

## Manila, QC start virus testing

Patients who will yield negative results will be allowed to go home, but are still required to undergo self-quarantine for 14 days

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A number of local government units in Metro Manila are starting efforts to begin the mass testing of their residents for the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).



Mayor Francisco “Isko Moreno” Domagoso gave the go-signal for the Manila Health Department (MHD) to conduct localized targeted mass testing at the city’s six district hospitals.

Likewise, the city’s hospitals are now authorized to send COVID-19 patients to the Ninoy Aquino Stadium, which was recently turned into a quarantine facility by the national government.

Two male COVID-19-positive patients will be the first to be admitted at the stadium.

In Quezon City, its health department has the names of 150 residents who will be subjected to the pilot community-based testing at the QCX at the Quezon Memorial Circle.

The Office of the City Mayor said the community-based testing is crucial to help calibrate efforts in combating the spread of COVID-19 in the communities.

The patients were identified by district health officers and are suspected to have symptoms for the disease.

Meanwhile, the Cainta local government in Rizal province has reported that 52 persons have tested positive for COVID-19.

However, data from the Department of Health (DoH) showed only two persons have recovered from the disease, while 90 persons under investigation (PUI) have already been cleared

The town’s death toll now stands at nine.

Dr. Gap Legaspi, UP-PGH director, has committed to the Manila City government that they can release the results in two to three days.

Presently, there are 152 PUI, while 41 COVID-19 patients and 95 PUI are being monitored. Dr. Arnold Pangan, Manila City Health officer, said the following health facilities are capable of 232 swab tests daily: MHD/Del Pan Quarantine Facility, 50 tests; Ospital ng Maynila, 20; Sta. Ana Hospital/MIDCC, 30; Gat Andres Bonifacio Memorial Medical Center, 50; Ospital ng Tondo, 17; Justice Jose Abad Santos General Hospital, 15; and Ospital ng Sampaloc, 50.

All swab tests will be processed either by the DoH's Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM) or the University of the Philippines Philippine General Hospital (UP-PGH).

Dr. Gap Legaspi, UP-PGH director, has committed to the Manila City government that they can release the results in two to three days.

In Quezon City, all samples will be sent to RITM, with results expected to be released in three to five days, said Dr. Rolando Cruz, head of the Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit of the QC Health Department (QCHD).

Patients who will yield negative results will be allowed to go home, but are still required to undergo self-quarantine for 14 days.

Cruz said the Philippine Red Cross will provide 1,500 additional testing and extraction kits in the coming days.

The Quezon City government is also in the process of procuring 10,000 swabs and universal transport media kits, with partnerships with St. Luke's and Lung Center of the Philippines being finalized for the faster release of test results.