



Navajo Nation: Covid-19 positive cases increase by 225, healthcare facilities reporting at 100 percent ICU capacity

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: December 5, 2020

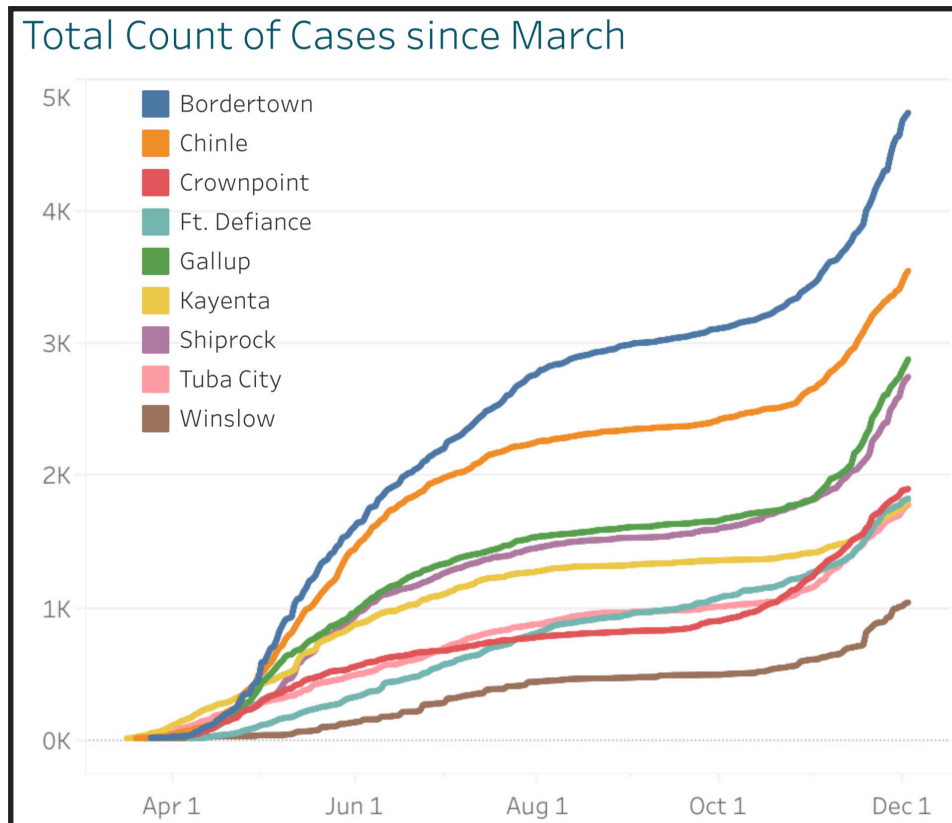


PHOTO: A screenshot of the Navajo Nation Covid-19 dashboard website showing a graph of cases for service units since March for December 5, 2020. The website is accessible at: <https://www.ndoh.navajo-nsn.gov/COVID-19/Data>.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — The Navajo Nation’s update to coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic situation report from the Health Command Operations Center (HCOC) for December 5, 2020 included data for testing, results, recoveries and mortalities related to Covid-19 in and around the Navajo Nation.

The increase of 225 new cases with 18 cases in delayed reporting brings the total confirmed positive cases on the Navajo Nation to 17,738. The total number of mortalities related to Covid-19 on the Navajo Nation increased by 2, bringing the total to 667. The report included 9,797 recovered cases. A total 170,343 Covid-19 tests have been administered with 141,154 tests were returned with negative results.

Today, Navajo leaders met through teleconference to hear recommendations from the Navajo Nation’s health experts regarding health care capacity for the current wave of Covid-19 cases.

“The Navajo Nation Council has heard from the Navajo Department of Health and the Navajo Area Indian Health Service today that the Navajo Nation needs every resource possible to address the current shortage of healthcare staff and personnel. Our ICU beds are at 100 percent capacity, and we’re still not seeing the most dire impacts from the holiday gathering that occurred,” said Speaker Seth Damon.

The leadership meeting included coordination and input from Dr. Jill Jim, executive director of the Navajo Department of Health (NDOH), Roselyn Tso, director of the Navajo Area Indian Health Service (NAIHS), President Jonathan Nez, Vice President Myron Lizer, Speaker Damon and members of the 24th Navajo Nation Council. Navajo leaders will continue discussions to identify solutions for the funding and resource needs of the NDOH beyond the December 30 deadline for CARES Act funds.

Health, Education, and Human Services Committee Vice Chair Carl Roessel Slater expressed concern about being prepared for a rise in mortalities after hearing reports from NAIHS on ICU and hospital bed shortages. In particular, delegates sought legislative recommendations to help in avoiding rationing of healthcare services in Navajo Nation facilities. Such rationing would subject needy Navajo patients to less-than critical care based on national prioritization and evaluation methods.

The Navajo Nation Council, in collaboration with the Executive Branch, will continue developing appropriate legislative measures to further the ongoing response to the Covid-19 pandemic on the Navajo Nation.

More Data

Navajo Nation cases by Service Unit

Chinle Service Unit:	3,571
Gallup Service Unit:	2,917
Shiprock Service Unit:	2,796
Crownpoint Service Unit:	1,923
Ft. Defiance Service Unit:	1,852
Kayenta Service Unit:	1,826
Tuba City Service Unit:	1,788
Winslow Service Unit:	1,044

40 additional Navajo Nation chapters reported 1-3 positive cases. The communities of heightened concern are: Shiprock, Kayenta, Chinle, Sanostee, Thoreau, Crownpoint, Tseyatoh, Tuba City and Churchrock. The number of confirmed cases in surrounding border towns was reported to be 4,817.

On Dec. 3, the Office of Environmental Health and Protection, with the concurrence of the Navajo Department of Health (NDOH) and the HCOC, issued Public Health Emergency Order No. 2020-031. The order continues the Stay at Home (Shelter in Place) Lockdown Order for an additional three weeks, including full 57-hour weekend lockdowns. Law enforcement will provide patrol services to ensure only essential functions are conducted during the lockdown hours.

The NDOH and the Navajo Epidemiology Center provided the updated Covid-19 figures in coordination with tribally-controlled 638 healthcare facilities and the Navajo Area Indian Health Service. More information, including Covid-19 testing locations, can be found on the Navajo Nation's Covid-19 website at: <https://www.ndoh.navajo-nsn.gov/COVID-19>.

The HCOC General Hotline can be reached at (928) 871-7014. Inquiries and requests may be sent to NNHCOCPlans@navajo-nsn.gov. The HCOC hours of operation are Monday-Friday from 8am to 5pm, Saturday from 8am to 12pm and Sunday on standby status.

###

MEDIA CONTACTS: communications@navajo-nsn.gov, (928) 287-2085

Byron C. Shorty, INT Communications Director

Timothy E. Benally, Public Information Officer