



THE NAVAJO NATION

RUSSELL BEGAYE PRESIDENT
JONATHAN NEZ VICE PRESIDENT

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Communications Office
Office of the President and Vice President
Mihio Manus
Nicole Macias
OPVP.PressRoom@gmail.com

PRESIDENT BEGAYE AND VICE PRESIDENT NEZ ADVOCATE AGAINST REPEAL OF IHCIA AND ACA TO PRESIDENT TRUMP AND CONGRESS

WINDOW ROCK-The Office of the President and Vice President (OPVP) has advocated against the repeal of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCIA) to both Congress and President Trump since Jan. 17, 2017.

OPVP has requested Congressional support in retaining IHCIA and preserving the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA).

“Through federal contracts, the Navajo Nation administers critical health services to its tribal members who live in rural communities across the Nation,” President Russell Begaye said.

Repealing IHCIA would have detrimental impacts on the health services provided to approximately 330,000 Navajo tribal members across the country.

Permanently enacted in 2010, IHCIA serves as the foundation of the Indian Health Service (IHS) and the Urban Indian health system that provides healthcare services for American Indians/Alaskan Natives.

ACA has critical provisions that must remain in place for health care services to continue on the Navajo Nation.

For example, Section 2901 states that Urban Indian health systems must be the payer of last resort for services provided notwithstanding any Federal, State or local law to the contrary. Section 9201 ensures that any health benefits provided by a Tribe to its members are not included as taxable income.

“Repealing provisions such as these along with the IHCIA will jeopardize the lives of Navajo Nation tribal members who rely on these Indian healthcare systems,” said Vice President Jonathan Nez.

OPVP has also requested an exemption for IHS from the Presidential Memorandum ordering a freeze on hiring of Federal civilian employees. The Presidential Memorandum permits the Director of the Office of Personnel Management to “grant exemptions from this freeze where those exemptions are otherwise necessary.”

“IHS facilities are already insufficiently staffed and underfunded,” said President Begaye. “This is contrary to the U.S. legal obligations and trust responsibility to provide quality health care to American Indians and Alaska Natives.”

The Presidential Memorandum ordering the hiring freeze will exacerbate issues at IHS that will prevent the delivery of quality health care in many areas.

“The Navajo Nation prioritizes ensuring these essential services are not interrupted toward providing quality health care for our tribal members in need,” Vice President Nez stated. “This hiring freeze has the potential to cost the lives of the most venerable Americans.”

OPVP has pledged technical assistance to work collaboratively with the Trump Administration to continually provide health care services to the American Indian and Alaska Natives.

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