

QC opens more testing centers

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THE Quezon City government will open new testing centers in all the city's six districts this week to handle residents suspected to have been infected with the new coronavirus.

"We are opening more testing centers located in different districts [in order that] that we can accommodate and identify more residents who might have Covid-19 (coronavirus disease 2019)," Mayor Josefina "Joy" Belmonte said.

Residents of District 4 would be accommodated at the Quezon City Experience in Quezon Memorial Circle, the city's testing center.

Residents of District 5 would be tested at the SB Park in Novaliches while District 6's testing facility is situated at the University of the Philippines' Asian Institute of Tourism along Commonwealth Avenue.

As for Districts 1, 2 and 3, the location of their testing centers are still being finalized but these will be opened on Tuesday. Belmonte said these testing centers would be equipped with first local-based with a high number of Covid cases. So will it include entire Metro Manila? Or will it be on a town, city or barangay level?" he said.

If the President will extend the quarantine, "it's a safer choice, but the problem is many people will still be out of work," Roque said. Sen. Christopher Lawrence "Bong" Go yesterday also favors the extension of the ECQ because of the unabated rise of virus cases.

As to the other cities in the country, the senator said that there swab booths and would target 50 tests per day.

She added that the testing facilities would be indirect coordination with village health centers while district health officers would man the booths.

The local government aims to conduct around 1,800 to 2,000 swab tests per week, including those that will be administered by local government hospitals. Specimen from the district testing centers and local government is a need to know first whether there is a flattening of the curve. The day of presidential reckoning comes at a time when the number of people recovering from the virus continues to outpace the death count.

The Department of Health (DoH) on Monday reported 41 new recoveries, bringing the total to 613. Nineteen more Covid fatalities were tallied, raising the death toll to 428.

The DoH attributed the rise in hospitals would be forwarded to the Lung Center of the Philippines and St. Luke's Medical Center-Quezon City for testing.

Community-based testing Project Manager Joseph Juico said the city government entered into a partnership agreement with the **Quezon City Police District (QCPD)** to help in the local testing.

The QCPD has deployed 30 nurses and six medical technicians from the Philippine National Police (PNP) who will help the QC Epidemiological recoveries to its new directive to count patients with mild symptoms who had completed a 14-day home quarantine.

There were also 200 new cases, bringing the count to 6,459.

Around half of the total cases or 3,199 patients are in hospitals.

Services Unit, led by Dr. Rolly Cruz, in contact tracing.

“The support of QCPD will help the **city health department** reach more communities per day, thereby helping identify who should be placed under quarantine,” Juico said.

The QC government advised its residents to coordinate with their village health officers for initial interview and assessment before they will be scheduled and brought to the testing centers.

markets and supermarkets to walkins and instead opt for deliveries of any package of food, medicine, and quarantine supplies by cadets, reservists, and barangay tanods.

Another quarantine extension advocate is Agusan Del Norte 1st District Rep. Lawrence Fortun. Fortun stressed the need for mass testing, effective contract tracing, immediate availability of medical equipment, and speedy and red tape-free distribution of assistance poor and vulnerable families.

“We definitely have not flattened the curve yet. While the spike is not as high as before, new cases are still emerging and the numbers are still increasing. Encouragingly notable, though, is the number of recoveries surpassing deaths, and the slowing down of the spread. But we cannot relent as the numbers still don't advise that it's time to drop some guards. Otherwise, a more widespread resurgence is likely and the country's economic standstill may even be worse and longer,” he said.

House Deputy Minority leader and Bayan Muna Rep. Carlos Isagani Zarate agreed that a “nationwide massive testing for Covid-19 is still key in any decision to lift, extend or modify” the ECQ.

Meanwhile, CT-CIS Party-list Niña Taduran and BHW Party-list Rep. Angelica Natasha Co called for a modified or selective lockdown.

Taduran acknowledged that conditions are not expected to return to normal, and she proposed that the government and private companies join in assisting workers and small businesses adjust to the post-lockdown scenario.

She suggested developing a comprehensive plan to offer workers jobs that are close to their residence and support work-fromhome schemes by providing necessary equipment.

PBA Party-list Rep. Jericho Nograles backed a modified lockdown in areas with zero cases and sufficient medical facilities and manpower to address Covid cases.

Ako Bicol Party-list Rep. Alfredo Garbin Jr. called for a modified quarantine but coupled with a strict implementation of physical distancing and mandatory wearing of masks, continued

closure of malls and schools, and a ban on mass gatherings.

Kabayan Party- list Rep. Ron Salo urged the DoH and the interagency task force on emerging diseases to prepare for the protocols or set of guidelines for the “new normal” that will be observed upon the partial or total lifting of the quarantine.

“The early release of these protocols is crucial, particularly among LGUs which are in the forefront of our fight against Covid-19,” Salo said.