



The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

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President Nez requests more COVID-19 vaccines and additional resources in meeting with Biden-Harris officials and federal agencies

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer met with officials from the White House, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Navajo Area Indian Health Service, and others via teleconference on Sunday, to provide updates regarding COVID-19 related issues and to advocate for more COVID-19 vaccines, testing kits, medical personnel, and other resources to help reduce the spread of the virus.

As of Jan. 29, 2021, the Navajo Area IHS reported that the Navajo Nation received 64,713 doses of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines combined, and that 47,455 of those doses had been administered including some for second doses. Following two large vaccine events at Tséhootsoof Medical Center and Gallup Indian Medical Center over the weekend, the number of vaccines administered is expected to increase substantially. Health care facilities continue to administer more vaccines during events and by appointments this week.

“Compared to states across the country, the COVID-19 vaccines are being put into the arms of our people here on the Navajo Nation at a very high rate. Over the weekend, we saw thousands of people waiting in long lines to receive the vaccines. Now that the 57-hour weekend lockdown is lifted, our health care workers are expanding efforts to get the vaccines administered as quickly and efficiently as possible. We appreciate the White House officials and federal agencies for meeting with us and for the support they continue to provide. Our message to them was that our health care workers are doing a great job and confidence in the vaccines is at a very high level among our people so we need more vaccines to meet the demand and to vaccinate as many of our people as possible. The need is growing greater and greater as we receive more reports of the COVID-19 variants spreading,” said President Nez.

He also noted that the Nez-Lizer Administration issued letters to the governors of Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah stating that if the states used Native American population numbers to advocate and receive COVID-19 vaccines, then the Navajo Nation should receive its share of those vaccines for Navajo people residing in urban areas. President Nez also asked the White House officials to follow-up on the Navajo Nation’s previous request to issue a major disaster declaration to free up additional funding and resources.

Navajo Department of Health Executive Director Dr. Jill Jim also requested support for more COVID-19 test kits to help identify positive cases and isolate the spread of the virus, which will also help to address the needs of school employees, businesses, and essential workers who are required to report to work for essential duties.

“We hear the voices of the people who are wanting more resources for school teachers and employees, businesses, and essential workers. We are doing our very best to advocate for all of them, but we are competing with high demands across the country. Persistence and communication are key to securing more resources. The discussion that President Nez and I had with the federal officials allowed us to provide updates on data and numbers and to demonstrate the need for more vaccines, medical personnel, and test kits,” said Vice President Lizer.

In December, the U.S. Department of Defense and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services deployed federal medical personnel to health care facilities on the Navajo Nation, to provide much-needed relief and resources for health care workers to help fight the spread of COVID-19. The Navajo Nation continues to work with FEMA to seek an extension of the deployment of medical personnel to continue assisting health care facilities and additional personnel to assist with vaccination efforts

The Nez-Lizer Administration will continue meeting with Biden-Harris officials and federal agencies to advocate for additional support and resources.

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