



STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
INDIAN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

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Michelle Lujan Grisham, Governor  
Lynn Trujillo, Secretary  
Nadine Padilla, Deputy Secretary

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:** Sherrie Catanach

[Sherrie.Catanach2@state.nm.us](mailto:Sherrie.Catanach2@state.nm.us)

505.469.7599

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**Governor Lujan Grisham appoints members to New Mexico  
Navajo Nation Response Team**

SANTA FE – Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham has launched the New Mexico Navajo Nation Rapid Response Team. The response team includes experts from tribal, federal and state agencies who will be charged with working across jurisdictions to find solutions to address the spread of COVID-19 on the Navajo Nation.

The newly formed team will be working closely with the Navajo Nation, the Governor's office, DOH and IAD to identify and efficiently respond to gaps in COVID-19 response. The goal of the team is to work outside of conventional jurisdictional siloes and ensure that tribal response is being prioritized. These professionals will be tasked with developing strategies to combat the spread of the COVID virus in the northwest region of the state.

"Too often we work in siloes – state, federal, local, tribal – and this pandemic and the situation on the Navajo Nation requires us to bring our very best organized focus to bear," said **Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham**. "I am grateful for the leadership of President Nez and for the volunteerism of these valued team members, who will help the state, the nation and the federal government coalesce as we mitigate and manage this awful virus."

"The Governor's Navajo Nation Response Team will play an important role in fighting COVID-19 and inspiring hope in our Navajo people. We welcome the partnership with the Navajo Nation's unified command team, and we look forward to implementing more proactive measures that keep everyone safe and healthy. Working together, we will be resilient once again and overcome COVID-19," said **Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez**.

"The Governor's appointment of members to the Navajo Nation Response team is a huge step towards containing the threat of COVID and flattening the curve in our tribal

communities," said **IAD Cabinet Secretary Lynn Trujillo**. "I look forward to working with the response team and the Navajo Nation on this effort."

The members appointed by the Governor are:

**Kevin Washburn** (Chickasaw Nation), Former Regents Professor of Law at the University of New Mexico School of Law where he served as its dean from June 2009 to October 2012, when he was appointed by President Obama and confirmed by the Senate to be the Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs at the U.S. Department of the Interior.

**Brigadier General Miguel Aguilar** retired from the New Mexico State Police after 20 years of distinguished law enforcement service. A member of the New Mexico National Guard, he was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General and continues his military career serving as Deputy Adjutant General of the New Mexico Army National Guard.

**Dr. Michelle Suina** (Pueblo of Cochiti), serves as Program Director for the CDC Good Health and Wellness in Indian Country Program at the Albuquerque Area Southwest Tribal Epidemiology Center.

**Dr. Kevin English** serves as the director of the Albuquerque Area Southwest Tribal Epidemiology Center (AASTEC) at the Albuquerque Area Indian Health Board, Inc., which serves 27 Native American communities in the Southwest.

**Dr. Paul B. Roth**, MD, MS, is nationally recognized as a leader in emergency medicine, an innovator in medical education and head of the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center.

**Dr. Leonard D. Thomas** (Navajo Nation), started his IHS medical career in the Billings Area at the Crow Service Unit, Crow Agency, Montana. He later accepted the position of Chief Medical Officer for the Albuquerque Area Indian Health and now serves as the permanent Area Director.

**Dr. Alex Eastman** is the Senior Medical Officer–Operations at the United States Department of Homeland Security, Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office. In this role, he is responsible for operational medicine across DHS in addition to countering threats to the United States worldwide.

**Roselyn Tso** (Navajo Nation), Director of the Navajo Area of the Indian Health Service, an agency within the Department of Health and Human Services. The IHS is the principal federal health care provider and health advocate for American Indian and Alaska Native people.

**Dr. Sarah L. Lathrop**, DVM, PhD, joined UNM in 2003 to conduct epidemiological studies at OMI using medical examiner data. She serves as the Principal Investigator

for the Foodborne Diseases Active Surveillance Network portion of New Mexico's Emerging Infections Program and Professor of Pathology at UNM Health Sciences Center.

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