

Over 77,000 vaccines given out to the Navajo Nation

Written by By Molly Adamson Sun Correspondent
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Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez held a live town hall meeting via Facebook Live on Feb. 9 to discuss the continuing COVID-19 pandemic and progress in vaccine distribution. He began the meeting by sharing the current numbers surrounding the coronavirus.

As of Feb. 8, there were 28,937 confirmed cases of COVID-19 among Navajo residents. There have been 236,327 COVID-19 tests given to Navajo residents.

Fifteen-thousand-two-hundred-sixty-four residents have recovered from the virus, while there have been 1,060 deaths in the community.

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“This virus, this pandemic, has probably reached every single person in the Navajo Nation one way or another, either having someone who has family members who have tested positive or those who have lost their lives to the virus,” Nez said.

While sharing his condolences for the families who have lost loved ones, Nez shared that he learned of his uncle’s passing over the weekend. Many people in the Facebook comments shared their condolences for the president.

Nez reminded people of the precautions that should be taken to stop the virus. Washing your hands, wearing masks, keeping six feet away from people outside your household, and staying home as much as possible are all practices he encouraged the community to continue.

“It’s not up to government to constantly remind you. It’s up to us as Navajo citizens to remind ourselves, to help ourselves through this pandemic,” he said.

He also said that people need to continue to be there for each other.

“We need to continue to comfort each other throughout this time (and) help each other out,” Nez said.

He did share some good news when it came to the vaccine rollout. The Navajo Nation has received 78,520 doses of the vaccine. Ninety-eight percent of those have been given out to people of the community, for a total of 77,074.

Nez shared that more vaccines are coming; a shipment of 28,925 doses is due later this week. He shared that the Navajo Nation government has a goal of 100,000 shots given to the Navajo people by the end of February.

Navajo Nation Vice President Myron Lizer praised the vaccine during the town hall and shared his hopes for the end of the pandemic.

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“This COVID-19 vaccination will help protect you from getting COVID-19,” Lizer said. “It will also be a safe way to build protection. It will be an all-important tool to stop this pandemic.”

A vaccination event was held on Feb. 9 at the University of New Mexico’s Gallup campus by the Gallup Indian Medical Center. The event was open to anyone 18 or older who is a resident of Gallup Service Unit and who receives their health care at Gallup SU health facilities.

Lee Lamb, the senior public relations specialist at UNM-Gallup, said that the university was very happy to help the community by sharing their location.

“We’re glad to see our community members getting vaccines,” Lamb said. “I think we are looking at it as the beginning of the end of this pandemic.”

By Molly Adamson
Sun Correspondent