



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

## 25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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### **Naabik'iyáti' Committee approves legislation authorizing five-year injury prevention grant for Tsehootsoo Medical Center**



**Council Delegate Dr. Andy Nez said Legislation No. 0038-26 represents a meaningful investment into the safety of Navajo communities.**

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** — On Thursday, the Naabik'iyáti' Committee approved Legislation No. 0038-26, authorizing the Indian Health Service Tribal Injury Prevention Cooperative Agreement Program grant awarded to Tsehootsoo Medical Center for a five-year period from 2026 through 2031.

The grant, awarded by the Indian Health Service (IHS) on Jan. 15, 2026, provides \$150,000 in first-year funding to Fort Defiance Indian Hospital Board Inc. (FDIHB), the nonprofit organization that operates Tsehootsoo Medical Center.

Council Delegate Dr. Andy Nez, sponsor of the legislation, said the grant will help expand programs focused on injury prevention and improving the health and safety of elders in surrounding communities.

“This grant represents a meaningful investment to the safety and well-being of our elders in our communities,” said Delegate Nez. “I am proud to sponsor this legislation because the Navajo Nation must continue to pursue every opportunity within the IHS system to expand services, address health disparities, and improve the quality of life for our people.”

The funding is provided through the Tribal Injury Prevention Cooperative Agreement Program (TIPCAP), a federal initiative administered by the Indian Health Service to help

reduce the disproportionately high rates of injuries experienced in Native communities.

Through the grant, Tsehootsooi Medical Center plans to expand the Stay Active and Independent for Life program, commonly known as S.A.I.L., an evidence-based exercise and fall prevention program for older adults.

The program was first launched in January 2020 but was paused during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was reinstated in October 2023 at the Nihi Dine'é Bá Wellness Center in Fort Defiance. Since its reinstatement, approximately 178 elders between the ages of 62 and 84 have participated in the program, with improvements documented in balance, strength, and mobility through fitness assessments.

Over the five-year grant period, FDIHB plans to expand the program to two or three additional communities within the Fort Defiance service area. The communities identified with the highest rates of falls and injuries include Fort Defiance, St. Michaels, and Nahata Dziil chapters.

Grant funding will support the hiring of a full-time Tribal Injury Prevention Coordinator to oversee program expansion, staff training, the purchase of fitness equipment and supplies, and participant incentives to encourage continued engagement.

FDIHB also noted that the Navajo Nation Community Health Representative Program has committed to supporting the initiative by conducting home assessments and encouraging elder participation across service communities.

The Naabik'iyáti' Committee approved the legislation under the consent agenda with a vote of 13 in favor and five opposed. The committee has final authority over the legislation.

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