



### Peacemaking statement about COVID 19

When the Twins slayed the Naayéé, certain things were spared for a reason. Cold, poverty, old age, lice—these things were left in the world to teach the Diné to take responsibility and to solve problems.

Now, we are facing a Naayéé that is a monster that kills through invisibility. It hides in cold places and in the dark and harms us when we don't take responsibility for our hygiene and prayer. The medicine people say this Naayéé will invade us and linger on, building its strength until it can kill many of us.

This was foretold. Our medicine people know of the warnings of the Holy People, that the invisible body would come onto Diné Bikéyah to harm us. We would know it was coming when the dawn and the dusk were red, and when there were meteor showers.

These things have happened, but we were not vigilant. Our ancestors would have recognized the warning signs of danger and fearsome coming, the Yikáí Yíichii' Red Dawn and Nihootsooi Biyi'jii' Ni'halchíí Red Sunset, which would cause us to perform protection prayers.

The government has named this disease Big Cough áí Dikos Nitsaa'ígíí-áí, but we know its true names are Invisible Body, Bits'íis Dooyit'íinii and Air that Gives Evil Spell, Ních'i Bi'íinízinii. These come to attack the Diné when we are weakened in our spirit. Our weakness comes from losing the strength that is our language and our Diné Fundamental Law. We must coexist with nature by getting up early in the morning to make an offering of white ground corn, at noon making an offering of corn pollen, and making our evening offering of yellow ground corn.

Many people are storing away their Native American Church and traditional paraphernalia, or their Christian Bibles and prayer materials. These things must be brought out of our closets and drawers, from under our beds and used in the open, in the light. Not only is it significant to bring out traditional paraphernalia but also utilize the honeeshgish, fire poker, arrowheads, stirring sticks, with prayers and protection songs.

This disease exists in darkness and cold. Our strength is brought against it when we pray in the light. When we fail to follow our traditions of prayer in the home and performing our ceremonies as they were given to us, these are the things that cause us to be vulnerable.

**Some Diné are worsening our vulnerability. Some people who are infected with the virus are still out in the community and among their families, exposing others. This behavior is against the dignity and worth of all individuals, and our responsibility to protect each other. Others ridicule the Diné who are being diligent in their hygiene with masks, handwashing, and social isolation. When these responsible behaviors are ridiculed or not followed, we are not respecting the teachings that were given to us by our ancestors.**