



For Immediate Release

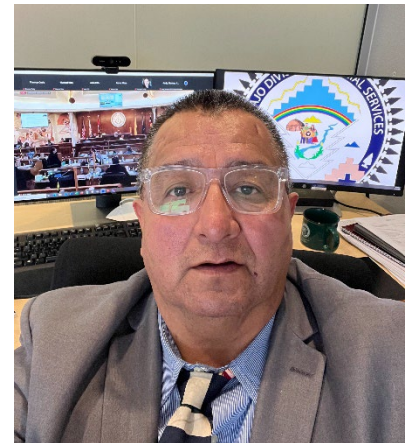
February 16, 2023

Division of Social Services initiates increased community outreach following Navajo Nation reopening.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Since the Navajo Nation lifted its mask mandate and reopened its doors in January, newly appointed Navajo Nation Division of Social Services Executive Director Thomas Cody has committed to visiting as many Navajo communities as possible.

“Issues and concerns about the lack of or limited social services began pouring into my office from clients and Navajo leaders after my appointment by President Nygren,” said Director Cody. “That is why I launched the NDSS community outreach initiative. This initiative also includes meeting directly with NDSS contractors, including domestic violence shelters, to streamline priorities and simplify service requirements.”

The initiative allows local Navajo people and leadership to provide input on how human and social services are currently delivered by NDSS. The goal is to improve processes and standards for service delivery and to remove the complexities from immediate access to much-needed services.



*NDSS Executive Director,
Thomas Cody*



Creating a Pathway to Wellness work session attendees pictured at the Hard Rock Wellness Center.

“Each of our social service programs have done good work to serve the needs of our Navajo people and our families,” said Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren. “Let’s work together with our local communities to make sure we’re always improving service delivery because this is part of supporting our homes and communities here on the Navajo Nation.”

“This process will provide a baseline so one year from now it will serve as our report card,” said Director Cody.

On February 7, the NDSS team traveled to the Dził Yijiin Region to the Creating a Pathway to Wellness work session.

Navajo Nation Council Delegate Germaine Simonson and Hardrock Chapter President Jay Begay hosted a productive work session with NDSS, the Navajo

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Department of Health, and the Navajo Special Diabetes Project focused on strengthening and empowering Navajo people.

“Our collaborative efforts will support community-based programs and bring more services to the community of Hard Rock. We have an opportunity to start with an itinerant site and potentially establish a field office at Hard Rock Chapter,” said Director Cody.

On February 9, a realignment meeting regarding the NDSS’ electronic case management database was held with NDSS contractor, Eaglesun, and the Navajo Nation Department of Information Technology.

“Our goal is to improve communications between our division, partners, and our contractors to speed up processes for efficient services,” said Director Cody.

NDSS will host its contracted domestic violence shelters on Feb. 21 in Shiprock, New Mexico, to share a major announcement and to hear from shelters directly. The NDSS contracts with 7 shelters, collaborates with one in Blanding, Utah, and operates one in Shiprock. The Office of the Executive Director will release updates as they become available.



NDSS electronic case management database meeting.

Plans are underway for a site visit to the Birdsprings Chapter House on March 8 and site visits to the Alamo and To’ Hajiilee Chapters in the coming weeks.

Director Cody encourages Chapter officials and delegates to coordinate site visits and meetings with the Office of the Executive Director. “It is time for us to start speaking directly to our people to address community needs,” he said.

Contact the Office of the Executive Director at (928) 871-6851 to request a site visit or email valentina.redhorse@ndss.org.

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