



Fauci: 'Looks like' US deaths will be lower than original projection

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Anthony Fauci said Wednesday morning that he thinks the number of U.S. deaths from coronavirus will end up being less than the original projection of 100,000 to 200,000.

Fauci, the government's top infectious disease expert, attributed the drop to the success of social distancing measures that have directed people to stay home and closed many businesses.

"Although one of the original models projected 100- to 200,000 deaths, as we're getting more data and seeing the positive effect of mitigation, those numbers are going to be downgraded," Fauci said on Fox News. "I don't know exactly what the numbers are going to be, but right now it looks like it's going to be less than the original projection."

By the end of March, the White House was projecting 100,000 to 240,000 deaths as America's best-case scenario for the pandemic.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Robert Redfield made similar comments on Tuesday, saying he expected the number of deaths to be "much lower" than what was predicted by the models.

A closely watched University of Washington model is now projecting about 60,000 deaths in the U.S.

Despite some hopeful signs, Fauci emphasized that now is not the time to ease up on social distancing measures, the best way to keep improving the outlook.

"We're going to start to see the beginning of a turnaround, so we need to keep pushing on the mitigation strategies because there's no doubt that that's having a positive impact," he said.

"Now's not the time to pull back at all," he added. "It's a time to intensify."

President Trump has been eager to reopen the economy, and Fauci said planning for that is underway at the White House, where late Tuesday night there was a meeting on the subject in the Roosevelt Room.

"If in fact we are successful it makes sense to at least plan what a reentry into normality would look like," Fauci said. "That doesn't mean we're going to do it right now, but it means we need to be prepared to ease into that. And there's a lot of activity going on."

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