



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Health, Education, and Human Services Committee receives report regarding non-emergency medical transportation services

WINDOW ROCK – On Monday, the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee received a report from the Navajo Nation Department of Health regarding an update on proposed regulations for non-emergency medical transportation services on the Navajo Nation.

NNDOH executive director Glorinda Segay, who provided the report to the committee, said that through Navajo Nation Council Resolution No. CO-50-14, the department is authorized to regulate health, human, and emergency and non-emergency medical transportation services. She added that their goal is to ensure Navajo clients are served efficiently and safely.

According to the report, a symposium was hosted by NNDOH in April, to introduce draft regulations for non-emergency medical transportation services, which would be reviewed and analyzed by the Navajo Nation Department of Justice. It states that the final draft of the proposed regulation would be completed by August 2017.

HEHSC member Council Delegate Nelson S. BeGaye (Lukachukai, Rock Point, Round Rock, Tsaile/Wheatfields, Tsé Ch' izhi), said within the Central Navajo Agency four accidents occurred involving non-medical transport vehicles within a span of less than two months, two of which allegedly involved drunk driving.

“We have to do this right because we have a responsibility to our people to protect their health and welfare. This committee is very concerned for our people, most especially our elders who may be at the mercy of a reckless service. It’s a great program, but it needs major improvements,” said Delegate BeGaye.

He recommended that the NNDOH expedite the process to complete the regulations so it may be introduced as legislation and implemented as soon as possible.

“Time is precious and we need to act quickly to prevent further liable situations,” Delegate BeGaye added.

Segay stated that her department would also host a work session with the HEHSC members to review and provide input within the proposed regulations, and would work with the committee to draft legislation to implement a regulation plan.

HEHSC member Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Beclabito, Cove, Gadi'i'áhi/To'Koi, Red Valley, Tooh Haltsooi, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Tsé ałnáoz't'í) raised concerns regarding the licensing of drivers, adding that there needs to be official identification and licenses for the drivers that is visible to the clients while being transported.

“The biggest thing is safety and that the Navajo clients are safe. They are a vulnerable population who rely on the service to get to their medical appointments. We must also address the safety of the driver and any other potential liability concerns,” said Delegate Crotty. “There are accidents happening due to reckless driving, and that should not be happening.”

Delegate Crotty added that the proposed regulations should require non-emergency transporters to install ignition interlock devices to ensure a qualified driver is operating the vehicle and to deter driving under the influence. She stated she has received reports of non-employees driving the transport vehicles, and on-duty employees driving under the influence.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the HEHSC members voted 3-0 to accept the report from the NNDOH.

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