



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

# 25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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## 25th Navajo Nation Council responds to HHS restructuring and job cuts



**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** - The 25th Navajo Nation Council expresses deep concern over the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) recent restructuring, which includes significant job cuts and agency consolidations. This decision, led by Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., raises serious questions about the federal government's commitment to honoring its trust and treaty obligations to Native American tribes, including the Navajo Nation.

"Any federal policy impacting Native communities must be developed in full consultation with tribal nations, as required by law," said Speaker Crystalyne Curley. "The 25th Navajo Nation Council will not stand idly by while policies are imposed without considering their impact on our people."

The decision to lay off 10,000 HHS employees and merge critical agencies like the Health Resources and Services Administration and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration fails to account for the unique needs of tribal communities. These agencies provide essential services to Native populations, and their reduction could have severe consequences for the health and well-being of the Navajo people.

The 25th Navajo Nation Council has consistently emphasized that federal policies must not erode the rights of Native American citizens or disregard federal treaty obligations. Any action that weakens these services directly contradicts these legally binding agreements.

Furthermore, the Council is deeply concerned about how the restructuring will affect healthcare access, funding allocations, and public health initiatives serving Native communities. Many tribal nations already face significant disparities in healthcare, and cuts to HHS programs risk exacerbating these challenges. The impact on agencies such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) raises further concerns about the continuation of critical research and disease prevention efforts affecting Native populations.

Similar to the Department of Education's recent guidance, which mischaracterized Native American tribes as racial groups rather than sovereign political entities, this restructuring effort disregards the government-to-government relationship between tribes and the federal government.

"The Navajo Nation already faces significant challenges due to the federal hiring freeze, particularly within the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE)," Speaker Curley said. "Further reductions in HHS resources will not only deepen existing disparities but also undermine the well-being of Native communities and the nation as a whole."

The 25th Navajo Nation Council urges the Department of Health and Human Services to engage in meaningful dialogue with tribal leaders to ensure that Native American healthcare remains a federal priority.

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