



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 15, 2017

MEDIA CONTACTS

Jared Touchin (928) 221-9253
Jolene Holgate (928) 380-4174
Crystalyne Curley (928) 286-7918
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

Navajo Nation Council to address the Indian Healthcare Improvement Act during special session

WINDOW ROCK – The 23rd Navajo Nation Council is scheduled to convene in a special session at 9:00 a.m. on Feb. 16 at the Department of Diné Education auditorium in Window Rock, to consider Legislation No. 0039-17, requesting Congress to retain the Indian Healthcare Improvement Act which was included as part of the Affordable Care Act in 2010.

Council Delegate Jonathan Hale (Oak Springs, St. Michaels) who serves as the chair of the Council's Health, Education, and Human Services Committee, sponsored the legislation following statements from the Trump administration and congressional members calling for the repeal of the Affordable Care Act, which is often referred to as "ObamaCare."

The proposed legislation outlines the many benefits that tribes receive under the Indian Healthcare Improvement Act, particularly as they relate to Indian Health Service and for Native Americans living in rural and urban areas. The law was first enacted in 1976 and permanently enacted in 2010 as part of the Affordable Care Act.

Language in the legislation states that repealing the Act would have "disastrous consequences" which would lead to the loss of third party revenue, legal authorities, and life-saving programs.

According to the legislation, repealing the Act would also have a negative impact on healthcare services for Navajo veterans because the current law authorizes IHS and tribes to enter into arrangements with the Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense to share medical facilities and services to help ensure that Navajo veterans are taken care of.

On Jan. 13, Delegate Hale issued a letter to congressional leaders including House Speaker Paul Ryan (R – WI) and U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R – KY), urging the members to retain the Act.

"As you consider a path forward on healthcare reform, I, as a leader of the Navajo Nation, urge you to ensure that this law is preserved so the Indian health system can continue to operate under a framework appropriate for 21st century healthcare delivery and honors the United States' trust responsibility to provide healthcare to American Indians and Alaska Natives," wrote Delegate Hale.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org or find us on Facebook and Twitter, keywords: Navajo Nation Council