



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

## 25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 13, 2025

### **Naabik'íyáti' Committee strengthens Medicaid defense with amendments and directives**



**Rooted in federal obligations** Legislation 0109-25 calls for the full preservation of funding for Indian Health Service and tribal healthcare providers.

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – On Thursday, the Naabik'íyáti' Committee passed Legislation No. 0109-25, strengthening Navajo Nation's advocacy against detrimental changes to Medicaid policy. The legislation includes key amendments and directives that emphasize intertribal coordination and federal accountability.

Legislation 0109-25, sponsored by Speaker Crystalyne Curley, reaffirms the Navajo Treaty of 1868 and its legally binding commitment to healthcare for the Navajo people. It demands the full preservation of Medicaid funding for the Indian Health Service (IHS) and tribal healthcare providers. The measure urges Congress to maintain the 100% Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) rate, oppose Medicaid work requirements, and prevent federal or state-imposed funding caps on tribal health services.

Speaker Curley, emphasized the urgent need for Congressional action, stating, "The Navajo Nation remains unwavering in its commitment to defending tribal sovereignty and securing healthcare for our people. Our right to quality care is not a request—it is a guarantee rooted in the trust and treaty obligations of the federal government. We call on Congress to uphold its responsibility to ensure continued access to Medicaid and critical health services for all tribal citizens."

Council Delegate Cherilyn Yazzie successfully sponsored two amendments to strengthen the legislation. The first amendment directs the Navajo Nation to coordinate with other tribal nations, tribal consortia, and intertribal organizations to jointly advocate for the protection of Indian healthcare and Medicaid policy. It also encourages federal agencies to engage in coalition-based consultation with tribal governments.

The second amendment articulates the Nation's opposition to provisions in the Trump administration's proposed FY 2026 Department of Health and Human Services budget, which includes potential Medicaid caps, the reassignment of tribal-serving programs under the "Make America Healthy Again" initiative, and new Medicaid work requirements that could disproportionately harm Native communities.

The Committee also issued two directives to support continued advocacy and public outreach. The first instructs the Navajo Nation Washington Office to coordinate with the Navajo Department of Health to provide quarterly reports on federal engagement efforts, including updates related to Medicaid, IHS policy, and the Make America Healthy Again initiative.

The second directive calls on the Office of the President and Vice President, in collaboration with the Navajo Department of Health, to develop a one-page fact sheet detailing the impacts of Medicaid policy for FY 2024–2025. This fact sheet must outline the potential harms from funding cuts and be widely distributed across the Navajo Nation through social media, radio, and email.

This legislative package underscores the Navajo Nation's firm stance on healthcare sovereignty and its proactive strategy to address policy shifts that threaten tribal health infrastructure. Legislation 0109-25 passed with a vote of 13 in favor and 2 opposed, with the Naabik'íyáti' Committee serving as the final authority.

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