



The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 6, 2020

Nation's leaders recognize "Navajo Nation Suicide Prevention Week"

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer signed a proclamation on Sunday, recognizing Sept. 6-12, 2020 as "Navajo Nation Suicide Prevention Week" in coordination with World Suicide Prevention Day on Sept. 10, 2020, and National Suicide Prevention Week.

"Our administration recognizes the mental health needs of many of our people, including our young Navajo people. The Navajo Nation Division of Behavioral and Mental Health Services continues to help many of our people, but we need to do more. It starts with healing among families. There are far too many young people losing hope at a young age. Parents and grandparents have the challenging responsibility to instill good values, teachings, and confidence in our children at a young age. We will continue to do everything we can to help families and young people who suffer from modern day monsters like depression, suicide, and other issues that often lead to people taking their own lives," said President Nez.

The Nez-Lizer Administration continues to support the "Building Communities of Hope" initiative to empower individuals, families, and communities and to restore hope, self-sufficiency, and determination through comprehensive suicide prevention strategies. Building Communities of Hope was initiated in November 2015 when President Nez served as the Vice President of the Navajo Nation. The initiative aims to provide services in schools, universities, and communities on and off the Navajo Nation.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented challenges for our people. By having to shelter-in-place to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, we know that many people are dealing with their issues at home and some are even taking the opportunity to heal their families using the time spent at home during this pandemic. We have heard stories of families reconciling, coming together, and strengthening their relations during this challenging time. We pray and continue to work toward helping more families become stronger and to revitalize the teachings of our elders," added President Nez.

According to Division of Behavioral and Mental Health Services, suicide is the seventh leading cause of death on the Navajo Nation, and American Indian communities experience higher rates of suicide compared to all other racial and ethnic groups in the U.S.

“The Division of Behavioral and Mental Health Services and Building Communities of Hope initiative play a vital role in saving lives and preventing suicides among our people. If you or someone you know is having issues with their mental or spiritual well-being, we encourage you to use the resources available to seek help. We will continue to pray for strength, understanding, and healing for all of our Navajo people who are dealing with these tough challenges,” said Vice President Lizer.

"In this COVID-19 pandemic it's important to seek help for yourself or others, we can all do our part to prevent suicide. Learn about suicide warning signs and symptoms to help someone today or in the future," said Department of Health Executive Director Dr. Jill Jim.

The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President recognizes public awareness is key to preventing loss of life by suicide and remains committed to suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention. The Navajo Nation supports the efforts of our Divisions, Departments, and Programs as advocates for life by promoting resiliency, culture, traditional values, faith, and providing public education and direct services with the understanding that these efforts will create avenues to reduce the number of suicides.

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THE NAVAJO NATION

Proclamation

RECOGNIZING SEPTEMBER 6 - 12, 2020 AS NAVAJO NATION SUICIDE PREVENTION WEEK

THE NAVAJO NATION recognizes September 6-12, 2020 as “Navajo Nation Suicide Prevention Week” to increase suicide awareness and prevention to help our Navajo people, including our young people, who are struggling in their daily lives. Suicide is a major public health concern and remains one of the leading causes of deaths on the Navajo Nation.

WHEREAS, suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States and the 7th leading cause of death on the Navajo Nation, claiming over 47,000 lives nationwide; and

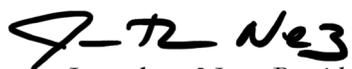
WHEREAS, American Indian and Alaska Native communities experience higher rates of suicide compared to all other racial and ethnic groups in the United States, with suicide being the 8th leading cause of death for American Indian and Alaska Natives across all ages; and

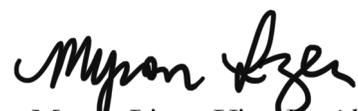
WHEREAS, the Navajo Nation encourages public awareness to prevent further losses of life and remains committed to increasing suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention; and

WHEREAS, the Navajo Nation supports the efforts of our Divisions, Departments, and Programs as advocates for life by promoting resiliency, culture, traditional values, faith, and providing public education and direct services with the understanding that these efforts will create avenues to reduce the number of suicides; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JONATHAN NEZ, President of the Navajo Nation, and **I, MYRON LIZER**, Vice President of the Navajo Nation, do hereby proclaim September 6 – 12, 2020 as Navajo Nation Suicide Prevention Week in coordination with World Suicide Prevention Day on September 10, 2020.

ORDERED THIS 6th DAY OF SEPTEMBER 2020


Jonathan Nez, *President*
THE NAVAJO NATION


Myron Lizer, *Vice President*
THE NAVAJO NATION