We can do this, Alaska! Social distancing saves lives

Keeping a safe distance from others (at least six feet) can play a critical role in controlling the spread of pandemics. Here’s the math to show you why. Scientists measure the intensity of an infectious disease by its reproduction number (R₀). This modeling assumes a median incubation period of five days – meaning that if someone gets sick, it typically happens about five days after exposure.

R₀ is the average number of people a sick person will infect. For COVID-19, this has been estimated at 2.5.

Here’s what it looks like if Alaskans reduce their social exposure by 75%:

- **DAY 1**: 1 Person infects 0.625 People
- **DAY 5**: 0.625 People infect 2.5 People
- **DAY 30**: 2.5 People infected

Here’s what it looks like if Alaskans can reduce social exposure by 50%:

- **DAY 1**: 1 Person infects 1.25 People
- **DAY 5**: 1.25 People infect 3.125 People
- **DAY 30**: 15 People infected

Here’s what it looks like if there is no reduction in social exposure (if no one follows Alaska’s social distancing mandate):

- **DAY 1**: 1 Person infects 2.5 People
- **DAY 5**: 2.5 People infect 6.25 People
- **DAY 30**: 406 People infected

It’s simple math: Staying home saves lives. Learn more at coronavirus.alaska.gov.