



# 24<sup>th</sup> Navajo Nation Council

## Office of the Speaker

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Delegates Congratulate, Offer Coordination to Navajo Area Director Roselyn Tso**

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – Council Delegates from the Health, Education and Human Services Committee (HEHSC) of the 24th Navajo Nation Council offered their congratulations to newly appointed Navajo Area Office Director Roselyn Tso at their regular meeting today.

The announcement of Director Tso's appointment by the Indian Health Service took place at the Direct Service Tribes Advisory Committee meeting in Albuquerque, N.M.

"We look forward to meeting the new area director and we welcome her collaboration in addressing the health needs of the Navajo people," said HEHSC Chairman Daniel E. Tso (Littlewater, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake, Baca/Brewitt, Casamero Lake, Ojo Encino, Counselor).

The Navajo Area Office is one of 12 regional headquarters of the Indian Health Service (IHS), an agency of the United States Department of Health and Human Services. The Navajo Area Office manages federally-operated health care facilities in and around the Navajo Nation and provides support for tribally-owned health care facilities through contracts and compacts.

Federal funding through the Navajo Area Office and the IHS support part of the 14 programs within the Navajo Department of Health.

"We realize that Director Tso is stepping into a position that influences the health of hundreds of thousands of Navajo people," Chairman Tso said. "We will coordinate with her as much as possible to address these issues going forward."

The committee recognized the efforts of the 23rd Navajo Nation Council in calling for the reestablishment of community-based health boards that the IHS eliminated from its health care facilities on the Navajo Nation, particularly in the Northern Agency.

We look to work through issues with adequate funding for aging facilities and contract health care services with Director Tso, said Delegate Paul Begay (Coppermine, K'aibii'to, LeChee, Tonalea/Red Lake, Bodaway/Gap).

“In Western Navajo, we have new, advanced equipment, state-of-the-art x-ray machines and equipment for treating cancer patients. But the equipment and staff operate in a 40+ year old facility,” said Delegate Begay.

Health care facilities supported through the Navajo Area Office and the IHS under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 (ISDEAA) are authorized by the HEHSC, which oversees all health-related programs within the Navajo Nation’s control. Under the ISDEAA, many former IHS health care facilities have become tribal health care corporations, such as the Winslow Indian Health Care Center (WIHCC).

The WIHCC recently broke ground for the Dilkon Health Center, one of the new health care facilities that the Navajo Nation Council has supported along with IHS and the Navajo Area Office.

The members of the committee also stated that they are ready to move forward with Director Tso on the site selection phase of the new Gallup Indian Medical Center. In the Crownpoint area, the committee seeks to address staff housing at the IHS facility, including the recruitment of more medical doctors, with Director Tso.

They also shared that they look forward to working with Director Tso on funding for expanding treatment centers for substance abuse, renewing and increasing federal support for diabetes programs, and strengthening funding and direct dialogue with Utah Navajo communities.

The Health, Education and Human Services Committee provides oversight of the Navajo Department of Health and also authorizes contracts and compacts between Navajo entities and the IHS and other programs within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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