

Navajo Nation mandates COVID-19 vaccinations for all government employees

Written by Staff Reports

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Government employees on the Navajo Nation are now required to have COVID-19 vaccinations.

The 24th Navajo Nation Council has passed Legislation No. 0178-21 which requires COVID-19 vaccinations for all Navajo Nation government employees. By a vote of 12 in favor and 6 opposed, the bill also urges all Navajo-owned enterprises, authorities, corporations, businesses, schools, and entities operating within Navajo Nation boundaries to promptly adopt COVID-19 vaccination requirements.

“This law moves us forward as a stronger Navajo Nation. We are in this together,” Speaker Seth Damon (Bááhaalí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tséyatoh), said Sept. 29.

In August, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez exercised his executive authority by issuing Executive Order No. 007-2021 which mandates vaccinations for tribal employees.

“I sponsored this legislation because it was a health emergency for the Navajo people,” Delegate Eugene Tso (Chinle), said. “Our families are resilient and we will overcome this pandemic.”

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“One life lost is one too many,” he said.

Tso received his third booster shot this week.

A special session was held Aug. 26 and the legislation was certified Aug. 31, by Damon. Following the 10-day period that expired Sept. 10, Nez did not exercise his authority to sign into law or veto the legislation. This immediately established the vaccination requirement for all Navajo Nation employees.

Legislation No. 0178-21 requires that:

All employees of the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial Branches, as well as employees of all chapters, including employees of Local Governance Act certified chapters, be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

Employees who are not fully vaccinated, for any reason, against COVID-19 are required to provide documentation to their supervisor that the employee has tested negative for COVID-19 every 14 days after the effective date of this legislation.

A person is fully vaccinated two weeks after the second dose in a 2-dose series for the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or two weeks after a single dose by the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine.

Acceptable documentation showing that the employee has tested negative for COVID-19 shall include a medical provider statement, testing facility test results, or a written self-certified statement indicating the date and facility of the testing.

Violations of the requirements set forth herein shall be “just cause” for disciplinary measures under the Navajo Preference in Employment Act.

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Tribal employees shall ensure compliance with these requirements within 45 days after implementation of the COVID-19 vaccination requirements.

Navajo Nation employees may test for COVID-19 at any location listed at:

<https://www.ndoh.navajo-nsn.gov/COVID-19/COVID-19-Testing>

Navajo Nation employees may receive COVID-19 vaccinations at <https://www.ndoh.navajo-nsn.gov/COVID-19/COVID-19-Vaccine>