



THE NAVAJO NATION

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PRESIDENT BEGAYE ADVOCATES FOR IMPROVED HEALTHCARE TO NEW HHS SECRETARY

WASHINGTON—Speaking before the Secretary's Tribal Advisory Committee (STAC) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services headquarters, President Russell Begaye urged HHS Secretary Tom Price to examine the quality of care and services provided by the Indian Health Service. This was Secretary Price's first STAC meeting with tribal leaders since being confirmed by the Senate on Feb. 10. Secretary Price explained that his priorities for HHS are "patients, people, and partnerships."

President Begaye underscored the need for an internal review of quality of care at IHS. "We need to see the quality of service improved," said President Begaye. Additionally, the president urged the secretary to create partnerships to increase the healthcare workforce and establish oncology services on the Navajo Nation.

Secretary Price centered his comments on building creative and cooperative partnerships "to solve the challenges that exist" within the financially "difficult times."

Secretary Price stated that he would like to hold future quarterly advisory committee meetings in Indian Country. At the conclusion of Wednesday's meeting the advisory committee members began working to identify future locations to host Secretary Price and his leadership team.

President Begaye extended an invitation to Secretary Price to visit the Navajo Nation. "I would relish the opportunity to visit your nations and tribes to see firsthand the challenges," stated Secretary Price.

Price, a physician and Republican, represented Georgia's 6th congressional district from 2005 to 2017. Secretary Price asked the advisory committee to provide their input to fill key HHS leadership positions that serve Indian Country. "We are in receptive mode to staff up IHS," added Secretary Price.

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