



Navajo Nation: Covid-19 positive cases increase by 236 as HEHSC receives NAIHS report on crisis situation across the nation

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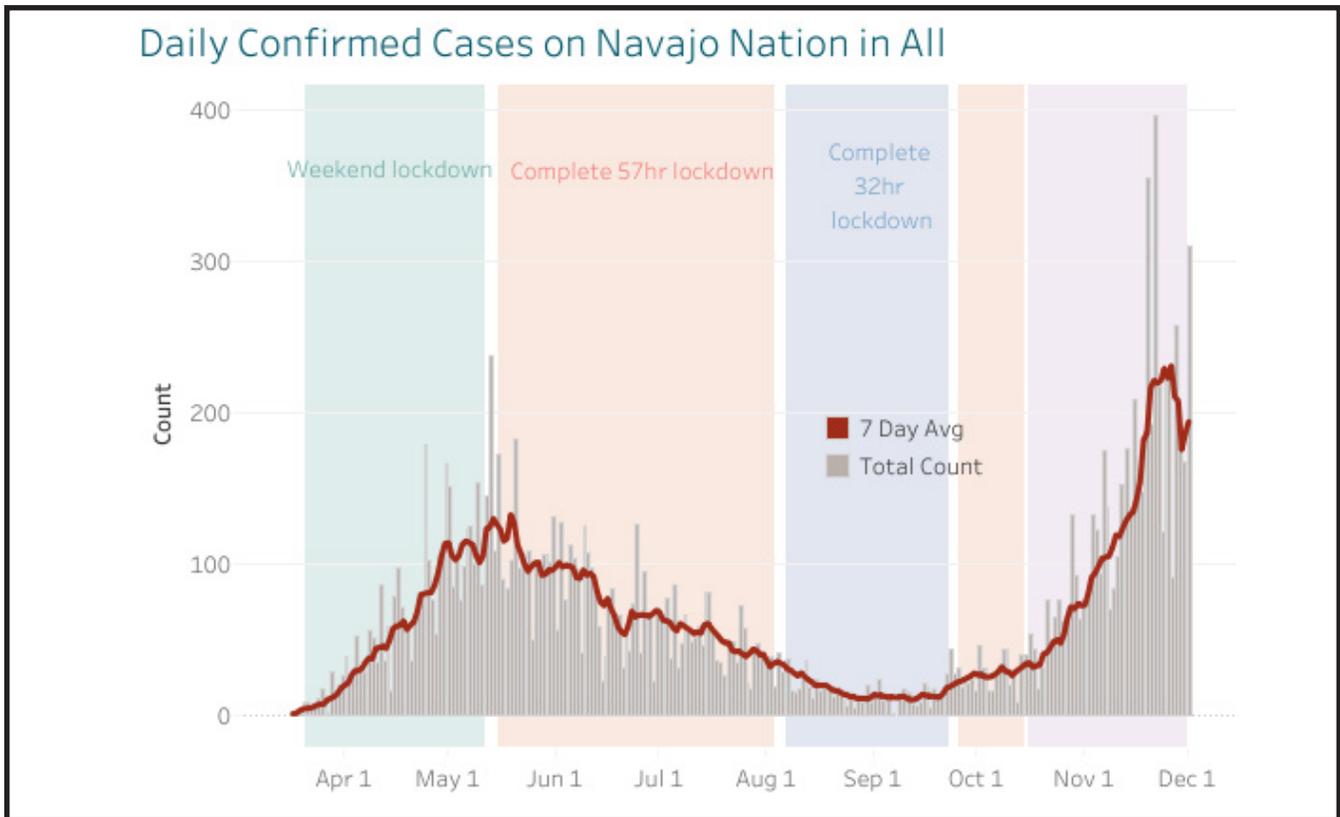


PHOTO: A screenshot of the Navajo Nation Covid-19 dashboard website for December 3, 2020. The website is accessible at: <https://www.ndoh.navajo-nsn.gov/COVID-19/Data>.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — The Navajo Nation’s update to coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic situation report from Health Command Operations Center (HCOC) for December 3, 2020 included updated numbers for testing, results, recoveries and mortalities related to Covid-19.

The increase of 236 new cases brings the total confirmed positive cases on the Navajo Nation to 17,310. The total number of mortalities related to Covid-19 on the Navajo Nation increased by 5, bringing the total to 663. The report included 9,569 recovered cases, an increase of 52 from yesterday. A total 168,261 Covid-19 tests have been administered with 139,401 tests returned with negative results.

“Going forward, the Navajo Nation Council is strongly warning the Navajo People that our coronavirus situation across the Navajo Nation is reaching crisis levels,” said Speaker Seth Damon. “Our healthcare professionals and public safety personnel have risked their health and wellbeing to continue this battle against Covid-19. Soon, they will be overrun with new positive cases if the Navajo public doesn’t have an immediate shift in behavior. The CDC’s guidelines, which include practices like wearing face coverings and social distancing, work in preventing the spread of Covid-19, and we need everyone to work together to hold each other accountable for our own safety and the safety of our households.”

Navajo Nation cases by Service Unit

Chinle Service Unit:	3,509
Gallup Service Unit:	2,828
Shiprock Service Unit:	2,716
Crownpoint Service Unit:	1,884
Ft. Defiance Service Unit:	1,794
Kayenta Service Unit:	1,782
Tuba City Service Unit:	1,752
Winslow Service Unit:	1,024

68 Navajo Nation chapters reported positive cases. The communities of heightened concern are: Kayenta, Shiprock, Tuba City, Chinle, Leupp, Sanostee, Round Rock, Hard Rock, Ganado, and Lukachukai. The number of confirmed cases in surrounding border towns was reported to be 4,691.

Today, the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee of the 24th Navajo Nation Council received a report from the Navajo Area Indian Health Service on the growing crisis situation across the Navajo Nation. NAIHS Director Roselyn Tso and Chief Medical Officer Dr. Loretta Christiansen reported the Navajo Nation's IHS facilities are beginning to reach bed capacity on a regular basis.

In addressing the response to preventing spread, thereby reducing drastic measures, Tso said, "Part of our issue is the insufficient number of contact tracers." She stated a proper response to a positive case would require five contact tracers. However, the NAIHS can currently only provision one contact tracer per positive case.

NAIHS has also pursued verbal and written agreements with healthcare facilities in Arizona, New Mexico and Colorado for patients needing to be transported from Navajo Nation facilities to improve capacity. Without these measures, NAIHS said, the capacity of the Navajo Nation's facilities would be reached, requiring healthcare providers to make unfortunate decisions as to which patients received intensive care.

HEHSC Chairman Daniel Tso called on the offices of state and national elected officials to be involved in the Navajo Nation's response to the newest wave of uncontrolled Covid-19 spread. Speaker Damon also committed Office of the Speaker staff and resources to the coordination of communication with leadership and health agencies to better inform the Navajo public about the crisis situation.

The Navajo Department of Health (NDOH) and the Navajo Epidemiology Center provided the updated Covid-19 figures in coordination with tribally-controlled 638 healthcare facilities and the Navajo Area Indian Health Service. More information, including Covid-19 testing locations, can be found on the Navajo Nation's Covid-19 website at: <https://www.ndoh.navajo-nsn.gov/COVID-19>.

The HCOC General Hotline can be reached at (928) 871-7014. Inquiries may be sent to NNHCOCPlans@navajo-nsn.gov. The HCOC hours of operation are Monday-Friday from 8am to 5pm, Saturday from 8am to 12pm and Sunday on standby status.

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MEDIA CONTACTS: communications@navajo-nsn.gov, (928) 287-2085
Byron C. Shorty, INT Communications Director
Timothy E. Benally, Public Information Officer