



## The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 28, 2020

## **Naat'áani Development Corporation attempts to bypass regulatory approvals and capitalize on the COVID-19 pandemic**

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** — On Friday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer vetoed resolution CMA-14-20, which unconscionably attempted to capitalize on the COVID-19 pandemic by requesting, at the behest of Naa'táani Development Corporation, the Governor of New Mexico to “expeditiously secure all necessary regulatory approvals, contracts, and infrastructure for launching the Naa'táani Development Corporation – Molina Healthcare, Inc. Indian Managed Care Entity.”

President Nez said the veto action protects the Navajo people from the deception on the part of Naat'áani Development Corporation, which is attempting to take advantage of the COVID-19 pandemic by circumventing the standard regulatory approvals and holding desperately needed medical supplies hostage to strongarm the state of New Mexico and the Navajo Nation.

In a press release issued by the Naat'áani Development Corporation, Council Delegate Daniel Tso claimed that 5,000 COVID-19 test kits and other resources are readily available through the Naat'áani Development Corporation and questioned the leadership of President Nez during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“If Naat'áani Development Corporation and Molina Healthcare truly have COVID-19 test kits and other crucial medical supplies ready for delivery as they claim, there is nothing stopping them from donating those items immediately to help Navajo people. Ironically, they are asking to start managing health care services by ransoming medical supplies as its first act. The Navajo people would demand that Naat'áani Development Corporation release that equipment immediately, including the 5,000 test kits that they claim to have. The Navajo people and others are very skeptical of the Naat'áani Development Corporation's CEO and certain board members who operate in secrecy. With the increasing numbers of Navajo people who are sick from the coronavirus, their actions are shameful and deceptive,” said President Nez.

“We've been on the ground helping communities and cautioning the public on a daily basis. Where is Chairman Daniel Tso? He's nowhere to be found. As the chair of the Navajo Nation's health committee, the Navajo people have high expectations of him. Right now, he's not

delivering – instead he’s sitting back promoting a smear campaign on our administration during this pandemic,” stated President Nez.

President Nez also pointed out that when the Naat’áani Development Corporation was created by the Navajo Nation Council years ago, the intent of the corporation was to foster and support the development of diverse businesses on the Navajo Nation, not to provide or manage health care.

“The management of health care for the Navajo people should remain in the hands of health care and medical experts, not in the hands of a board and a questionable CEO with absolutely no expertise in the health care field,” added President Nez.

“According to state officials, the regulatory approval process will take over 20 months to approve. For Naat’áani Development Corporation and Molina Healthcare to create the false impression that they would be up and running within weeks is outright reckless and disruptive. The CEO of Naat’áani Development Corporation and the leadership of Molina Healthcare should be ashamed of their actions during this time,” said President Nez.

In addition, the introduction of Naat’áani Development Corporation to managed care will not raise new dollars, but rather lead to more competition for current health care dollars and services during the COVID-19 pandemic. IHS hospitals and 638 facilities currently serving the Navajo people should not have their funding jeopardized.

“The Naat’áani Development Corporation needs to be truthful and forthcoming with information for the Navajo public, instead of constantly using back channels to manipulate officials and to smear the Nez-Lizer Administration. Business should be done the right way — with integrity. We call on the shareholder representatives to re-evaluate the leadership of Naat’áani Development Corporation,” said Vice President Lizer.

“We’ve been cautioning our people about companies attempting to scam the public during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the actions of the Naat’áani Development Corporation and Molina Healthcare fit that category. It’s time for the Naat’áani Development Corporation to truly work for the Navajo people – not themselves. They must release the medical equipment, including COVID-19 test kits, that it claims to have on hand. Holding those supplies hostage puts the health of our Navajo people in even greater danger at this time,” stated President Nez, adding that the Nez-Lizer Administration will continue to work for a stable and efficient healthcare for the Navajo people with current health partners.

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