



Urges New Mexico governor to launch the Indian managed care entity

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. - The Navajo Nation Council unanimously passed emergency legislation 0069-20 March 20, requesting the Governor of New Mexico activate the Naat'áanii Development Corporation - Molina Healthcare, Incorporated Indian Managed Care Entity to gain access to Medicaid dollars to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 on the Navajo Nation.

"In this time of crisis, we need all the available resources we can get to fight the spread of the novel coronavirus on the Navajo Nation. The Council was wise in fast-tracking this initiative - Congress passed legislation increasing Medicaid by 6.2 percent to fight the coronavirus; however, that extra money is not impactful unless the NDC Managed Care Organization is able to access those funds. We can no longer be the forgotten population. We need the extra dollars and I strongly urge the Navajo President to sign the legislation," Navajo Nation Delegate and the Council's Health, Education and Human Services Committee chairman Daniel Tso said.

Tso sponsored the legislation which passed by a vote of 21-0. When activated, the NDC MCO could get up to \$40 million to fight the novel coronavirus and its impact.

On Jan. 20, the Navajo Nation Council unanimously passed legislation requesting the State of New Mexico to issue all necessary approvals to the Naat'áanii Development Corporation and Molina Healthcare, Inc. to launch an Indian Managed Care Entity in New Mexico. This would be the first tribal IMCE in the country.

Navajo Nation Council passes emergency legislation to access COVID-19 Medicaid dollars

Written by Gallupsun Staff
Friday, 03 April 2020 07:05

However, the launch was delayed by differing opinions between the Navajo Nation Council and the Office of the President and Vice-President over launching enrollment. The NNC's position is to go with passive enrollment because no new contractor has ever gone with active enrollment.

Manley Begay, Jr., chairman of the Naat'áanii Development Corporation, urged President Jonathan Nez to sign the legislation.

"We learned during the H1N1 outbreak, that American Indians and Alaska Natives were disproportionately impacted - a report by the Center for Disease Control notes that the death rate was higher than the rate for all other racial/ethnic populations combined," Begay said. "Now we are dealing with COVID-19 pandemic, which is notably worse than H1N1, and we cannot sit back while this crisis threatens our people. Time is of the essence. We need the NDC MCO operational to access the necessary dollars to mitigate the spread of the disease on the Navajo Nation"

"Once the IMCE is fully implemented, the NDC MCO members would have access to free testing and diagnostics for the novel coronavirus," Begay continued. "It would also provide doctor and hospital visits with all necessary prescriptions, x-rays and laboratory services for members that require treatment against the virus. We hope President Nez will stand together with us by signing this critical legislation."

The legislation was sent to the Navajo Nation President. He has 10 days to sign or veto the legislation.