

RESOLUTION OF THE  
NAABIK'ÍYÁTI' STANDING COMMITTEE  
24<sup>th</sup> NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL -- Third Year, 2021

AN ACTION RELATING TO HEALTH, EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES AND NAABIK'ÍYÁTI' COMMITTEES; ESTABLISHING DINÉ HATAÁLII AS PRIORITY ONE ESSENTIAL WORKERS AS A MATTER OF NAVAJO NATION POLICY FOR COVID-19 VACCINE ACCESS; REQUESTING THE NAVAJO AREA INDIAN HEALTH SERVICES INCLUDE DINÉ HATAÁLII AS PRIORITY ONE ESSENTIAL WORKERS FOR PURPOSES OF COVID-19 VACCINE ACCESS AND DISTRIBUTION; FURTHER REQUESTING THAT DINÉ ELDERS BE INCLUDED WITHIN PRIORITY ONE VACCINE ACCESS AND DISTRIBUTION

WHEREAS:

- A. The Navajo Nation Council is the governing body of the Navajo Nation, 2 N.N.C. § 102 (A), and statements of official Navajo Nation policy must be reviewed and approved by the Navajo Nation Council unless otherwise delegated to a standing committee of the Navajo Nation Council. See 2 N.N.C. § 164 (A).
- B. The Health, Education and Human Services Committee is a standing committee of the Navajo Nation Council with the delegated authority and responsibility to establish Navajo Nation policy governing health, social services, and human services. 2 N.N.C. § 400(A); 2 N.N.C. § 401(B)(1).
- C. The Naabik'íyáti' Committee is a standing committee of the Navajo Nation Council with delegated authority and responsibility to "coordinate[s] all federal, county and state programs with other standing committees and branches of the Navajo Nation government to provide the most efficient delivery of services to the Navajo Nation." 2 N.N.C. §§ 700 (A) and (A)(4).
- D. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern related to the outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19), a highly contagious and sometimes fatal respiratory virus, on January 30, 2020; the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services declared a Public Health Emergency related to the COVID-19 outbreak on January 31, 2020; and the WHO declared a global pandemic due to COVID-19 on March 11, 2020.
- E. The Navajo Nation Commission on Emergency Management, with the concurrence of Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, declared a Public Health State of Emergency on the Navajo Nation on March 11, 2020 due to COVID-19. Resolution No. CEM 20-03-11.

The Navajo Nation Department of Health subsequently issued numerous Public Health Emergency Orders. Public Health Orders 2020-001 through 2020-035 are incorporated by reference into this resolution.

- F. COVID-19 infections and deaths within the Navajo Nation are ravaging the physical, mental and spiritual health of the Navajo people and straining an already overburdened healthcare system. As of December 30, 2020, the Navajo Nation has confirmed 22,776 COVID-19 positive cases and 783 COVID-19 related deaths and the numbers continue to rise.
- G. Diné Hataááłii, Navajo medicine people, are the teachers of Diné traditional laws, values and principles, and must always be respected and honored if the people and the government are to persevere and thrive; the teachings of the Hataááłii, their participation in the government and their contributions of traditional values and principles of the Diné life way will ensure the growth of the Navajo Nation; and from time to time, the Hataááłii people must be requested to provide the cleansing, protection prayers, and blessing ceremonies necessary for securing healthy leadership and the operation of the government in harmony with traditional law. See 1 N.N.C. § 203 (G).
- H. Diné Hataááłii are the pillars of the Navajo, Diné, way of life; since time immemorial, Hataááłiis have been in the forefront of defending and protecting the Diné people from all elements of harm and danger; through their oral teachings, ceremonial process, prayers and songs; Hataááłiis restore the Diné people back to harmony and balance and embody what the Diné as a people are within the universe as the five fingered beings.
- I. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Hataááłiis have endured the hardships of being frontline workers alongside other healthcare workers; they have tended to the needs of hundreds of Diné that come to them each day for help in combatting the physical, mental and spiritual effects of the COVID-19 pandemic; Hataááłiis have put not only themselves, but their own families, in harm's way to help whoever needs assistance and to fulfill their sacred responsibilities to the Navajo people; whether through ceremony, prayer, songs, or medicine making, Hataááłiis have been and continue to be frontline defenders of the Diné people in the fight against COVID-19.
- J. Concerning Diné elders, the policy of the Navajo Nation is to continue the traditional respect for such members of the Navajo Nation. As stated under the Diné Elder Protection Act, "elders are valuable resources to the Nation because they are

repositories and custodians of Navajo history, culture, language, and tradition; vested in Diné elders is the hope of the Navajo Nation to retain its tribal history, culture, language and tradition. Navajo elders provide stability by being role models for their children and grandchildren to whom they demonstrate long-standing commitment to family, marriage, employment, profession and other social institutions. Based upon these premises, it is in the Nation's best interest and welfare to protect its elders from abuse, neglect, mistreatment, exploitation, and other mistreatment." 9 N.N.C. § 1802.

- K. Navajo Nation leadership recognizes that it is imperative that Hataááliis and Diné elders receive all assistance and protection available, including priority access to the COVID-19 vaccine, to continue the lifeways of the Diné culture and to tend to the physical, mental and spiritual needs of the Diné People.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:**

- A. The Navajo Nation hereby establishes Diné Hataáálii as Essential Workers as a matter of Navajo Nation policy for purposes of Priority One COVID-19 vaccine access.
- B. The Navajo Nation also hereby requests that the Navajo Area Indian Health Services include Diné Hataáálii as Priority One Essential Workers for purposes of COVID-19 vaccine access and distribution.
- C. The Navajo Nation requests that Diné elders be included among Priority One listing for COVID-19 vaccine access and distribution.

**CERTIFICATION**

I, hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly considered by the Naabik'íyáti' Committee of the 24<sup>th</sup> Navajo Nation Council at a duly called meeting in Window Rock, Navajo Nation (Arizona), at which a quorum was present and that the same was passed by a vote of 18 in Favor, and 00 Opposed, on this 14<sup>th</sup> day of January 2021.

  
Honorable Seth Damon, Chairman  
Naabik'íyáti' Committee

01/15/2021  
Date

Motion: Honorable Pernell Halona  
Second: Honorable Herman M. Daniels

Chairman Seth Damon not voting

# NAVAJO NATION

836

1/14/2021

Naa'bik'iyati' Committee Regular Meeting

06:37:58 PM

Amd# to Amd#	Legislation 0321-20:Establishing	PASSED
MOT Halona, P	Dine Hataali as Priority One	
SEC Daniels	Essential Workers as a Matter of	
	Navajo Nation Policy for....	

Yeas : 18

Nays : 0

Excused : 2

Not Voting : 3

## Yea : 18

Begay, E	Daniels	Slater, C	Tso, D
Begay, K	Freeland, M	Smith	Tso, E
Begay, P	Halona, P	Stewart, W	Tso, O
Charles-Newton	James, V	Tso, C	Walker, T
Crotty	Nez, R		

## Nay : 0

## Excused : 2

Brown	Yazzie
-------	--------

## Not Voting : 3

Wauneka, E	Henio, J	Yellowhair
------------	----------	------------

Presiding Speaker: Damon