

NCI detox reopens

Written by By Beth Blakeman Associate Editor
Friday, 01 May 2020 05:33

COVID-19 calls for changes

Na' Nihzhoozhi Center Inc. detox center is undergoing changes since it reopened April 18 at 10 pm.

Dr. Kevin Foley, the executive director of NCI, says the police will continue to pick people up, but the detox center will only take in intoxicated people who have been confirmed positive after being tested for COVID-19.

Foley explained that this new practice means people who have not tested positive will not become newly exposed to the virus.

Foley says the National Guard is also helping to staff the center with 17 people in three shifts. They will handle administrative duties, such as getting charts and logging people and property in. The extra staffing will help keep the center running since it is down to about 5 or 6 people.

Foley says that when staff members became ill, before NCI closed, 22 people were taken to Rehoboth McKinley Christian Health Care Services two at a time to be admitted into the hospital. After they were cleared, they were sent to a hotel. But not all of them have come back.

Some who got sick are recovering and getting close to returning. Some he hasn't heard from.

Foley says NCI has burned through its supplies and needs more gowns and face shields. He said County Emergency Management provided a lot of Personal Protective Equipment on April 17.

Foley told the *Gallup Sun* that the Secretary of Aging, Katrina Hotrum Lopez, had taken a tour of the detox center building on April 20 to determine whether NCI could be a site where the

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Secretary of Health would be able to quarantine people against their will.

Follow-up calls to Secretary Hotrum-Lopez went unreturned. Calls to David Morgan received the following response.

“Plans for the Na Nihzhoozhi Center Inc. are still very fluid. The New Mexico Department of Health is in the process of gathering all the details necessary to draft a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) allowing the Department of Health to be able to provide COVID-19 related services at the facility for the area’s transient population. When things get finalized and the contract worked out, I’ll have more to report to you.”

By Beth Blakeman
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