



THE NAVAJO NATION

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT & VICE PRESIDENT

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Navajo Nation Vice President Ben Shelly visits New Mexico Cancer Center during grand opening

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – On his second day in office, Navajo Nation Vice President Ben Shelly received a special tour of the new \$6 million New Mexico Cancer Center during its grand opening from its CEO and head oncologist, Dr. Barbara McAneny.

The center is now open and is designed specifically with Native patients in mind. Run by New Mexico Oncology Hematology Consultants, the center is home to a specialized team of experienced professionals, technically superior equipment, state-of-the-art care, all in a culturally-appropriate and sensitive environment.

“We know these are not easy treatments,” Dr. McAneny told the Vice President. “We know it’s a hard work to treat a cancer and to fix a cancer, and we want very much to smooth that path.”

One of the ways the center plans to do that is by having a beautiful log hogan to be used by Navajo patients to blend traditional and western medical treatment. The center is committed to the integration of traditional healing practices in the treatment of cancer, she said.

She said the center was designed and built with the patients’ desires and concerns in mind.

“When we built this building and the other buildings, one of the things that we did is we asked the patients what would make it

easier for you,” she said. “And they said we want it close, we want light, we want beauty, we want art, we want to be able to



Navajo Nation Vice President Ben Shelly discusses the fire stick at the New Mexico Cancer Center’s ceremonial hogan with CEO Dr. Barbara McAneny. The hogan will be used by patients in a blending of traditional and western medicine.

see outside the building, we want to remember all the beautiful things that we’re fighting to live for.”

This is the first radiation treatment center to serve Gallup and the nearby Navajo Nation, which will aid in keep Navajo cancer patients and their families closer to home.

Vice President Shelly said cancer is a growing problem among the Navajo people and that treatment centers don't exist on the Navajo Nation. He said he was thankful a well-coordinated cancer treatment center is now close by to help the Navajo people.

One of the main pieces of equipment shown to the Vice President was a state-of-the-art linear accelerator, Dr. Jeffrey Long explained.

"This produces high energy X-rays, and is the standard piece of equipment used in radiation therapy treatment nationwide," he said. "This is so sophisticated that at least 98-99 percent of any patient's needs for radiation therapy at all can be served right here in Gallup."

"We tried to make it friendly for families," Dr. McAneny said.

The center will employ six staff members and be open five days a week, Dr. Long said.

"We're certainly prepared to handle very large volumes of patients and if we need to," he said. "Our commitment to excellence and compassionate care is such that we will add staff very, very rapidly if necessary to cover the large increase in referrals over time."

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Vice President Shelly sees the state-of-the-art linear accelerator which produces high energy X-rays, and is the standard piece of equipment used in radiation therapy treatment nationwide.