



The Navajo Nation
Office of the President and Vice President

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**Nez-Lizer support “active enrollment” for
managed health care for Navajo citizens in New Mexico**



PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer with New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, New Mexico Secretary of Indian Affairs Lynn Trujillo, and New Mexico Human Services Department Secretary David Scrase in Santa Fe, N.M. on Jan. 21, 2020.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer have informed the state of New Mexico that the Nez-Lizer Administration strongly supports “active enrollment” for Medicaid enrollment for approximately 75,000 members of the Navajo Nation in the state of New Mexico.

On Jan. 2, President Nez and Navajo Nation Department of Health Executive Director Dr. Jill Jim met with New Mexico Human Services Department Secretary David Scrase, New Mexico Department of Indian Affairs Secretary Lynn Trujillo, and Medicaid Director Nicole Comeaux to discuss options related to the Navajo Nation overseeing the Medicaid program.

“The top priority for our administration is protecting the health plan options for our Navajo people. We believe transparency and freedom of choice and tribal individual self-determination is

key in this process as it deals with the healthcare for thousands of our citizens. This process should be very transparent and our Diné citizens, especially our elders, should be fully informed and educated to make the best decision for themselves,” said President Nez. “Passive enrollment does not honor individual self-determination when it comes to healthcare choices.”

The Nez-Lizer Administration recently informed New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham of its supports for Legislation No. 0367-19 introduced by Council Delegate Daniel Tso. President Nez and Vice President Lizer requested Gov. Lujan Grisham and the state’s Human Services Department to work with the Navajo Nation, Naat’aani Development Corporation, and Molina Health Care to implement Medicaid Services.

In 2017, the Navajo Nation Council created the Naat’aani Development Corporation, which submitted a proposal to partner with Molina Health Care to enter into a contract with the state of New Mexico to assume management of a managed care plan for the Nation.

“As we move forward, we expect Molina Health Care and Naat’aani Development Corporation to be forthcoming with additional detailed information that outlines how and who exactly will manage and oversee the healthcare benefits. These entities need to be out in the Navajo communities informing and educating our people – there will be accountability every step of the way,” added President Nez. “Throughout this process, our administration will continue to work directly with the state of New Mexico on a government-to-government basis. We will continue to have a seat at the table and lead the way forward.”

According to a Medicaid feasibility study conducted by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to congress in 2014, the federal government recognized that the Navajo Nation is fully capable of establishing its own internal Medicaid agency, which would provide more benefits and revenue for the Navajo people rather than creating dividends for Naat’aani Development Corporation and Molina Health Care.

“Our administration will work hard to ensure that no adverse impacts will be made to the Navajo health care system and to ensure the Navajo Nation’s sovereignty through its regulatory jurisdiction and authority are protected and exercised to protect health care for Navajo people who decide to participate in the Indian Managed Care Entity,” said Vice President Lizer. “Active enrollment will also address concerns from Pueblo tribes related to the IMCE.”

President Nez and Vice President Lizer thank New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, New Mexico Human Services Department Secretary David Scrase, and New Mexico Department of Indian Affairs Secretary Lynn Trujillo for their commitment to ensuring tribal consultation with the Nez-Lizer Administration is honored throughout the process.

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