



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Health, Education, and Human Services Committee discuss funding and future of Na'nizhoozhi Center, Inc.

WINDOW ROCK – The Health, Education, and Human Services Committee received a report from the Na'nizhoozhi Center, Inc., also known as the Gallup Detox Center, on Monday regarding the development of permanent solutions to keep the center open on a long-term basis.

According to the report provided by NCI executive director Dr. Kevin Foley, the NCI received 52 Navajo Nation chapter supporting resolutions to have NCI remain open because it has a success rate of about 85-percent, and 99-percent of the individuals that utilize the center's services are Navajo people. He said his organization would like to ensure the detox center stays open to prevent further alcohol-related deaths.

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'l'í) raised concerns regarding the lack of data information from the NCI detox center.

"As decision makers, we should be making informed data-driven decisions because we are talking about lives. We have to make sure that the decisions we make and the programs we invest in have positive outcomes," said Delegate Crotty.

She added that the City of Gallup would not take responsibility for controlling alcohol sales and said that if the city is willing to accept business from Navajo people, they should not have to ask the Navajo Nation to provide funding for the detox center, which annually receives about \$220,000 from revenues generated from the McKinley County liquor excise tax, which totals around \$1.2 million per year.

Navajo Nation Department of Behavioral Health Services department manager Theresa Galvan said the Office of the President and Vice President did not seek to renew the Memorandum of Agreement with the City of Gallup and McKinley County, which expired in Oct. 2015 and resulted in NCI losing funding support from the Navajo Nation. NNDBHS then issued an exit report to the Navajo Nation Department of Health and OPVP, said Galvan.

On Feb. 24, Indian Health Services allocated approximately \$234,000 in emergency funding to the city of Gallup to ensure the NCI detox center remained open during the remaining winter months.

EHSC member Council Delegate Nelson BeGaye (Lukachukai, Rock Point, Round Rock, Tsaille/Wheatfields, Tsé Ch' izhí) said the committee was informed that the OPVP met with U.S. Sen. Tom Udall (NM-D) on March 25 to discuss a partnership between the Navajo Nation and Rehoboth McKinley County Health Services regarding detox and rehabilitation services.

“President Begaye said in a press release issued from his office [on March 26] that he wanted to bring everyone to the table, however our committee and Council members have not received a follow-up from that meeting. We need to be informed as to what the next steps are going to be,” said Delegate BeGaye.

EHSC chair Council Delegate Jonathan Hale (Oak Springs, St. Michaels) issued a directive to NCI to gather data information on the detox center, as well as the process that is used to intake intoxicated individuals and what services they receive. A work session will then be scheduled at a later date to include the NCI, NNDOH, and OPVP.

EHSC members voted 4-0 to accept the report.

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