



*Elena Irwin*

## Ohio State Seeks Sustainable Solutions amidst COVID-19

As we encounter the largest public health threat we've faced as a nation, those of us working on sustainability and resilience research at Ohio State are extremely grateful for our colleagues on the front lines fighting COVID-19. Ohio State's strength is — and always will be — people and our potential to solve problems together.

You may have seen the news that researchers at [Battelle and Ohio State's Wexner Medical Center developed a new diagnostic test](#) for the virus that vastly shortened the turnaround time for test results, helping to "flatten the curve." Investigators with Ohio State's Infectious Diseases Institute, Translational Data Analytics Institute, and Sustainability Institute work daily with Ohio's public health agencies to [develop models](#) that will help project the impact of mitigation strategies and when the epidemic may peak. And faculty across the university [are helping the state with preparedness efforts](#) and advising us on [ways we can protect ourselves](#).

Ohio State sustainability and resilience faculty are providing insights into not just what might be but what should be a new normal as we seek to foster a more sustainable, resilient and equitable future. Questions of how we will "bounce back" strike a familiar refrain for our resilience scientists examining factors that determine how fast a community recovers from disasters.

Navigating COVID-19 challenges demands ingenuity, compassion, empathy and spirit. We must work together across communities, combine expertise and create new ways of thinking to deliver solutions — at an unprecedented scale. Our scientists and scholars are joining forces to seek immediate solutions and help change our trajectory toward a more sustainable world.

- Infectious disease scientists, ecologists, geographers and others study the interactions among people, animals, plants and our environment to track viruses.
- Social and behavioral scientists help us understand how individual beliefs, perceptions and interactions influence our decision-making and judgment.
- Projections of future scenarios that help assess policy options require the expertise of faculty who do predictive modeling and integrated assessment, including data scientists, physical and environmental scientists, and economists.
- Challenges of disease treatment, management and testing require technological innovations, for example by biomedical engineers and material scientists.
- Historians and sociologists can tell us how social divides and inequities exacerbate the consequences for all.
- Ethicists and policy scientists frame normative questions of human well-being and social choice.

**As a key stakeholder of Ohio State, please accept our invitation to a Zoom meeting with Mark H. Weir of the College of Public Health at 4 p.m. Monday, April 13 (details below).** Professor Weir is a director of the Ecology Epidemiology and Population Health Program of the Infectious Diseases Institute and a core faculty member of the Sustainability Institute. He will share his experiences in assisting state leaders in COVID-19 modeling and planning efforts.

In the meantime, our thoughts are with you as you respond and adapt to the changes brought on by COVID-19. Please stay safe and be well.

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*Mark Weir*

## **COVID-19 in Ohio: Helping to Understand and Alter the State's Curve**

The Sustainability Institute is joining with the Infectious Diseases Institute and the College of Public Health to offer this COVID-19 presentation with Professor Mark Weir as he shares his expertise on the science behind COVID-19 predictions and forecasting. Weir is a director of the Ecology Epidemiology and Population Health Program of the Infectious Diseases Institute and a core faculty member of the Sustainability Institute. As part of an Ohio State COVID-19 modeling response team, Weir is assisting Ohio leaders with assessing the steps in reopening the state and

modeling how to mitigate risks to healthcare workers. Open discussion with attendees will follow his presentation, during which he'll explain how the models are formulated to advise state leaders on preparations and risks. He'll update us on the latest shape of the coronavirus infection rate curve and predictions of its peak, and he'll tell us what Ohioans should focus on right now to flatten the curve.

**Zoom Meeting**  
**Monday, April 13, 2020**  
**4-5 p.m.**  
[Details and registration](#)



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