



The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

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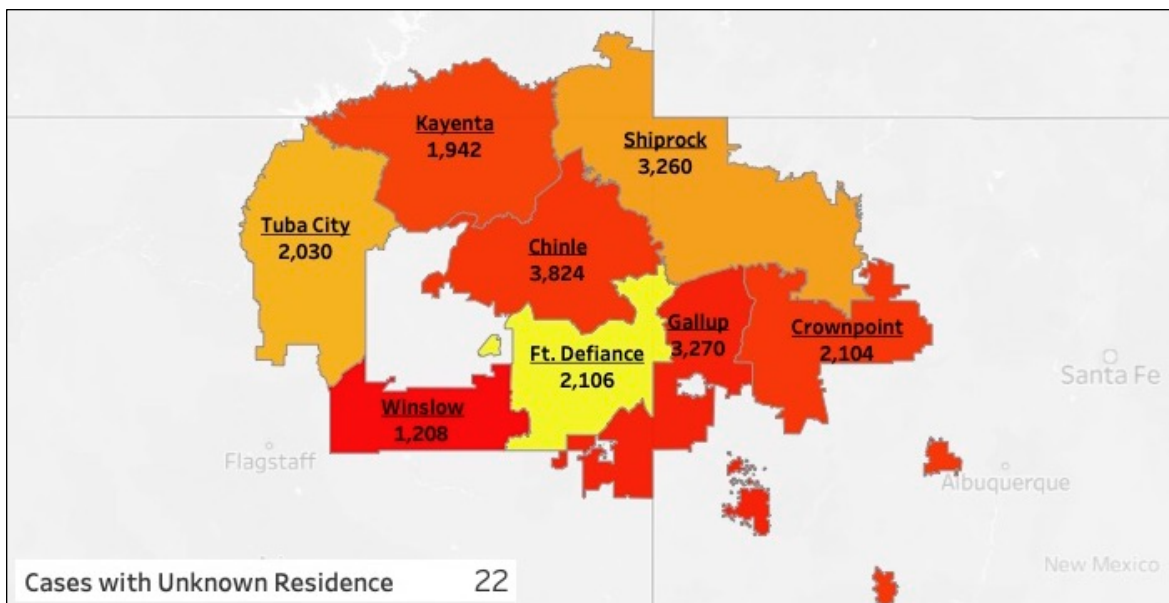
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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158 new cases, 10,623 recoveries, and two more deaths related to COVID-19 as Navajo Area IHS receives first shipment of Pfizer vaccines



WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – On Monday, the Navajo Department of Health, in coordination with the Navajo Epidemiology Center and the Navajo Area Indian Health Service, reported 158 new COVID-19 positive cases for the Navajo Nation and two more deaths. The total number of deaths is now 722 as of Monday. Reports indicate that 10,623 individuals have recovered from COVID-19, and 183,334 COVID-19 tests have been administered. The total number of positive COVID-19 cases is now 19,766.

Navajo Nation COVID-19 positive cases by Service Unit:

- Chinle Service Unit: 3,824
- Crownpoint Service Unit: 2,104
- Ft. Defiance Service Unit: 2,106
- Gallup Service Unit: 3,270
- Kayenta Service Unit: 1,942
- Shiprock Service Unit: 3,260
- Tuba City Service Unit: 2,030

· Winslow Service Unit: 1,208

* 22 residences with COVID-19 positive cases are not specific enough to place them accurately in a Service Unit.

On Monday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer visited the Gallup Indian Medical Center as the Navajo Area IHS received the first shipment of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines for COVID-19. The process of distributing the vaccine to other health care facilities on the Navajo Nation, including health care clinics, also began on Monday. More vaccines are expected to be delivered on Tuesday. The vaccine will be administered based on the Centers for Disease Control's phased distribution plan that calls for health care workers and those living in long-term assisted living facilities to receive the vaccine first, on a volunteer basis.

The Navajo Nation opted to have the Navajo Area IHS oversee the distribution of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, with the exception of the Utah Navajo Health System, which opted to work with the state of Utah for distribution. The Utah Navajo Health System reported that the vaccines will be delivered later this month, in accordance with its agreement with the state.

"Today is a historic day in this fight against COVID-19. With the vaccine in hand for our health care workers and those living in nursing homes, it provides more hope and optimism for our health care workers who have worked non-stop and for all of our Navajo people. We have to be mindful that this will be a long process and we cannot let down our guard. We have to keep fighting COVID-19 together by staying home as much as possible, wear a mask, avoid crowds and gatherings, practice social distancing, and wash your hands often. The fight is not over, but the Pfizer vaccine provides us with another tool to help overcome the COVID-19 pandemic," said Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez.

On Monday, the state of Arizona reported 11,795 new cases, Utah reported 1,968, and New Mexico reported 1,507 new cases. On Tuesday, Dec. 15 at 10:00 a.m. (MST), the Nez-Lizer Administration will host an online town hall on the Nez-Lizer Facebook page to provide more updates. It will also air later on local radio.

"The fight is far from over, but we now have a new weapon to use against COVID-19. Let's continue to be strong and continue to focus on keeping ourselves and others safe during this pandemic. There is finally some relief for our health care workers who are receiving the vaccine, but we have to continue fighting for them as well by staying home as much as possible. Continue to pray and to stay strong," said Vice President Myron Lizer.

For more information, including helpful prevention tips, and resources to help stop the spread of COVID-19, visit the Navajo Department of Health's COVID-19 website: <http://www.ndoh.navajo-nsn.gov/COVID-19>. For COVID-19 related questions and information, call (928) 871-7014.

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