



The Navajo Nation
Office of the President and Vice President

CONTACTS:

Jared Touchin, Communications Director
(928) 274-4275

Crystalyne Curley, Sr. Public Information Officer
(928) 274-2758

nnopvp.communications@gmail.com

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**Navajo Nation and IHS recognize World
Diabetes Day with “War on Diabetes” proclamation**



PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Indian Health Service Principle Deputy Director RADM Michael D. Weahkee, Council Delegate Raymond Smith, Jr., Council Delegate Pernell Halona, Division Directors Santee Lewis, Dr. Pearl Yellowman, Dr. Rudy Shebala, and RADM Weahkee’s Chief of Staff Rear Adm. Brandon Taylor during the proclamation signing on Nov. 14, 2019 in Washington, D.C.

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Vice President Myron Lizer, and Indian Health Service Principle Deputy Director RADM Michael D. Weahkee issued a “War on Diabetes” proclamation on Thursday, coinciding with the World Health Organization and International Diabetes Foundation’s observation of “World Diabetes Day” on Nov. 14.

President Nez, RADM Weahkee, and members of the 24th Navajo Nation Council gathered at the Navajo Nation Washington Office in Washington D.C. to finalize the proclamation.

“With this proclamation we are not only declaring a war on diabetes, but we are declaring a war to save the health and lives of our Navajo people. Every Navajo person has a family member,

friend, or colleague that is living with diabetes and we have many who are also pre-diabetic and don't know it. We cannot sit back and let this health problem continue to grow. We are a strong and resilient people and we can defeat diabetes by raising awareness and changing our lifestyles to become healthier and stronger," said President Nez.

The proclamation states that nearly 27,000 people on the Navajo Nation are affected by diabetes. Overall, statistics indicate that as many as one-in-four members of the Navajo Nation are diabetic or pre-diabetic. The goal of the "War on Diabetes" is to promote healthy lifestyle choices through eating healthy and daily exercise and to bring awareness to pre-diabetes and diabetes symptoms.

"We lose far too many of our Navajo people due to the complications and direct impacts of diabetes – a health problem that is completely preventable, but it's incumbent upon all of us to educate one another and support one another about healthy living," said Vice President Lizer. "In addition to the impact on our loved ones, the costs of treating diabetes is very high for our healthcare providers and for our families."

The Nez-Lizer Administration will soon host a "Rock to Rock" relay event to support and encourage community members to participate by walking or running. Details of the relay event are forthcoming.

"Diabetes is one of the 'modern day monsters' that our people are battling on a daily basis, but through the teachings of our elders and through the practice of T'áá hwó' ajít'éego, or self-reliance and self-determination, we can overcome diabetes and live better lives for ourselves and our families," added President Nez.

They were also joined by Council Delegates Raymond Smith, Jr. and Pernell Halona, Division Directors Santee Lewis, Dr. Pearl Yellowman, Dr. Rudy Shebala, and RADM Weahkee's Chief of Staff Rear Adm. Brandon Taylor.

President Nez and Vice President Lizer thank RADM Weahkee and the members of the 24th Navajo Nation Council for supporting the "War on Diabetes" with the signing of the proclamation.

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