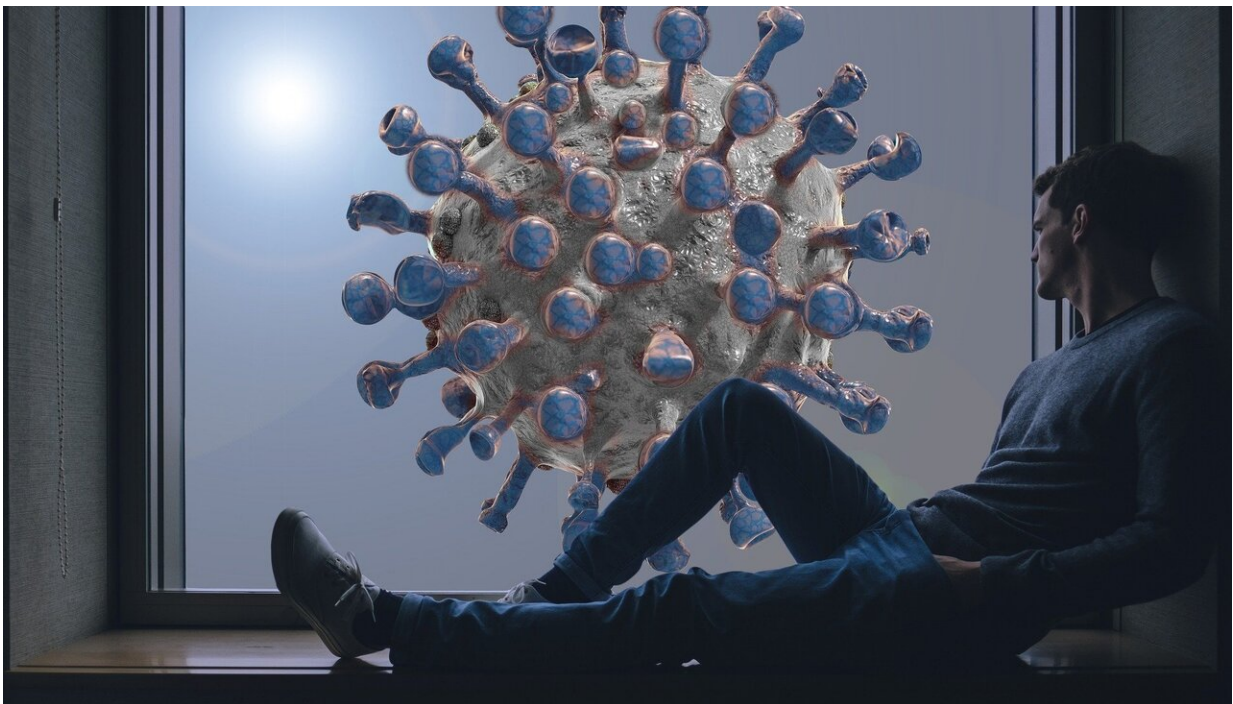# Coronavirus dictates an open exchange of modeling knowledge

May 1 2020, by Skip Derra

Credit: CC0 Public Domain

It has become increasingly clear that, depending on the computer model used, either we could still be in the midst of the pandemic with rising numbers of cases and deaths or we could be nearing the time to reintroduce society to normal operations. Why such disparity? Because each model works a bit differently and depending on the model used and

assumptions added in, the results will change, sometimes dramatically.

Now 31 leaders in computer modeling science are calling for an open exchange of the computer models and code that are devoted to assessing and predicting the path of COVID-19. A letter to *Science* magazine, written by C. Michael Barton, director of the Center for Social Dynamics and Complexity and a professor in Arizona State University's School of Human Evolution and Social Change, and other leaders in computer modeling, states that given the gravity of the situation, the traditions of science necessitate a free exchange of computer modeling information.

"A hallmark of science is the open exchange of knowledge. At this time of the crisis, it is more important than ever to openly share their knowledge, expertise, tools and technology. We strongly urge all scientists modeling the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and its consequences for health and society to rapidly and openly publish their code … so that it is accessible to all scientists around the world. Proprietary black boxes and code withheld for competitive motivations have no place in the global crisis we face today."

More information: Jennifer Sills et al. Call for transparency of COVID-19 models, *Science* (2020). DOI: 10.1126/science.abb8637

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