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## How Should We Re-Open?

How do you feel when the guy who cuts your grass sneezes without covering his mouth while doing his job? How about the person in the next office? How about the person at the next restaurant table? The answers are obvious, yet this simple model (yes, it is a model) can educate us about the problems that we are facing in re-opening the economy.

How fast we re-open is related to the number of interpersonal contacts related to the job. Let's start with the easy ones. The person who cuts my grass (or fertilizes my lawn and trees) generally wears a mask anyhow. Whether his or her partner or children are sick is of little concern, whether it is a cold or COVID-19. People in these categories can go to work fairly quickly.

Offices and factories are less controlled, but there is still some degree of control. Employers know who should be there, and they can trace their illnesses and the people they have been with. It is more costly, but conceptually it is tractable. In an earlier post, your blogger described the number of surfaces, the amount air and the amount of sweat in a factory. It is daunting, but not insurmountable to do this kind of tracing. These businesses could open up next.

What about classrooms, lecture halls, dormitories, schools, shopping malls, arenas and stadiums? How will we trace 20,000 people at Little Caesar's Arena, 40,000 at Comerica Park, 60,000 at Ford Field or 100,000+ at the Big House? Casinos are full of smokers and drinkers around a table or in front of a (sanitized?) slot machine. Do you remember your favorite intimate dining spot? How intimate will it be with half the number of tables, and with your servers wearing gloves and masks? How profitable will it be with half the number of customers?

As a younger academic, your blogger studied moving behavior for households, and was advised that the best way to find the movers was to hire a private investigator (PI). While expensive, PIs knew what they were doing. What follows is that tracing diseases will require appropriate tests, appropriate testing facilities, and (probably thousands of) tracers who know what they are doing. Re-opening some parts of the economy will be very expensive ... and frighteningly slow.

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