

QC to subsidize lab services for indigents

By Arlie O. Calalo

Poor residents in Quezon City will no longer spend any single centavo for clinical laboratory services as the local government will set aside funds to subsidize the establishment of laboratory facilities at the city's health centers.

This was the result of a measure passed by the Sangguniang Panlungsod which will offer free laboratory services to indigent residents, Vice Mayor Joy Belmonte, the council's presiding officer, told *Daily Tribune*.

She said Ordinance No. SP-2686, S-2018 or the "Quezon City Clinical Laboratory Ordinance"

is the city government's response to the lack of access of poor residents to free and quality health services.

Councilors Julianne Alyson Rae Medalla and Diorella Maria Sotto, authors of the ordinance, said the city government will appropriate funds for the establishment of clinical laboratories in all community health centers in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Department of Health and other national agencies.

"Clinical laboratory services in private clinics and hospitals are usually expensive. So we thought of putting up our own laboratories in our public health

centers for our indigents," Belmonte said.

Laboratory tests such as urinalysis, hematology and complete blood count (CBC) are important in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of disease; job applicants are also required to take such medical tests at their own expense as part of their pre-employment medical examination, Belmonte noted.

The clinical laboratories shall provide the following services: Hematology such as CBC, platelet count and hemoglobin, to name a few; clinical microscopy such as urinalysis and fecalysis; serology and immunohematology that include RPR, HbsAg and HIV

test; clinical chemistry such as blood uric acid, BUN and creatinine and electrolyte tests such as chloride, potassium, sodium and calcium.

Under the Quezon City Health Department, each barangay laboratory shall be managed and supervised by a chief medical technologist while technical operations will be overseen by a clinical pathologist.

The laboratory services will be provided for free to city-sponsored indigent residents as certified by the Social Services and Development Department also to elected barangay officials and workers, Day Care Center teachers and community health workers.