

COVID-19 mass testing begins in QC, Manila

Hardest-hit Metro cities launch initiative to curb spread of coronavirus

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Quezon City and Manila, two of the cities in Metro Manila hit hardest by the outbreak of the new coronavirus disease (COVID-19), piloted their community-based testing on Monday.

Quezon City, which has recorded 764 confirmed cases so far, tested 150 residents at QCX, a former museum inside the Quezon Memorial Circle grounds.

Those tested were identified by district health officers and all showed symptoms consistent with COVID-19, according to project director Joseph Juico.

Samples from the community-based testing would be sent to the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM), with the results expected within three to five days, said Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit head Rolando Cruz.

“If a patient is tested positive, he or she will be automatically referred to [a facility] under the care of health practitioners equipped to deal with mild symptoms,” Cruz said.

Those who test negative, on the other hand, will be allowed to stay home, but are still required to finish a 14-day quarantine.

In Manila, no figure was immediately available on the number of residents who took part in the first day of mass testing for COVID-19 in the city. The local government, however, said that it was capable of conducting 1,624 COVID-19 swab tests per week in the six district hospitals and the city health department’s quarantine facility.

These would be processed either by the RITM or the Philippine General Hospital.