



The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 3, 2020

Navajo Nation extends stay-at-home lockdown and reimplements 57-hour weekend lockdown as hospitals reach a state of major crisis

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – On Thursday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer hosted a virtual forum, in which several Navajo Area IHS medical and health care providers stated that the Navajo Nation is now in a major health care crisis and pleaded with the public to stay home and take precautions to help reduce the overwhelming surge in new COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations. As of Thursday, the Navajo reported a total of 17,310 positive cases and 663 deaths related to COVID-19 since the pandemic began. The entire forum is available online at: <https://youtu.be/yfOg3RANG-A>.

Dr. Loretta Christensen, Chief Medical Officer for Navajo Area Indian Health Service, stated that we are “truly in crisis mode” as hospitals continue to receive more and more hospital visits and hospitalizations related to COVID-19. The current situation is leading to a shortage of hospital beds, oxygen supplies, medical personnel, and increasing wait times to transfer severe COVID-19 patients to other hospital facilities in the region that are better equipped to assist.

“We have been in a state of emergency since the pandemic began here on the Navajo Nation, but that has now elevated to a major health care crisis. Our health care experts are now saying that the current wave or surge is far more severe and troublesome than the wave that we saw in April and May, perhaps four or five times larger according to projections. Our medical experts on the front lines are pleading with all of our Navajo people to stay home as much as possible in order to reduce and isolate the spread of COVID-19. We have not yet seen the full extent of this second wave, but we do know that the severity of this second wave relies completely on our individual actions. Because of this unprecedented rise in COVID-19 cases, we are extending the stay-at-home lockdown for three additional weeks beyond Dec. 6 and it will include 57-hour weekend lockdowns every weekend through Dec. 28.,” said President Nez.

President Nez and Vice President Lizer also signed a letter on Thursday, requesting President Trump and the Federal Emergency Management Agency to issue a Major Disaster Declaration for the Navajo Nation for Individual Assistance Crisis Counseling, Disaster Case Management and Public Assistance Category B (Emergency Protective Measures) including Direct Federal Assistance for all Navajo Nation Chapters, our local units of government, and all other additional federal services and assistance allowed under a Major Disaster Declaration.

Public Health Emergency Order No. 2020-031 provisions go into effect on Monday, Dec. 7, 2020 until Monday, Dec. 28, 2020:

- Extends the Stay-At-Home Lockdown which requires all residents to remain at home 24-hours, seven days a week, with the exceptions of essential workers that must report to work, emergency situations, to obtain essential food, medication, and supplies, tend to livestock, outdoor exercising within the immediate vicinity of your home, wood gathering and hauling with a permit.
- Re-implements full 57-hour weekend lockdowns for three additional weekends that include: 8:00 P.M. MST through 5:00 A.M. MST on December 11, 2020 through December 14, 2020, and for the same hours on December 18, 2020 through December 21, 2020 and December 25, 2020 through December 28, 2020.
- Essential businesses including gas stations, grocery stores, laundromats, restaurants and food establishments that provide drive-thru and curbside services, and hay vendors can operate from 7:00 a.m. (MST) to 7:00 p.m., Monday through Friday only.
- Refrain from gathering with individuals from outside your immediate household and requiring all residents to wear a mask in public, avoid public gatherings, maintain social (physical) distancing, remain in your vehicle for curb-side and drive-through services.

In addition, President Nez and Vice President Lizer issued Executive Order 011-20, to limit services and require Navajo Nation government and enterprises to remain closed through Sunday, Dec. 27, 2020, with the exception of essential employees as determined by division directors and enterprise management, to maintain essential services and functions of the government. This is due to the growing numbers of positive COVID-19 cases on the Navajo Nation.

“Our top priority is the health and well-being of the Navajo people and that should be everyone’s priority. We are at a crossroads in terms of keeping our people safe and healthy and mitigating the major health care crisis that we are presently in. The good news is that we, the people, have the power to turn this upward trend in new cases around and reduce the spread of COVID-19 through our own actions. Hospital medical personnel including doctors, nurses, and many others are overworked because they are fighting for all of us every single day. Let’s help them in this fight simply by staying home as much as possible to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Our health care providers are pleading with everyone at this point, so please continue to pray for them and to help them,” Vice President Lizer stated.

To view Public Health Emergency Order No. 2020-031, please visit:

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

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