



The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Nez-Lizer and health care experts urge public to stay home as total number of positive COVID-19 test results reaches 14

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – On Thursday evening, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer were informed by the Navajo Department of Health and Navajo Area IHS that the total number of positive cases of the COVID-19 coronavirus for members of the Navajo Nation has reached 14.

The majority of the 14 cases involve individuals who initially reported their symptoms to the Kayenta IHS Service Unit, and others who either reported to or were transported to or were treated at Chinle Health Care Facility, and Northern Navajo Medical Center. Health and emergency officials are taking every precaution to screen and isolate their family members and others. The Navajo Health Command Operations Center and Navajo Area IHS are in the process of determining if and how the cases relate.

“We are awaiting more details on the cases. We understand that the public has many questions and we ask that the public be patient until the facts are gathered – we do not want to report any misinformation. I assure everyone that the Navajo Health Command Operations Center, Navajo Area IHS, and 638 Tribal Health Organizations are working proactively to investigate each case to prevent the spread of the virus. Everyone must remain home at this point and let the health care and emergency experts do their jobs. Please be respectful and adhere to their directions as they are doing their best to protect our communities,” said President Nez.

“This is not a time for panic. Although there is an increase in positive tests for COVID-19, there are also a large number of people who have tested negative and some who are recovering. Please remain watchful over family members and follow official instructions so as not to create panic and please respect our first responders, health care workers, Health Command Operations Center and many other experts as they handle the situation,” added Vice President Lizer.

On Thursday, the Navajo Health Command Operations Center issued a Public Health Emergency Order requiring closure of the Chilchinbeto community for quarantine and isolation, also known as “shelter-in-place,” to limit the spread of COVID-19. The order requires residents to remain in their homes to slow the spread of the virus. President Nez stated that the order may also be applied to the entire Navajo Nation if reports become widespread.

The Navajo Health Command Operations Center officials are also in the process of securing care packages that will be available in the community of Chilchinbeto for those in need – elderly and high-risk residents will be the first priority.

Enhanced travel restrictions are also in place, urging all citizens not to travel unless travel is necessary to obtain essential items such as groceries, medication, emergencies, medical appointments, and livestock care. The notice also urges all citizens to stay home for a period of at least 15-days.

A Public Health Emergency Order was also issued on Wednesday, requiring restaurants to operate at no greater than 50 percent of maximum occupancy and no greater than 50 percent of seating capacity. In addition, tables and booths may not seat more than six people, and all occupied tables and booths must be separated by at least six-feet, limiting employees to “essential staff,” and displaying prevention and awareness signage for patrons.

The notice also limits fast-food businesses to drive-thru services, suspends all flea markets and indoor/outdoor markets, and prohibits social gatherings of 10 or more persons with exemptions for retail or grocery stores, and hospitals, among others.

“We are facing some serious challenges just as our ancestors did, but we will persevere and overcome this through the power of prayer and by working together cooperatively. We are resilient just like our ancestors. Make smart decisions and pray for our communities,” President Nez said.

Questions from the public may be directed to the Navajo Health Command Operations Center at (928) 871-7014. For questions from members of the Chilchinbeto community, please call (928) 871-6271. If a person has symptoms related to the COVID-19 coronavirus, please contact your local health care center prior to your arrival to a hospital facility:

Chinle Comprehensive Health Care Facility
(928) 674-7001/7688

Crownpoint Health Care Facility
(505) 786-5291/6381

Fort Defiance Indian Hospital Board, INC
(928) 729-8000

Gallup Indian Medical Center
(505) 722-1000

Sage Memorial
(928) 755-4500

Kayenta Health Center
(928) 697-4000

Northern Navajo Medical Center
(505) 368-6001

Tuba City Regional Health Care
(866) 976-5941

Utah Navajo Health System
(866) 976-5941

Winslow Indian Health Care Center
(928) 289-4646

Arizona Poison and Drug Information Center
(844) 542-8201

New Mexico Coronavirus Hotline
(855) 600-3453

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