



July 18, 2014

Peter Kovnat, Staff Attorney  
Legislative Council Service  
411 State Capitol  
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Dear Mr. Kovnat:

On July 16, 2014 representatives from the Navajo Division of Health (NDOH) attended the Second Meeting of the Indian Affairs Committee at the University of New Mexico in Gallup, New Mexico.

As per your request, this letter provides highlights of comments provided to the Chairman and the Indian Affairs Committee during the public comments:

*"There are over 12,000 Navajo veterans who have served in the various wars and conflicts from WWII to the Iraqi and Afghanistan wars. Most of these are veterans who volunteered to serve their country and have done so honorably and with distinction. Unfortunately, far too many have suffered the visible and invisible wounds from these wars and conflicts and are experiencing difficulties in adjusting in the civilian world – some for more than four decades. These are veterans who, as President Shelly remarked "deserve more because they earned it." Too many of these veterans are homeless, jobless, have behavioral issues, and are substance abusers and can be found wandering the streets of Gallup, NM, Farmington, NM, Albuquerque, NM, Flagstaff, AZ and other cities bordering the Navajo Nation.*

*Navajo Division of Health proposes an initiative to identify resources to establish a multi-purpose sheltered transitional housing on the Navajo Reservation for Navajo veterans. The facility would identify at least 10 homeless veterans and place them in the home. The facility would provide a comprehensive array of services designed to support them and enable them to return to their respective communities as productive citizens of the Navajo Nation, their communities, and their families. While in the home, the project envisions the following examples of services that could be provided: temporary housing; counseling; job skills; educational opportunities; traditional native healing; coping skills; substance abuse intervention; faith-based counseling; aftercare services, and; other supportive services.*

*The proposed initiative will require a collaborative effort among a number of tribal organizations, departments, and divisions and various local veteran organizations. Other critical partners include the States' Legislative and Executive offices from Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah. This effort will also involve the tri-state and federal Regional offices of the U.S. Veteran Affairs and other federal agencies."*



The Navajo Division of Health took special interest in comments from the Legislators regarding 1) special (direct) funding for the Native American and 2) a one-stop-shop center to access an array of services.

The Navajo Division of Health is working closely with the Navajo Department of Veteran Affairs to address delivery of healthcare and supportive services for Navajo veterans. NDOH is interested in establishing a partnership with the State of New Mexico to advocate and assist in making this effort a reality for Navajo and other veterans.

Attached is Resolution Number NABIO-57-13 of the Naabik'iyati' Committee of the Navajo Nation Council, establishing the official position of the Navajo Nation regarding veteran issues. These issues are adequate and comprehensive healthcare, nursing and long-term care homes, educational and technical trainings, adequate housing, culturally appropriate care, and wellness and healthcare facilities.

Navajo Division of Health appreciates the local community outreach efforts and opportunities to comment before New Mexico Legislative leaders.

I can be reach at [larry.curley@nndoh.org](mailto:larry.curley@nndoh.org). Henry "Hank" Haskie, Project Specialist is the contact person for NDOH's veteran wellness project ... he can be reached at [hhaskie@nndoh.org](mailto:hhaskie@nndoh.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Larry Curley", with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

Larry Curley, Executive Director  
Navajo Division of Health