

We're all sick of being locked down, and the economic downturn has been brutal. There's a palpable sense that it's time to put the coronavirus behind us and move on. Unfortunately, the coronavirus does not agree.

People now seem used to the idea of hundreds of new coronavirus deaths a day. Yet, even 500 deaths per day would equate to a 9/11 event every week. And we're still well above that death rate in this country at an average of around 750 deaths daily.

The total number of deaths continues to rise. So far, there have been 120,000 confirmed deaths. The actual number is higher. According to one [estimate](#), there may have been another 25,000 deaths by June 1 that weren't counted, bringing the total past 140,000. Many states do not include cases with all the symptoms of coronavirus but no test or a negative test. Unfortunately, the tests [fail](#) to detect the disease 20-30% of the time.

Models that assume continuation of social distancing measures are pointing to around 125,000 total deaths by July 4. Models that take into account the rapid phase-out of those measures predict something closer to 150,000 total deaths by then. (Model forecasts can be found [here](#).) None of the models take into account mass public events, whether demonstrations or the President's political rallies.

Keep in mind that these project increases are during the summer, when some decline in contagion is expected. Many experts expect a second wave in the fall. The disease has not become any less contagious or less dangerous since it first struck.

We will be better prepared in some ways for a second wave this fall than we were this past winter. We have more respirators, ventilators, and hospital beds. Doctors understand the disease better, and we hopefully will be starting to get some better treatments. In other respects, however, we are not at all ready.

There's still a gigantic hole in our preparation. We remain woefully lacking in terms of testing ability. Testing is needed so we can spot local outbreaks at an early stage and intervene quickly. It's also needed so we can do contact tracing to prevent further disease spread. The federal government and many states have fallen down on the job in terms of testing. President Trump believes in testing, but only for the people around him.

Experts now think that wearing masks might dramatically reduce contagion. Yet that has become a contested feature of the culture wars. Again, President Trump is heavily responsible.

In short, folks, we're not in good shape for what lies ahead. Instead, we are becoming complacent simply because things got better due to drastic measures. Yes, there are other crises facing our society. But this one isn't going away.