

COMMUNITY COMES TOGETHER

Written by By Beth Blakeman Associate Editor
Friday, 01 May 2020 05:36



In the midst of the COVID-19 global pandemic, with shortages of tests and Personal Protective Equipment, re- use, recycling, and making the most of available resources have become crucial to the effort.

Fifteen hand-crank hospital beds, from an old nursing home that was purchased by Rio Arriba County, will be put to new use at Rehoboth McKinley Christian Health Care Services.

The beds were offered to the hospital, along with sixty 3-D printed N95 masks and 123 gowns.

The masks came from Ryan Proctor in Albuquerque, and printed face shields came from Steve Cox with Northern New Mexico College.

Two anonymous cash donations to the Rio Arriba County Rosie the Respirators face mask project came to \$6K. That money will help with additional donations of fabric face masks and shields.

WellSpring Recovery Center Behavioral Health Services Specialty Projects and Safety Officer Bill Camarota borrowed a 30-foot trailer from Navajo Tractor CEO Bill Overton, picked the supplies up April 21 and delivered them to RMCHCS.

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Uses for the beds changed quickly from a plan to keep them in storage for other facilities wrestling with the virus, to setting five up in the RMCHCS cardiac unit and ten more in the third floor solarium, where cubicle dividers will be installed to provide patient privacy.

Camarota said the lines for oxygen are ready for the cardiac rehab unit.

“We’re getting ready for the surge, he said.

The Navajo Department of Health says as of April 21, the Navajo Nation has registered 1,206 total positive cases of COVID-19 with 48 confirmed deaths. McKinley County is reporting 244 cases, San Juan County 121, Cibola County 14, Socorro County 17, Sandoval County 13, San Juan County, Utah 15, Navajo County, Ariz. 328, Apache County, Ariz. 240, and Coconino County, Ariz. 213.

Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez is expecting COVID-19 cases to peak sometime in the first half of May. Since the Gallup area serves as a medical hub for residents from the Navajo and Zuni reservations, the bed donation is expected to be especially helpful to tribal members hit by the pandemic.

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