



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Health, Education, and Human Services Committee receives report regarding the Tóhajiilee Healing to Wellness Court

TÓHAJIILEE, N.M. – On Tuesday, the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee received a report from the Tóhajiilee Healing to Wellness Court, a program offered to the satellite areas of the Navajo Nation in New Mexico.

According to the report, the Tóhajiilee Healing to Wellness Court program is a pilot project that uses restorative justice as a method to assist offenders who face substance abuse issues. The program serves the communities of Tóhajiilee and the Alamo Navajo Reservation, which began in the latter part of 2012.

The report also mentions that the pilot project uses a multi-disciplinary approach to bridge the gap between behavioral health and the justice system, such as incorporating traditional healing and substance abuse counseling to aid in rehabilitating offenders and decrease recidivism rates.

EHSC member Council Delegate Norman M. Begay (Alamo, Ramah, Tóhajiilee), who represents the Navajo satellite areas, commended the positive status of the pilot project and said it is an important program which he has witnessed grow over time.

“When I was a legislative district assistant, I helped pushed for this initiative. It is serving the needs of young people and adults in this area, and I am glad this program is beginning to take shape into something more,” said Delegate Begay.

In support of the program, EHSC member Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Beclabito, Cove, Gadi’i’áhi/To’Koi, Red Valley, Tooh Haltsooi, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Tsé ałnáóz’t’í’í) suggested to committee members that as the oversight for the Nation’s social programs, it is important to continue advocating for funding of behavioral health services.

“We have the role and responsibility as law makers to appropriate the [behavioral health programs] money. We could be courageous enough to say that this is the type of program we want to fund that can directly help impact the Nation. This could drastically improve the social conditions on the Navajo Nation and we need to support that,” said Delegate Crotty.

Delegate Crotty added that although the majority of programs on the Navajo Nation are geared toward services for women and children, it is imperative to also include further social programs

that serve the needs of Navajo men and boys who are also victims of violence, domestic abuse, and alcoholism.

In addition to the Healing and Wellness Court, there is a Peacemaking Teen Court and Substance Abuse Prevention Program, which targets Navajo youth to assist in preventing substance abuse, and offers peer-to-peer leadership training and youth councils. The program has served over 300 Navajo youth in the last six months.

HEHSC members voted 3-0 to accept the report.

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