



The Navajo Nation
Office of the President and Vice President

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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President Nez recognizes the month of May as “*ńtsáhakees Silah’igii Baa ‘Áhayá* – Navajo Nation Mental Health Awareness Month”

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer issued a proclamation on Monday, recognizing the month of May 2022 as “*ńtsáhakees Silah’igii Baa ‘Áhayá* – Navajo Nation Mental Health Awareness Month” to raise awareness of the importance of mental health and its impact on the well-being of Navajo citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Over the past two years, we’ve experienced higher levels of stress, trauma, anxiety, depression, and grief, but through the teachings of our elders we remain strong and continue to overcome. In many ways, the pandemic has magnified some of the modern-day monsters in our communities, including mental and emotional health. We recommit ourselves to standing and supporting those experiencing mental health conditions with this proclamation. Let us strive to ensure that people with mental health conditions know they are not alone, that there is hope, and that healing is possible through support and prayer. We have to continue to come together, support one another, and continue to heal our Nation as we move forward together,” said President Nez.

The Nez-Lizer Administration has also partnered with the Navajo Nation Division of Behavioral and Mental Health Services to create a Mental Health Coalition, who has been providing outreach and support for children, adults, families, and communities. Together, they call upon citizens, tribal organizations and businesses, and schools to help strengthen the mental health of our communities.

The proclamation states that “Diné culture and tradition hold in high esteem our teaching and need for mental, emotional, physical, and social health” and “mental health is part of overall health and helps to sustain our thought processes, relationships, productivity, and ability to adapt, to preserve, and to overcome adversity.”

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the mental health of Navajo citizens of all ages. It is more critical to reduce the stigma around the mental health struggles of others. Stigma and fear of discrimination keep many who benefit from mental health services from seeking help.

“If you know of someone in your home or community struggling with mental health issues, lend a hand to get them help and support. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness but a sign of strength. Together, we must create a concrete message of hope and equity. We must also help our mental health providers provide comfort and support for family members and friends struggling with this illness. Most importantly, we have to address mental health the same way we treat physical health,” said Vice President Lizer.

The proclamation recognizes that mental health is often life-threatening, and early detection and treatment can profoundly differentiate recovery and healing.

For more information regarding services and assistance, please visit the Navajo Nation Division of Behavioral and Mental Health Services website at: <https://www.nndbmhs.org> or by calling (928) 871-6240. Support is also available through the National Suicide Lifeline at 1 (800) 273-8255.

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THE NAVAJO NATION

Proclamation

RECOGNIZING THE MONTH OF MAY 2022 AS “ÑTSÁHAKES SILAH’IGII BAA ‘ÁHAYÁ – NAVAJO NATION MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH”

WE recognize our Diné people who endure the challenges associated with mental illnesses, and we pledge solidarity with their families, who also require our support and recommitment, for they serve as constant companions to their loved ones suffering from mental health issues. Let us strive to ensure people living with mental health conditions know that they are not alone, that hope exists, and that healing and thriving is possible through support and prayer.

WHEREAS, our Diné culture and tradition, hold in high esteem, our teaching and need for Mental, Emotional, Physical and Social health; and

WHEREAS, Mental health is part of overall health living and helps to sustain our thought processes, relationships, productivity, and ability to adapt to change, to persevere, and overcome adversity; and

WHEREAS, we recognize that mental illness adversely affects those abilities and often is life-threatening in nature and acknowledge that early identification and treatment can make a profound difference in successful management of mental illness and recovery; and

WHEREAS, approximately one in five Americans experience a mental illness, yet only about one third of them will access treatment, and even fewer in tribal communities; and

WHEREAS, every citizen and community can make a difference in helping end the silence and the stigma surrounding mental illness that has plagued and discouraged people suffering from mental illness from accessing help; and

WHEREAS, in conjunction with “National Mental Health Awareness Month”, we renew our commitment to ridding our Nation of the stigma associated with mental illness, and encourage those living with mental health conditions to get the help they need, and reaffirm our pledge to ensure those who need help have access to the support and resources they deserve.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JONATHAN NEZ, President of the Navajo Nation, and **I, MYRON LIZER**, Vice President of the Navajo Nation, do hereby proclaim the month of May 2022 as “Ñtsáhakes Silak’igii Baa ‘ahayá - Navajo Nation Mental Health Awareness Month” throughout the Navajo Nation.

PROCLAIMED THIS 2nd DAY OF MAY 2022


Jonathan Nez, *President*
THE NAVAJO NATION


Myron Lizer, *Vice President*
THE NAVAJO NATION