



The Navajo Nation  
Office of the President and Vice President

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**Nez-Lizer express concerns with Naat'áani Development  
Corporation's actions to gain approval to oversee Medicaid funds**

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer continue to express concerns over the Naa'táani Development Corporation's ability to manage hundreds of millions of dollars in health care funding for Medicaid coverage for over 70,000 Navajo citizens in the state of New Mexico. Naa'táani Development Corporation has partnered with Molina Healthcare, Inc. to launch the Indian Managed Care Entity.

Naa'táani Development Corporation was established in July 2017 to create subsidiaries to promote economic opportunities and revenue. Since then, the Naa'táani Development Corporation has operated mostly behind closed doors to lobby tribal and state officials to secure approvals and a contract with the state of New Mexico to manage the Medicaid funds.

On March 27, 2020, President Nez vetoed Resolution CMA-14-20, which attempted to capitalize on the COVID-19 pandemic by requesting, at the direction 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.”

The Council attempted to override the veto, however, the final outcome of the override remains in question due to a memorandum issued on April 7, 2020 by Council Delegate Charlaine Tso stating that she “inaccurately” casted her vote in support of the override. In the memo, she also requested that her vote be accurately recorded in opposition to the override, meaning that the override failed. The Office of the President and Vice President issued two separate letters to the Office of the Speaker requesting clarification, however a response has not been received.

“As leaders of the Navajo Nation, the Nez-Lizer Administration and the Navajo Nation Council want to ensure quality health care for all our Navajo people, but I am very concerned with how the Naa'táani Development Corporation are working behind the scenes and giving false impressions to gain oversight to enormous amounts of Medicaid funds. Their actions raise red flags and create grave concerns about how they will operate and who will truly benefit if the Naa'táani Development Corporation, an entity with no prior health care experience or expertise, obtains approvals from the state of New Mexico to oversee Medicaid for our Navajo people. The Navajo people should be very concerned and demand transparency and information from Naa'táani Development Corporation and their supporters,” said President Nez.

Since 2019, the Office of the President and Vice President has participated in several meetings with the Naa'táani Development Corporation, the Council's Naabik'iyati' Committee, and Health, Education, and Human Services Committee to ensure the Indian Managed Care Entity would adequately protect and serve Navajo citizens.

The Office of the President and Vice President repeatedly requested important financial information and detailed operating plans from the Naa'táani Development Corporation and its subcontractor, Molina Health Care. The Office of the President and Vice President also requested information on regulatory jurisdiction and oversight of the Indian Managed Care Entity to ensure that Navajo Nation sovereignty and regulatory authority would be recognized in the Indian Managed Care Entity contract with the state of New Mexico.

"The Office of the President and Vice President insisted that obtaining this information was necessary with the health care of over 50,000 Navajo citizens residing in New Mexico at stake. Unfortunately, the information provided to date has not provided clarity on how Navajo citizens' health care would be improved, how the Indian Managed Care Entity would contribute financially to the well-being of Navajo citizens, and how Navajo sovereignty would be protected and upheld," President Nez stated.

He added that at no time did the Office of the President and Vice President, nor the Navajo Nation Department of Justice, request that New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham insist on a waiver of sovereign immunity on the part of the Navajo Nation, a false allegation publicized in a Jan. 11, 2021 press release issued by the Office of the Speaker.

"The fact that the Naa'táani Development Corporation would mislead the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee with such false information is deeply troubling and casts doubt on whether the Naa'táani Development Corporation truly intends to operate the Indian Managed Care Entity with transparency for the benefit of Navajo citizens. The only input requested from the Nation's Executive Branch in the contract negotiations concerned whether or not the Nation needed to be a signatory for the contract. On Jan. 7, the Navajo Nation Department of Justice sent a letter to the state of New Mexico, stating that the Navajo Nation did not need to be a signatory to the agreement," President Nez added.

Vice President Lizer stated that securing health care funds for Navajo people is already extremely competitive and difficult and that adding a new entity to the health care field will only make the process more challenging.

"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. This is a time when we should all be working together, not working against each other," said Vice President Lizer.

The Office of the President and Vice President will continue to stand strong and protect Navajo Nation's sovereignty and best interests, including the health and welfare of Navajo citizens.

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