

'COVID test before detention' policy enforced in Quezon City

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Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte on Sunday said that the city government will compel persons deprived of liberty (PDLs) to undergo coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) testing before their commitment to the detention facilities in the city.

"We have installed guidelines that will be observed when the court orders the commitment of a PDL to a detention facility managed by the BJMP (Bureau of Jail Management and Penology)," said Belmonte.

Belmonte added that the guidelines will likewise cover those arrested by authorities before they were "detained in a police precinct or facility."

She stressed that these measures are being undertaken

"in an effort to prevent the spread of coronavirus disease 2019" in the city's detention facilities.

Belmonte signed Executive Order No. 30 after the BJMP and the Quezon City Police District (QCPD) reported cases of COVID-19 in their respective detention facilities.

After the court issued the commitment of a PDL into the Quezon City Jail (QCJ), Belmonte said the order mandates the BJMP to coordinate with the Quezon City Health Department (QCHD) to arrange for the PDL's COVID-19 testing in a separate quarantine facility.

She explained the PDL will remain in the quarantine facility while waiting for the COVID-19 test result as they "will be transferred to the QCJ if the result is negative."

If the PDL is positive, Belmonte said he will remain in the quarantine facility for treatment or moved to another facility as determined by the QCHD.

"The PDL will only be committed to the QCJ if cleared of the infection," the city government said in a statement.

"When it comes to the arrested PDLs, they will undergo the mandatory medical exam. If they require COVID-19 testing, the QCPD shall notify the QCHD immediately," the statement added.

Before a PDL is released from the QCJ or any QCPD-run detention facility, Belmonte said they will undergo a medical examination to determine whether COVID-19 testing is necessary.

In her order, Belmonte also encouraged the BJMP and QCPD to conduct regular health monitoring of PDLs in their custody.