



The Navajo Nation
Yideeskáądi Nitsáhákees

DR. BUU NYGREN *PRESIDENT*
RICHELLE MONTOYA *VICE PRESIDENT*

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CONTACT: Alastair Lee Bitsóí, OPVP Media Relations

Email: alastair.bitsoi@navajo-nsn.gov

Cell: 917-202-8308

Navajo President Buu Nygren says new Navajo Department of Health administrator knows how government works, has strong passion to help Navajo elderly population

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – The new Navajo Nation Department of Health’s health services administrator says her job is to meet the diverse needs of the growing *Diné* elderly population, which now includes Boomers.

Marlinda Littleman, administrator of the Division of Aging and Long-Term Care Support, said the elderly Navajo population are different than they used to be.

“Seniors are getting younger,” she said in an interview Wednesday. “They’re more educated and engaged in community-based programs. The needs of the elders are different. DALTCS will need to change with the times.”

DALTCS stand for the Division of Aging and Long-Term Care Support, she said. Despite the Nation’s aging population, there has been no one to head the division for the past year and a half – until now.

“We have around 60,000 *Diné* elderly who live on the Navajo Nation,” Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren said Wednesday. “Marlinda knows how the government works. She knows how to handle funds and budgets. And right now, she brings a strong foundation of network and partnership to help our elders.”

DALTCS was without a leader to guide its staff of 260 that relied on its own goals and leadership to serve 10% of the Navajo Nation’s elderly with its annual budget of \$18 million.



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The President said he’s confident Ms. Littleman will know how to adapt her division’s programming to meet the *Diné* elderly’s needs.

She began her new role on July 1 after being recruited by Kim Russell, executive director for the Navajo Nation Department of Health.

Elderly services and care are a top priority for the Nygren-Montoya Administration.

The President has said elders have worked all their lives taking care of their families, communities and serving the Navajo Nation and he does not want them to have to wait for the Navajo Nation any longer.

“It’s our mission to get prompt services to our precious grandmas and grandpas,” he said.

From her desk at the Department of Health, Ms. Littleman observes how the elderly population across the Navajo Nation is younger and savvy with technology.

She said today’s Navajo elder population often do not know they can get help with vision care and hearing aids.

They may need guidance on how to report elder abuse or volunteer at local schools to share their life knowledge and wisdom with children and get paid for it through the Navajo Nation Foster Grandparent Program.

Beyond serving Navajo elderly nutritional foods at its 83 senior centers, Ms. Littleman will focus on recruitment drives, health promotion and use technology to address the many needs of elderly clients.

She said she’ll turn her attention to fulfill the policy needs of the federal Older Americans Act. Under

this law, the Navajo Nation’s DALTCS program provides nutrition services, transportation, family caregiving and ombudsman services.



Ms. Littleman meets with her DALTCS staff on Friday, July 5, in Window Rock.

Originally from the Tuba City and raised in Dinnebito, Ms. Littleman has a Master of Business Administration from the University of Phoenix and a Bachelor of Administration from Northern Arizona University.

She previously served as deputy director at the Navajo Nation Division of Social Services.

“Marlinda’s experience working for tribal government and with the older adult population is just really going to take our program to the next level,” Director Russell said.

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