

The Long 'Coronavirus Winter'

By Tom Lyden

March 13, 2020

Coronavirus

FOX 9

MINNEAPOLIS (FOX 9) - For thirty years Dr. Mike Osterholm has been warning the public about the very real possibility of a deadly pandemic. [COVID-19](#) has brought many of his dire predictions to reality.

FOX 9 Investigator [Tom Lyden](#) talked to Dr. Osterholm about the best and worst case scenarios for COVID-19, the potential impact on hospitals already operating on thin margins, and the potential problems with shutting down schools.

Dr. Osterholm is the former state epidemiologist for Minnesota and is one of the world's leading experts on infectious diseases. He has been a consultant for the World Health Organization (WHO), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). He is currently director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy (CIDRAP) at the University of Minnesota.

"Now we're in uncharted territory in the sense that we don't know if this is going to infect 20 percent or 60 percent of the population, probably somewhere in between, is it going to last for a few months for many months or will there be a big peak of cases that will clearly overwhelm places like we're seeing now in Milan, Seattle or will this be a more steady stage – just a few here, a few here – and so this is the part that makes it hard to predict where it's at," said Dr. Osterholm. "My guesstimate is that it's not going to be the big one,

but it's surely going to be a bad one. And I think from that perspective, we have to get prepared. I tell everyone right now, this is not going to be getting ready for a Minneapolis blizzard where you just have to hunker down for a couple of days. We're in the first week or two of a coronavirus winter and it's going to be a long few months ahead of us."