



The Navajo Nation  
Office of the President and Vice President

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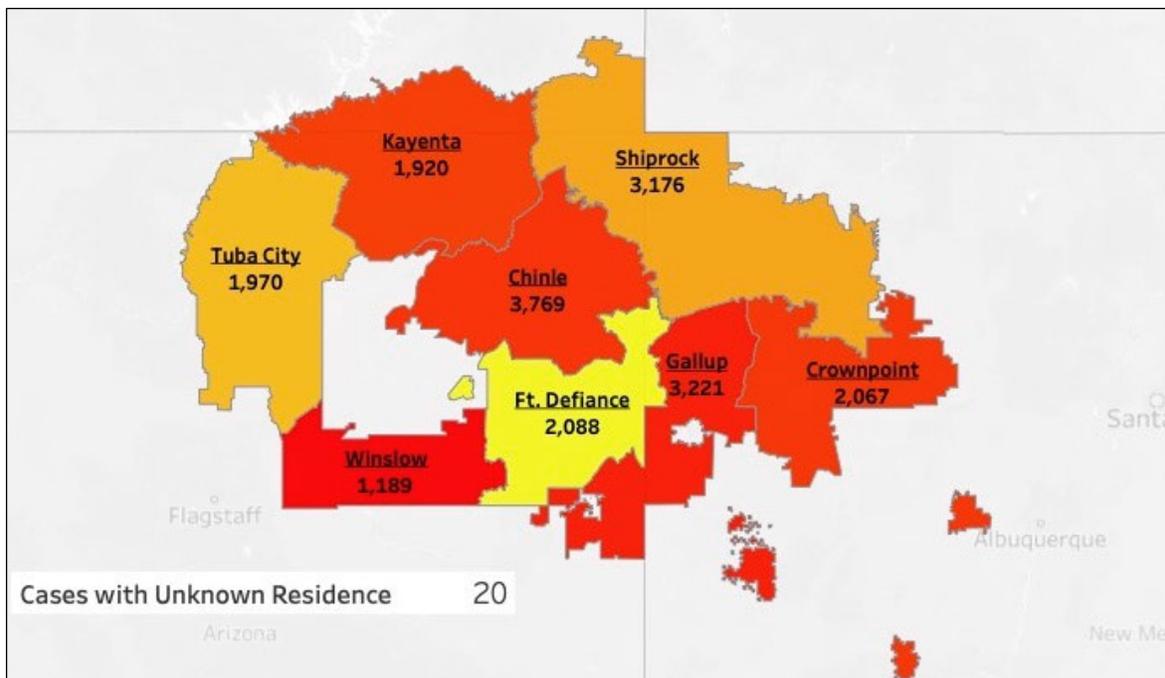
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**203 new cases, 10,359 recoveries, and seven more deaths related to COVID-19 as Navajo Area IHS anticipates first shipment of Pfizer vaccine**



**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – On Saturday, the Navajo Department of Health, in coordination with the Navajo Epidemiology Center and the Navajo Area Indian Health Service, reported 203 new COVID-19 positive cases for the Navajo Nation and seven more deaths. The total number of deaths is now 718 as of Saturday. Reports indicate that 10,359 individuals have recovered from COVID-19, and 181,120 COVID-19 tests have been administered. The total number of positive COVID-19 cases is now 19,420, including 17 delayed reported cases.

Navajo Nation COVID-19 positive cases by Service Unit:

- Chinle Service Unit: 3,769
- Crownpoint Service Unit: 2,067
- Ft. Defiance Service Unit: 2,088
- Gallup Service Unit: 3,221
- Kayenta Service Unit: 1,920
- Shiprock Service Unit: 3,176
- Tuba City Service Unit: 1,970

· Winslow Service Unit: 1,189

\* 20 residences with COVID-19 positive cases are not specific enough to place them accurately in a Service Unit.

On Friday, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved and authorized the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for COVID-19. 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 receive its first shipments of the vaccine on Monday and Tuesday, which will be transported to Gallup Indian Medical Center, Chinle IHS, and Northern Navajo Medical Center, followed by other locations that have the equipment to store the Pfizer vaccine at deep freeze temperature.

Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez met with Navajo Area Indian Health Service Chief Medical Officer Dr. Loretta Christensen on Friday, and discussed the vaccination distribution plan that is being overseen by Navajo Area IHS. Dr. Christensen stated that IHS has had extensive planning in the works for quite some time and has also been doing practice runs at their hospital facilities.

"With the FDA's approval of the Pfizer vaccine and pending approval of the Moderna vaccine, there is high demand across the entire country. Navajo Area IHS is working hard to help as many people as possible every day, while also implementing the distribution plan that prioritizes health care workers and those living in long-term assisted living facilities. So, it will take time for the vaccines to become widely available to the general public. Until then, it's very important that everyone keep up their guard to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. We cannot lose focus because there is a vaccine. We have to keep fighting this invisible monster together," said President Nez.

On Saturday, the state of Arizona reported 8,076 new cases, Utah reported 3,692, and New Mexico reported 1,803 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.

"We have to remain united in the fight against COVID-19 and we have to do more to help our health care workers. Right now, our hospitals and health care workers are overwhelmed due to the high level of new COVID-19 cases. If we stay home more, we help to isolate the virus and reduce the spread of the virus. Please stay strong and continue to pray for our people," 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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