



The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

CONTACTS:

Jared Touchin, Communications Director
(928) 274-4275

Crystalyne Curley, Sr. Public Information Officer
(928) 274-2758

nnopvp.communications@gmail.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 21, 2022

U.S. Senate confirms the appointment of Roselyn Tso to serve as the head of the Indian Health Service

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer applaud the U.S. Senate’s final confirmation of Roselyn Tso on Wednesday, to serve as the next Director of the Indian Health Service (IHS). Tso is an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation from LeChee, Ariz. She is Deeschii’nii (Start of the Red Streak People) and born for Hashk’aa hadzohi (Yucca Fruit Strung Out). Her maternal grandfather is Tl’ogi Dine’e’ (Zia Pueblo People) and her paternal grandfather is Tl’ízi lání (Many Goats).

Upon taking the oath of office, Tso will oversee the delivery of health care services to 2.6 million American Indians and Alaska Natives and the management of \$7.4 billion in federal health care funds and 15,000 IHS employees across the country. On April 12, 2021, President Nez delivered a letter to U.S. President Joe Biden requesting his support and nomination of Tso to lead the IHS based on her experience and handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. In March 2022, President Biden officially nominated her for the position.

“This is a historic achievement for all of our Navajo people and tribal nations across the country. To have one of our own Navajo members in the highest position within IHS is remarkable. Ms. Tso was born and raised on the Navajo Nation and understands the health care needs that many first people of this country deal with on a daily basis. Her work ethic, value system, and approach to problem solving demonstrates the resilience of indigenous peoples, and the commitment to combat the systemic inequities that impact tribal nations. It is because of her extensive experience working with federal and tribal governments that we are confident that she will uphold federal trust responsibilities and enhance our nation-to-nation relationship to improve the



PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Navajo Area Indian Health Service Director Roselyn Tso on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. on May 25, 2022.

Indian health care service delivery to all tribal nations. We thank President Biden, our Congressional delegation, and the U.S. Senate for their support," said President Nez.

He added that Tso's commitment to working together with the Navajo Nation and its health care professionals to mitigate the COVID-19 pandemic helped to lower infections and led to the Navajo Nation having one of the highest vaccination rates in the entire world.

"This is a big step forward for all of Indian Country. We congratulate Ms. Tso, her family, and her colleagues for their commitment over the years that laid the groundwork for this great milestone. With decades of Indian Health Service budget challenges, I believe Ms. Tso can bring new vision to elevate the healthcare need, which were all made very apparent after the COVID-19 pandemic. Our prayers for continued success are with Ms. Tso as she will soon take on a greater challenge to serve all tribal nations across this land. We hold her and her team in the highest regards for everything they have done to support our Navajo people," said Vice President Lizer.

During a hearing held by the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs in May, President Nez testified in support of Tso's confirmation. Tso was joined by her family for the hearing, in which she highlighted the priorities that she would undertake as the IHS Director including strengthening and streamlining health care services, improving tribal consultation, and improving accountability within IHS operations.

As the head of the Navajo Area IHS since 2019, Tso has provided exemplary leadership in the administration of a comprehensive health care system. She began her career with the IHS in 1984. She previously served in various roles in the Portland Area, both at the service unit level as the Administrative Officer for the Yakama Service Unit and at the Area level as the Planning and Statistical Officer, Equal Employment Officer and Special Assistant to the Area Director.

In 2005, Tso assumed the role of Director, Office of Tribal and Service Unit Operations for the Portland Area. In this leadership position, she was responsible for the implementation of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Act and worked directly with tribes. Tso also worked with the three urban programs in the Portland Area that provide services ranging from community health to comprehensive primary health care services. In addition, she previously served as Acting Director of the ODSCT in 2010 and 2016-2018.

Tso holds a Bachelor of Arts in interdisciplinary studies from Marylhurst University in Portland, Oregon, and a master's degree in organizational management from the University of Phoenix, Portland, Oregon.

###

For the latest news from the Office of the President and Vice President, please visit <http://www.opvp.navajo-nsn.gov/> or find us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.