

Belmonte exempts lenders from restrictions during ECQ

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Owners and employers of businesses lending to the poor in Quezon City are now exempted from restrictions imposed during the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ), Mayor Joy G. Belmonte said.

Through a statement issued over the weekend, Belmonte said “establishments providing microfinancing, loans or credit to residents will be allowed to operate within Quezon City amid the ECQ.”

In executive Order 29, Belmonte emphasized that the city government is duty-bound to ensure the availability of sources of loans and credit to the poor and marginalized, during the ECQ.

“entities that are duly regulated by governmental authorities to offer loans and credit will be allowed to operate so they can provide assistance to our citizens in need,” the QC official said.

“we believe that this addresses a gap in the rules, which is sorely needed by our less-fortunate residents, and we hope the national government feels the same way,” Belmonte said. “The eo is pro-poor and gives the poor access to loans that they can’t avail from common banks.”

Covered by the order are financial institutions supervised by the Bangko sentral ng Pilipinas, such as banks, non-stock savings and loans associations, money exchange/remittance companies, e-money issuers, payment system operators and pawnshops.

Financial service cooperatives, credit cooperatives and multi-purpose cooperatives that provide savings and credit to their members, as regulated by the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) will also be allowed to operate.

Other establishments, duly regulated by governmental authority, providing micro-financing, loans and other forms of credit to unemployed or low-income individuals were also exempted from the ECQ.

Belmonte said in Tagalog she included banks, monetary financial institutions and other lending institutions so people who lost sources of income due to the ECQ imposition can borrow with ease as these businesses are less-strict in documentary requirements compared to banks.

“Isinama natin ang mga kooperatiba, MFIS at iba pang lending institutions para mas madaling makautang ang sinuman na nawalan ng pagkakakitaan dahil sa ECQ dahil kaunti lang ang requirements kumpara sa mga bangko.”

Belmonte’s eo 29 requires that these establishments must only deploy a skeletal workforce, who will be allowed to travel to and from their place of operation.

“The personnel are enjoined to follow the strict rules on social distancing, mass gathering, the wearing of face masks and to observe proper hygiene,” Belmonte said.

employees of said establishments are also advised to carry their valid identification card duly issued by their companies for validation purposes by law enforcers. Alladin S. Diega Makati City rep. Luis n. Campos Jr. issued the statement as sss members couldn’t access the pension fund’s website for the second week, stalling claims for their muchneeded benefits as President Rodrigo Duterte ordered a two-week extension of the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) to May 15.

“Agencies providing frontline services should upgrade their computer and information systems to meet the rapidly growing public demand for easier and faster online transactions,” Campos said.

“with or without the Covid-19 pandemic, the future of public transactions is clearly electronic

and online—not over-the-counter in brick-and-mortar agency branches,” Campos added.

The lawmaker also urged other government agencies to improve and expand the transactions that their respective members can conveniently perform online.

“Dependable round-the-clock online facilities are crucial to delivering uninterrupted services to the public,” Campos said.

In a notice posted on the website, the sss said it is “urgently” updating its site to accommodate the surge.

“Please be advised that the sss website (sss.gov.ph) has been on downtime since April 18, 2020. while