



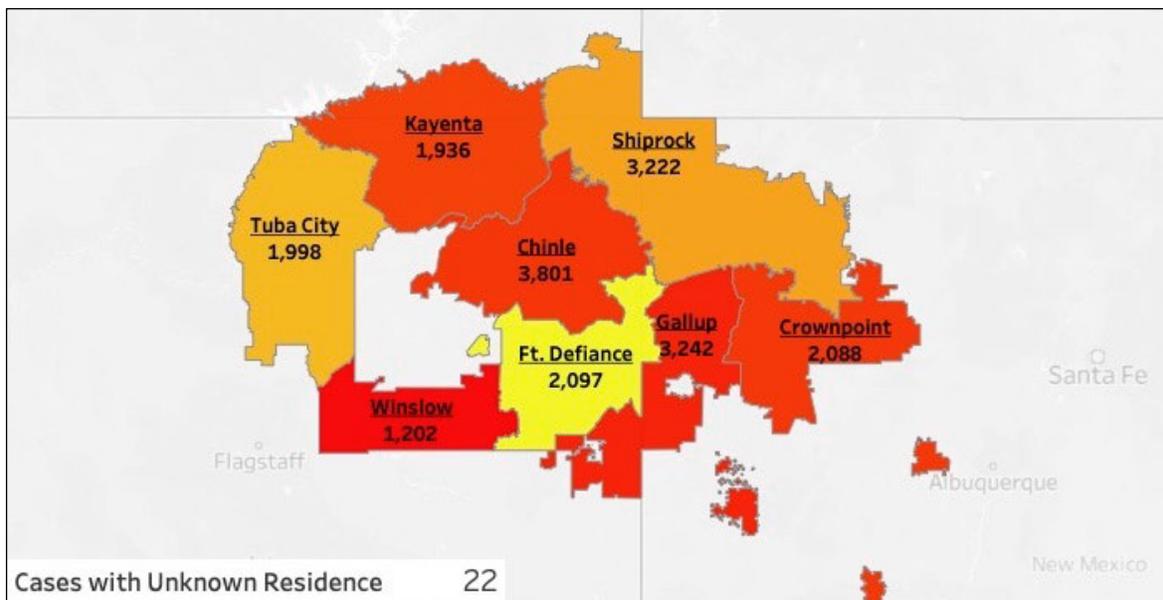
The Navajo Nation
Office of the President and Vice President

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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183 new cases, 10,371 recoveries, and two more deaths related to COVID-19 as Navajo Area IHS prepares to deliver Pfizer vaccine to health care facilities



WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – On Sunday, the Navajo Department of Health, in coordination with the Navajo Epidemiology Center and the Navajo Area Indian Health Service, reported 183 new COVID-19 positive cases for the Navajo Nation and two more deaths. The total number of deaths is now 720 as of Sunday. Reports indicate that 10,371 individuals have recovered from COVID-19, and 182,322 COVID-19 tests have been administered. The total number of positive COVID-19 cases is now 19,608, including six delayed reported cases.

Navajo Nation COVID-19 positive cases by Service Unit:

- Chinle Service Unit: 3,801
- Crownpoint Service Unit: 2,088
- Ft. Defiance Service Unit: 2,097
- Gallup Service Unit: 3,242
- Kayenta Service Unit: 1,936
- Shiprock Service Unit: 3,222
- Tuba City Service Unit: 1,998
- Winslow Service Unit: 1,202

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

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved and authorized the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for COVID-19 on Friday. 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. Navajo Area IHS expects to deliver the vaccine to each health care facility including health care clinics, by Tuesday to be administered to health care workers, in accordance with the recommendations of the CDC.

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. On Sunday, Utah Navajo Health System issued a press release stating that they opted to work with the state of Utah due to their longstanding working relationship with the state.

"I commend Navajo Area Indian Health Service for their careful planning and diligence to ensure our health care workers receive the Pfizer vaccine as soon as possible. This is the first step in the vaccine process to help rid this invisible monster from our homes and communities. Until the vaccines are available to the general public, all of us have to continue to take proper precautions and keep our guard up to protect ourselves from the spread of COVID-19. Keep staying home as much as possible, keep wearing a mask in public, avoid crowds and in-person gatherings, practice social distancing, and wash your hands with soap and warm water often," said Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez.

On Sunday, the state of Arizona reported 5,854 new cases, Utah reported 2,083, and New Mexico reported 1,459 new cases. The Navajo Nation's 57-hour weekend lockdown is in effect until 5:00 a.m. (MST) on Monday, Dec. 14. All residents of the Navajo Nation are required to remain home during the weekend lockdown with the exception of essential workers who are required to report to work. All businesses on the Navajo Nation are closed during the 57-hour weekend lockdown.

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.

"Keep fighting COVID-19 together, stay strong, keep praying, and we will get through this challenging time together. Our health care workers are not giving up on us, so let's not give up on them and let's help them by staying home as much as possible. Please do everything possible to keep yourselves and your families safe," 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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