

Senator feels the sting: Martinez vetoes NCI bill

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent
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Bill contained \$200K for detox purposes

Gov. Susana Martinez has vetoed a bill pertaining to funding the Na'nizhoozhi, Center, Inc. The bill contained \$200,000 in funds earmarked for Gallup's sole institution that treats substance abuse.

"It was a surprise that (Martinez) vetoed the bill," Sen. George Muñoz said. The bill was one of several sponsored by Muñoz during the 2016 New Mexico Legislative session. "We really needed it."

The veto came about two weeks after U.S. Congressman Ben Ray Luján held a meeting in which officials from the city of Gallup, McKinley County and the Navajo Nation talked about nailing down a permanent funding pattern for NCI.

At one point years ago, the Navajo Nation funded NCI to the tune of as much as \$4 million, but that amount dwindled over the years to nothing. The city has been the primary funding agent of

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the institution for the past several years.

Luján called another meeting April 4 to continue discussions on the funding matter. Muñoz said the \$200,000 would have gone to detox and treatment as well as suicide prevention.

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