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PRESIDENT BEGAYE SAYS NEW KAYENTA HEALTH CARE CENTER IS A SYMBOL OF HOPE, WELLNESS AND HEALING



Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez attended the dedication of the Kayenta Health Center and Alternative Rural Hospital on Wednesday, Apr. 27. President Begaye said the newly opened Kayenta facility is only a start when it comes to health care on the Navajo Nation.

KAYENTA-During yesterday's dedication of the Kayenta Health Center and Alternative Rural Hospital, Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye said the newly opened facility is a symbol of hope, wellness and healing for the Navajo Nation.

"When one of your family members gets sick, the first thing you look for is a hospital. You look for the signs of hope in getting treated. We look for a hospital because we know we will get medicated and be well," President Begaye said. "This is a symbol of wellness, healing and a symbol of hope. It's not only for Navajos but also for people like tourists who are driving through."

Indian Health Service and dignitaries from the Navajo Nation cut the ribbon yesterday on the new 179,000 square-foot hospital in Kayenta, Ariz. The facility will serve a population of more than 19,000 in the service unit.

President Begaye said the opening of the Kayenta Health Center is only a start and that the Nation is looking forward to developing more health related facilities and opportunities. He said the next health care facilities to be constructed will be in Dilkon, Bodaway Gap, and the Whitehorse Lake area of Pueblo Pintado.

The president also mentioned the agreement the Navajo Nation has with the University of Arizona that provides for seven scholarships to Navajo students to go through the University's medical program.

"I look forward to the day when our children will take care of us as our doctors and nurses. We need everyone from around the country to help us build up our health facilities. We look forward to having our own cancer and heart hospitals here on the Nation," he said. "We look forward to having Navajo



Members of the Kayenta Steering Committee along with Delegate Nathaniel Brown (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso and Kayenta) and Glenna Manymules-Bitsui stand beside President Begaye at the unveiling of a plaque honoring the Kayenta Health Center and Steering Committee.

doctors working on us. We look forward to the day when we defeat diabetes.”

Glenna Manymules-Bitsui, Health Planner with the Navajo Department of Health, said the facility will bring hands-on, individualized care to the community of Kayenta. Patients will have their health care tracked from day one she said.

“I think this is very important because we don’t see that out here very often. People travel from facility to facility to maintain their health care,” she said. “This is localized and individual care we’re talking about.”

Manymules-Bitsui said it took 25 years from the day it was visualized for the facility to be completed, When she moved to the area in 2006 to assist the Health Care Facility Steering Committee, one challenge they encountered was funding, she said.

“We participated in phase funding. The first funding we received was \$10 million dollars but to build a \$150 million dollar facility, \$10 million doesn’t go far,” she said. “That’s not the way you build a facility and that was the biggest struggle we had. We had to maintain and keep moving forward.”

Funding for the facility was appropriated by Congress and through Indian Health Services, Health Care Facility Construction.

Yet despite any obstacles, everyone in attendance was grateful for the facility and the service to be provided.

“It’s a great and beautiful day,” Manymules-Bitsui said. “We are grateful for this new facility.”

Vice President Jonathan Nez said the Kayenta Health Center is a symbol of self-sufficiency and self-reliance. Everyone who was involved had added to the planning and development of the center through their efforts he said.

He also noted that the community should utilize the Kayenta Health Center for more preventative efforts in maintaining their health.

“President Begaye and I have been promoting health and wellness. We don’t want people to just come in for their condition. We want to be able to prevent health problems like diabetes. We want to educate our community members to take better care of themselves,” he said.

In his closing remarks, President Begaye congratulated the community of Kayenta and those who worked extensively to bring the Kayenta Health Center and Alternative Rural Hospital to fruition.

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