

QC dads approve P12m for elders' pneumonia shots

By Rio N. Araja

THE Quezon City Council has approved a P12-million allocation to fund free anti-pneumonia shots for the city's 375,000 registered senior citizens.

Vice Mayor Joy Belmonte said the 37-member city council passed Ordinance No. SP-2699, green-lighting the subsidy for free pneumococcal immunization for the elders.

Under the ordinance, each of the six districts in Quezon City would equally receive P2 million from the initial P12-million allocation for the purchase of the vaccines.

The city's health department would be able to have a steady supply of 23-valent polysaccharide vaccines for elderly residents who have not been vaccinated.

"We now have a definite budget allocation of P12 million for our free pneumococcal immunization, and this could still increase in the succeeding years depending on the number of senior citizens who would need vaccination," the council measure read.

Belmonte said senior citizens are the most vulnerable to pneumococcal infections that could lead to serious conditions, such as inflammation of the lungs or brain.

According to the Department of Health, pneumonia remained one of the leading causes of death among Filipinos and the leading vaccine-preventable death.

In 2013, it ranked as the second leading cause of morbidity, along with acute lower respiratory tract infections.

"In fact, more than five people die for every 1,000 population in 2013. This is equivalent to 531,280 registered deaths from all causes and all ages," Belmonte said.