

QC to procure thermal scanners vs nCoV

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In an effort to monitor suspected carriers of the 2019 novel coronavirus (nCoV), the Quezon City government will procure 3,000 personal protective gears and thermal scanners.

Mayor Joy Belmonte on Tuesday approved the emergency procurement of the equipment, which will be distributed to barangays and other health personnel in charge of the response for a possible nCoV outbreak.

“We have equipment provided by the Department of Health (DOH), but we will acquire additional gears,” she said. “We will be procuring thermal scanners not just for our own personnel but also for the emergency response teams that will be organized by the barangays.”

Belmonte said the city government is well prepared in addressing the nCoV threat, noting that they have followed the directives and protocols of the DOH.

Earlier, the mayor ordered barangay officials to activate their emergency response teams amid the threat posed by the viral disease that has infected thousands, mainly in Hubei, China.

There are three confirmed cases of nCoV in the Philippines, with one fatality.

According to Belmonte, ambulances in the city’s 142 barangays are being retrofitted to ensure the safety of frontline health workers who would respond to suspected nCoV carriers.

She said hospitals in the city are prepared to accept possible nCoV patients.

“Our health workers have been trained and our hospitals are prepared to address the threat of nCoV,” she said.

POGOs

Belmonte said two Philippine offshore gaming operators (POGOs) in the city have imposed a moratorium on accepting new workers amid the nCoV scare.

“These POGOs have around 2,700 employees who came from mainland China. All of them have occupational permits and there are no new hires from China,” she said.

Belmonte said the city’s business processing and licensing department has coordinated with the POGO companies to ensure that their workers, particularly those who have traveled to China and other areas with nCoV cases in recent weeks do not exhibit symptoms.

She said thermal scanners have been installed in POGO hubs to monitor the health condition of workers.

Emergency response teams

Las Piñas Mayor Mel Aguilar yesterday ordered the creation of health emergency response teams (HERTs) in the barangays to respond to possible cases of nCoV.

Aguilar directed the officials of 20 barangays in the city to form HERTs.

“The HERTs will be the government’s eyes and ears against the virus,” she said.

“They are tasked to visit the homes of residents who have traveled to nCoVinfected places such as China, Macau, Taiwan and Hong Kong. The teams will record body temperatures of the travelers for 14 days,” Aguilar added.

She also called for the strict monitoring of POGO Chinese workers in the city to allay public fears that they maybe carriers of the virus.

Parañaque City Mayor Edwin Olivarez also asked barangays to form health monitoring units to respond to possible nCoV cases.

Several POGO establishments, which employ mostly Chinese workers, are located in the city.

The Ospital ng Muntinlupa has installed priority lanes for patients experiencing flu-like symptoms to prevent the spread of the virus.

Mandaluyong cancels events

The Mandaluyong City government has canceled some of the activities scheduled for its 75th Liberation Day and 26th cityhood anniversary due to the threat of nCoV.

Mayor Menchie Abalos said the commemoration program, parade and concert slated on Feb. 9 would be postponed.

Abalos cited concerns on the possible spread of the disease due to the volume of people attending the celebration.