



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL  
Office of the Speaker

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## Navajo Nation recognized with Health Leadership Award for passage of the Air is Life Act of 2021

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PHOTO: Members of Arizonans Concerned About Smoking, Inc. and USPHS Commissioned Corps Officers presented the 2022 Health Leadership Award to Council Delegates Daniel Tso and Thomas Walker, Jr. on behalf of the Navajo Nation.

**GLENDALE, Ariz.** — On Tuesday, Health, Education, and Human Services Committee Chairman Daniel Tso and Council Delegate Thomas Walker, Jr. of the 24th Navajo Nation Council received the 2022 Health Leadership Award from the Arizonans Concerned About Smoking Inc. (ACAS) during the annual U.S. Public Health Service Symposium.

In October, the Niłch'í éi Bee Íiná - Air is Life Act of 2021 was unanimously passed by the Navajo Nation Council and signed into law by President Jonathan Nez. The new law prohibits the use of commercial tobacco products in enclosed, indoor workplaces or public places, and within 25 feet of any indoor area across the Navajo Nation.

“It’s humbling to know that this was a long and hard effort, but an aspect that we are thankful for as co-sponsors of the resolution. Niłch’ éi Bee Íiná represents the oxygen we breathe to live every day. We all know the health risks and cancer commercial tobacco brings. We appreciate the Air is Life Coalition, the Navajo Nation Council, and President Jonathan Nez for coming together to get this done. The livelihood of the Navajo people is important and the Air is Life Act protects our future,” said Council Delegate Thomas Walker, Jr. (Birdsprings, Leupp, Tolani Lake, Coalmine Canyon, Cameron).

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The ACAS is a non-profit, pro-health organization that seeks to raise public awareness regarding the hazards of tobacco use. The organization believes that all individuals should have a healthy smoke-free workplace and home, and not be exposed to second-hand smoke.

“The Navajo Nation is concerned for the health of our young people, especially when e-cigarettes and vaping are becoming easier to access. The long hard lobbying efforts of the Air is Life Coalition and the perseverance of Dr. Patricia Nez-Henderson must be commended. It is an honor to sponsor this historic legislation that will save countless lives. We proudly accept this Health Leadership Award and thank the Arizonans Concerned About Smoking Inc. for their hard work educating the public on the dangers of tobacco smoking,” said Chairman Daniel Tso (Littlewater, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake, Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Ojo Encino, Counselor).

The ACAS annual event is dedicated to the work of U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps Officers. Additionally, many of the nation’s top federal, tribal, and state public health providers, administrators, and emergency responders received recognition for their hard work in the field of public health during the pandemic.

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