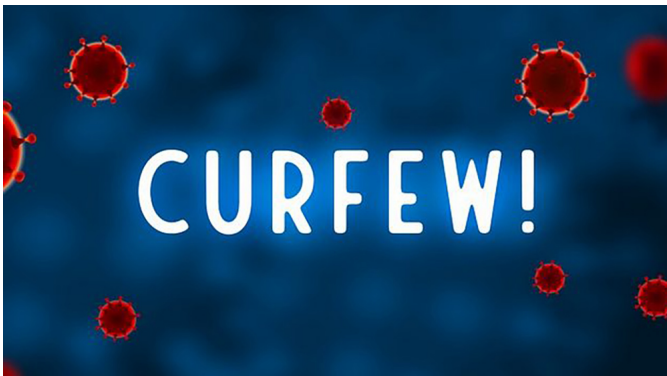


The struggle to flatten the curve: Navajo Nation cases climb

Written by Staff Reports
Friday, 17 April 2020 05:03



President Nez: ‘When we isolate ourselves, we isolate the virus’

After announcing a stay-at-home order, ordering all essential businesses to close, and even implementing a nightly curfew, the number of positive COVID-19 cases is still rising on the Navajo Nation.

The Navajo Department of Health and Navajo Area Indian Health Service, in coordination with the Navajo Epidemiology Center, said there are 488 cases on the Navajo Nation as of April 8, with another 62 cases being confirmed that day.

The 488 cases include the following counties:

Navajo County, Ariz.: 186

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Apache County, Ariz.: 50

Coconino County, Ariz.: 116

McKinley County, N.M.: 45

San Juan County, N.M.: 70

Cibola County, N.M.: 9

San Juan County, Utah: 2

There are 20 confirmed deaths from COVID-19 as of April 8 as well.

The Navajo Nation's latest Public Health Order to attempt to slow the spread of new cases comes in the form of a 57-hour curfew, which will take effect on April 10 at 8 pm until April 13 at 5 am, except for essential employees who are required to have documentation from their employer.

Navajo Police will strictly enforce the curfew order by issuing citations that may include a fine up to \$1,000 and/or 30 days in jail.

"The only way we're going to beat COVID-19 is by practicing T'áá hwó' ajít'éego, self-determination. The teachings of our Navajo elders still help and guide us to this day," President Jonathan Nez said April 8. "Each and every one of us has to take it upon ourselves to self-isolate – when we isolate ourselves, we isolate the virus."

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Vice President Myron Lizer urged people to prepare for this weekend curfew ahead of time.

“Now is the time to get prepared for the 57-hour curfew. If you need groceries, medication, or other necessary items we urge you to take every precaution,” he said. “Please only send one family member to purchase items – do not take children [or elders] into stores or public places.”

The daily curfew implemented on March 30 remains in effect from 8:00 pm to 5:00 am.

With both Good Friday and Easter coming up during the 57-hour curfew, the Nez-Lizer Administration issued a proclamation April 8 designating the weekend as “Navajo Nation Family Prayer Weekend.”

Nez and Lizer encourage families to pray together for family members, neighbors, health care workers, governing officials, and those who are sick, and the families who have lost loved ones due to COVID-19 on the Navajo Nation.

«For many of us, prayer is an important expression of faith, love, and hope. It is an act of worship, and it offers healing, guidance, and comfort. Through prayer, we find the strength to overcome challenges and heartache. Prayers reminds us that we are not alone and that we are all children of God,» said Lizer.

TIMELINE OF THE VIRUS ON THE NAVAJO NATION

April 3: The positive case total hits 270 after 29 more are confirmed. The death count climbs to 12.

April 4: Another 51 positive cases bring the total to 321 while the death count rises to 13. Nez and Lizer meet with Arizona Army National Guard State Surgeon Col. Tom Leeper, the U.S.

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Army Corps of Engineers, FEMA Region 9 officials, Team Rubicon, and the Chinle Comprehensive Healthcare Facility Incident Command team, to receive Personal Protective Equipment in Chinle, Ariz. Citizens are urged to wear cloth face coverings when they go out in public.

April 5: The positive case count rises to 354 after 33 new cases are confirmed. Another death brings the total up to 14.

April 6: Another 30 cases brings the total up to 384, along with one more death to bring the total to 15. Nez and Lizer meet with officials with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to discuss the possible use of Miyamura High School gymnasium in Gallup as a Federal Medical Station to help with the overflow of COVID-19 patients. A 57-hour weekend curfew is announced for the Navajo Nation for April 10-13.

April 7: Forty-two new cases are announced to bring the total to 426, as well as two additional deaths to bring the total up to 17.

April 8: The Navajo Nation tally reaches 488 after another 62 cases are confirmed. Three more deaths bring the total up to 20.

For more information on the Navajo Nation efforts in fighting COVID-19, visit <http://www.ndoh.navajo-nsn.gov/COVID-19>