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## **PRESIDENT BEGAYE PROVIDES REPORT TO DSTAC CALLING FOR SPECIALTY CENTERS AND A VA HOSPITAL**

WASHINGTON, DC-Representing the Navajo Nation at the 2nd Quarterly Direct Service Tribes Advisory Committee (DSTAC) meeting, President Russell Begaye addressed several needs facing the health care system on the Navajo Nation.

The DSTAC 2nd Quarterly Committee was held in Arlington, VA, at the Courtyard Arlington on February 14-15.

There are critical needs on the Navajo Nation to develop health care facilities that specifically address cancer, cardiology and substance abuse. Developing these facilities on the Nation will be beneficial in providing employment while keeping health care benefits and funds on the Nation.

“One effort we will keep advocating for is establishing specialty centers,” President Begaye said. “Millions of dollars end up flowing off the Nation to private hospitals in Phoenix, Albuquerque, Salt Lake City and also to border towns.”

The Nation provided a written report for the 2nd Quarterly meeting that gave an overview of Strengthening Partnerships with Tribes, Improving Indian Health Service (IHS), Improving Quality and Access to care, and Ensuring Transparency and Accountability.

In the report, the Nation addressed the IHS amendment that extends the national reimbursement agreement for Veterans for direct health care services through June 30, 2019.

“We appreciate this agreement but we do see the need to have a stand-alone Veterans Administration (VA) hospital on the Navajo Nation,” President Begaye said. “Travel, lodging and transportation to VA hospitals off the reservation is time consuming and costly to our tribal and local-area veterans.”

President Begaye noted that the Chinle Service Unit has a continuing partnership with the Dartmouth University Tuck School of Business. CSU has recently completed a project relating to elder services that resulted in recommendations to explore swing-bed certification due to lack of locally available skilled nursing services.

“Our children need to be exposed to the field of medicine. We are partnering with several universities to provide Navajo students opportunities that will support them as they enter the fields of medicine,” he said.



**At the 2nd Quarterly DSTAC meeting held in Arlington, VA, President Russell Begaye said the Navajo Nation needs to construct cancer, cardiology and substance abuse facilities.**

President Begaye said that tribal members have reported issues of facing lengthy wait times at IHS facilities.

“We also hear complaints that patients are getting minimal services with little follow up,” he said. “This is ongoing and needs to be addressed.”

The president reported that federal programs and Tribal 638 contracts/compacts are operating at the same funding level as FY 2016 while also operating under the current Federal Continuing Resolution at 57% of FY2016’s allocation.

He also noted that all Federal Service Unit spending has remained within funds available during the first quarter of FY 2017.

“It’s a privilege for the Navajo Nation to be represented by this committee who advocates and presents our issues at the highest level of government,” President Begaye said. “We need to continue to advocate for quality health care services to be provided to tribal members on our Nation.”

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