



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

## 25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Council Members reaffirm Navajo Nation's healthcare priorities at IHS tribal consultation session**



Speaker Crystalyne Curley (left) and Council Delegates Germaine Simonson (second from right) and Dr. Andy Nez (right) called for greater transparency and ongoing consultation with IHS.

**PHOENIX, Ariz.** — On Thursday, July 10, 25th Navajo Nation Council Speaker Crystalyne Curley and Council Delegates Dr. Andy Nez and Germaine Simonson represented the Navajo Nation during a federal tribal consultation session regarding the Indian Health Service's (IHS) proposed strategic realignment.

The realignment focuses on direct patient care delivery, enterprise/operational management, and supporting tribal self-determination.

The Council members called for greater transparency and ongoing consultation from IHS concerning the purpose, intent, and expected outcomes of the realignment effort.

Speaker Curley, joined by Navajo Department of Health Interim Executive Director Sherylene Yazzie, urged IHS to hold an additional round of formal tribal consultations once realignment options are fully developed by IHS to allow for more meaningful tribal input. She also emphasized that any structural changes within IHS must not come at the expense of healthcare services for the Navajo people.

Speaker Curley also raised concerns about the ongoing IHS hiring freeze and its disproportionate impact on rural areas such as the Navajo Nation. She urged IHS to fully support the construction of a new Gallup Indian Medical Center facility and called for the

protection of third-party reimbursements, including Medicare and Medicaid.

Delegate Andy Nez asked that IHS account for relevant state and tribal laws and policies that affect its operations, such as traditional healing practices in Arizona and the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act, both of which require direct service delivery by IHS.

He also emphasized the importance of seeking public input, allowing patients to share their experiences and feedback directly. He shared that public input and data governance should align with the direction and advocacy needed by IHS especially when addressing matters from the U.S. administration.

In closing, Speaker Curley reminded federal partners of the Treaty of 1868 between the Navajo Nation and the United States, which guarantees the right to healthcare as part of the federal trust responsibility.

"Our ancestors made enormous sacrifices. The federal government has a duty to uphold those promises," she said. "We are prepared to work in good faith, but we will continue to hold the federal government accountable. Our people deserve no less."

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