



# PROCLAMATION

DECLARING APRIL 18, 2026

## Maternal Health Awareness Day

**WHEREAS**, the Navajo Nation honors mothers as sacred life-givers, and their health and well-being are essential to the strength, balance, and future of the Diné people; and

**WHEREAS**, maternal health includes the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being of women during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period; and

**WHEREAS**, across the United States, more than 800 women die each year from pregnancy-related or childbirth-related complications, and approximately 70,000 women experience severe maternal morbidity or life-threatening complications; and

**WHEREAS**, more than 80 percent of maternal deaths are preventable with timely, equitable, and quality care; and

**WHEREAS**, American Indian and Alaska Native women are disproportionately impacted and are two to three times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes compared to white women; and

**WHEREAS**, maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity are driven by preventable conditions including hemorrhage, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, mental health conditions, substance use disorders, and violence; and

**WHEREAS**, nearly half of maternal deaths occur during the postpartum period, with a significant number occurring between one week and one year after delivery, underscoring the need for continued postpartum care and support; and

**WHEREAS**, one in five women experience perinatal mood and anxiety disorders, and untreated maternal mental health conditions are among the leading causes of preventable maternal deaths; and

**WHEREAS**, intimate partner violence is a leading cause of maternal death, and pregnant women are at increased risk of experiencing violence during pregnancy; and

**WHEREAS**, access to early and adequate prenatal care, screening, and treatment—including for chronic conditions and oral health—can significantly reduce pregnancy-related complications for both mother and baby; and

**WHEREAS**, a woman’s health at conception can have a significant impact on her future health as well as her baby’s, and access to pre-pregnancy care can help prevent complications, reduce maternal mortality and morbidity, and lower rates of birth defects, preterm births, and infant death; and

**WHEREAS**, community-based, culturally grounded care models—including doulas, midwives, community health representatives, and traditional teachings—have been shown to improve maternal and infant health outcomes, reduce unnecessary interventions, and build trust within communities; and

**WHEREAS**, expanding access to maternal health services in rural and underserved communities across the Navajo Nation is critical, as many communities face barriers including limited healthcare facilities, transportation challenges, and workforce shortages; and

**WHEREAS**, investments in telehealth, mobile care, pharmacies, home monitoring, and education on urgent maternal warning signs can improve access to timely and life-saving care; and

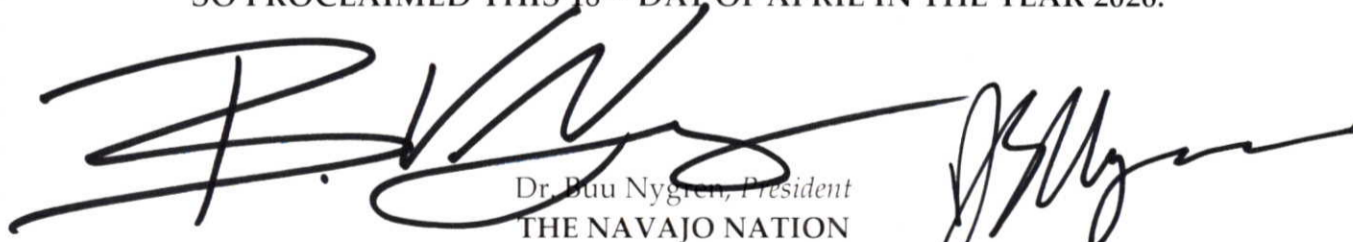
**WHEREAS**, strengthening the maternal health workforce, including Native doulas, midwives, and behavioral health providers, creates culturally competent care systems and supports economic opportunity within the Navajo Nation; and

**WHEREAS**, the involvement of fathers and supportive partners plays a vital role in promoting healthy pregnancies, safe births, and positive outcomes for mothers and infants; and

**WHEREAS**, every mother deserves respectful, responsive, and culturally appropriate care to ensure safe pregnancies, healthy births, and a strong future for both mother and child;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, President Buu Nygren, of the Navajo Nation, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the laws of the Navajo Nation, do hereby proclaim April 18, 2026 as *Maternal Health Awareness Day*, on the Navajo Nation, and urge all community members, healthcare providers, elected officials, and organizations to raise awareness, strengthen support systems, and take action to improve maternal health outcomes and eliminate preventable maternal deaths.

SO PROCLAIMED THIS 18<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF APRIL IN THE YEAR 2026.

  
Dr. Buu Nygren, President  
THE NAVAJO NATION

