



# 23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 23, 2015

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### **Health, Education, and Human Services Committee approves FY2016 tribal consultation issue papers**

**WINDOW ROCK** – On Monday, the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee approved Legislation No. 0403-15, which seeks to solidify the Navajo Nation’s position concerning the Women, Infant Children Nutrition Program, the Navajo Birth Cohort Study, HIV on the Navajo Nation, and the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act.

According to the legislation, the one-on-one tribal consultation sessions occur between the Nation and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to initiate dialogue and recommendations and to collaborate to address the needs of Navajo people.

EHSC chair and legislation sponsor Council Delegate Jonathan Hale (Oak Springs, St. Michaels) said establishing the Navajo Nation’s position regarding its needs will provide important direction for Navajo lawmakers and leaders.

“The position papers were drafted and provided by the Navajo Nation Department of Health and they will be used at the federal level during the tribal consultation sessions. This will help us as lawmakers to advocate effectively for funding at the federal level, and more importantly, have a consistent position on these issues.”

Delegate Hale added that the legislation would allow the Nation to request increased funding for the Navajo Birth Cohort Study, to improve the WIC program on the Navajo Nation, to address funding deficiencies within the Navajo HIV Prevention Program, and to address barriers within the Radiation Exposure Compensation Program to ensure a more effective claims process.

EHSC member Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Beclabito, Cove, Gadi’i’áhi/To’Koi, Red Valley, Tooh Haltsooi, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Tsé atnáoz’t’I’i) commended the NNDOH for their diligence in drafting and submitting the issue papers, however she had concerns regarding the Navajo Area Agency on Aging program and requested an update from the NNDOH.

“What we need is an update from NAAA regarding their Title III funding. I have had numerous requests from my colleagues on this issue. We cannot have a thorough conversation with NAAA until we receive that information, so I would like to request an update from NNDOH,” said Delegate Crotty.

The NAAA receives funding from the Older Americans Act through Title III federal funding that is administered to the tribe, and is allocated for needs such as caregiving support, nutrition and meals programs, in-home services, transportation, legal services, and elder abuse prevention programs.

EHSC member Council Delegate Nelson S. BeGaye (Lukachukai, Rock Point, Round Rock, Tsaille/Wheatfields, Tsé Ch' izhi) made an additional request to have the NNDOH provide a separate report regarding current projects and initiatives to educate committee members on other issues that they can aid with and advocate for at the state and federal level.

EHSC members voted 4-0 to approve Legislation No. 0403-15. The Naabik'iyátí' Committee serves as the final authority on the bill.

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