

Navajo Nation COVID 19 Preparedness Team meeting regularly

Written by Staff Reports

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WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. - Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer officially established the Navajo Nation COVID-19 Preparedness Team Feb. 27, to monitor, plan, prepare, and coordinate precautionary efforts to address the coronavirus.

“Working together with the Navajo Department of Health, Bureau of Indian Education, Indian Health Service, state and local health departments, we are taking this proactive measure of establishing the Navajo Nation COVID-19 Preparedness Team to continue raising public awareness and to plan and prepare for the potential spread of the coronavirus in our region. We’re bringing these entities together to ensure that we are communicating and coordinating efforts to educate the public. There are no cases of the coronavirus on the Navajo Nation, but this is a very serious health concern, and it’s vital that we continue to provide information with everyone, including students, elderly, and community members,” Nez explained.

Nez called for a meeting with the Navajo Department of Health and the Navajo Area Indian Health Service Director Roselyn Tso, where he stressed the need to utilize Community Health Representatives to inform Navajo elderly people and those living in remote areas, and to coordinate with hospitals and clinics.

“The number one priority is the health of our Navajo people. As the coronavirus, we ask for everyone’s help to inform your family and friends. As you go about your daily routines and especially when you travel, please take precautions,” Lizer said.

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Symptoms of the virus may include mild to severe respiratory illness with fever, cough, and shortness of breath, and is known to spread person-to-person. It can take up to 2 to 14 days for the virus to become active after exposure. Currently, there is no vaccine available for the virus, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

To help prevent the spread of COVID-19, the Centers for Disease Control recommends the following:

Wash your hands with soap and water often.

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

Minimize long-distance travel. The coronavirus has the potential to become severe. Severe cases can also lead to pneumonia, kidney failure, and in some cases, death. The most vulnerable are the elders, young children, and those with compromised immune systems.

The Navajo Nation COVID-19 Preparedness Team includes the Office of the President and Vice President, Navajo Department of Health, Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety, Navajo Nation Division of Social Services, Navajo Nation Department of Emergency Management, Department of Diné Education, Navajo Nation Division of Community Development, U.S. Indian Health Service, U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the U.S. Bureau of Indian Education.

The Navajo Nation COVID-19 Preparedness Team met again March 3 and will continue to meet regularly to discuss the latest information about COVID-19. The Navajo Department of Health reported that there are no cases of the coronavirus on the Navajo Nation as of March 3.

More information about COVID-19 can also be found on the Centers for Disease Control website. [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html)

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