forced to close or providing only limited service during the pandemic. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)



A woman gestures during a live outdoor concert by jazz pianist Kenny Barron and others during Make Music-New York, in Brooklyn's Ditmas Park neighborhood during the coronavirus outbreak, Sunday, June 21, 2020, in New York. The concert was one of seven being held at once from the driveways, balconies and porches of homes in the neighborhood. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)



People gather in front of the home of Roy Nathanson as part of Make Music-New York in Brooklyn's Ditmas Park neighborhood during the coronavirus outbreak, Sunday, June 21, 2020, in New York. Simultaneous live outdoor concerts were performed from porches, balconies and driveways in the neighborhood, which has many Victorian homes. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)



People applaud while listening to an outdoor concert performed by 10 musicians in front of Roy Nathanson's home, part of Make Music-New York in Brooklyn's Ditmas Park neighborhood during the coronavirus outbreak, Sunday, June 21, 2020, in New York. The concert was one of seven simultaneous concerts that included jazz, rock and classical music. This concert raised funds for local restaurants and businesses who were either closed or only able to offer limited service during the past three months due to coronavirus protocols. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)



Ashley Theagene, foreground left, listens as her father plays along with other musicians at Make Music-New York in Brooklyn's Ditmas Park neighborhood during the coronavirus outbreak, Sunday, June 21, 2020, in New York. Seven live outdoor music concerts were performed simultaneously for culturally-starved New Yorkers in the Victorian neighborhood who have been cooped up for fourth months during the pandemic. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)



Jessica Siegel and Mike O'Malley dance in the street while listening to an outdoor concert, part of Make Music-New York, in Brooklyn's Ditmas Park neighborhood during the coronavirus outbreak, Sunday, June 21, 2020, in New York. The concert was one of seven simultaneously performed jazz, rock and classical concerts offered from the driveways, porches and balconies of homes in the neighborhood. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)



Elijah Herring, right, plays the sax while performing with keyboardist Kenny Barron, center, and bassist Dan Loomis, during Make Music-New York in Brooklyn's Ditmas Park neighborhood during the coronavirus outbreak, Sunday, June 21, 2020, in New York. The concert was one of seven simultaneously performed live jazz, classical and rock performances offered from the driveways, porches and balconies of Victorian homes in the neighborhood. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)



People sit on the pavement watching a concert from the home of Roy Nathanson, part of Make Music-New York, in Brooklyn's Ditmas Park neighborhood during the coronavirus outbreak, Sunday, June 21, 2020, in New York. Seven simultaneous jazz, rock and classical music performances were given from the driveways, porches and balconies of homes in the neighborhood. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)

New York City has made huge strides in containing the outbreak since the coronavirus shutdown started in March, with more than 320 new cases reported on Thursday, down from several thousand a day during the peak. But officials say the contact tracing effort is crucial to preventing a resurgence as the city enters the second phase of easing coronavirus restrictions on Monday, including outdoor dining at restaurants and in-store retail shopping.

Mayor Bill de Blasio said he expects as many as 300,000 more people to return to their jobs during Phase 2.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo confirmed that the city is on track to start Phase 2 of reopening on Monday and said in a news release that 15 deaths were attributed to COVID-19 across the state on Saturday. That is the state's lowest death toll since the early days of the outbreak in March.

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