



## The 21<sup>st</sup> Navajo Nation Council

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## Council Delegate Alice Benally presents Navajo Nation report to Direct Services Tribes Advisory Committee

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – Council Delegate Alice W. Benally, vice-chairwoman of the Health and Social Services Committee of the 21<sup>st</sup> Navajo Nation Council, met with members of the Direct Services Advisory Committee in Nashville, Tenn., on Feb. 17 regarding the Navajo Nation healthcare system.

Benally (Crownpoint/Nahodishgish) represents the Navajo Nation at the national level as a member of the Direct Services Advisory Committee. The purpose of the advisory committee is to address health care issues and priorities for tribal nations who receive healthcare services directly from the Indian Health Service (IHS) such as the Navajo Nation.

In an effort to address various health care issues, a Navajo Nation Report provided by Benally and the Health and Social Services Committee informed the advisory committee of issues ranging from the potential affects of the national health care reform, the H1N1 influenza pandemic, uranium exposure, Medicaid, and budgets among other issues affecting the Navajo Nation.

Benally said the Navajo Nation continues to monitor developments at the national level on national health care reform.

"Navajo Officials have participated in various health summits, town hall meetings and other forums where health care reform were discussed," Benally said. "Advocacy focused on improving access to quality health care and waiver of cost sharing for American Indians and Alaska Natives."

Benally also mentioned the importance of Navajo Nation-controlled tribal programs and how those programs address specific needs unique to Navajo. One such example is the transforming of the Navajo Department of Health to the Navajo Department of Public Health to address public health needs as well as possible creation of a Navajo Division of Aging Services to improve and expand services to elders.

One of the recommendations Benally addressed to the advisory committee included an effective inter-agency coordination effort and partnership to improve service delivery to link all federal, state and tribal entities serving Indian Country.

"I am honored to represent the Navajo Nation on this committee," added Benally. "And, I am honored to serve the Navajo people."

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