

QC mayor calls on hospitals to protect health workers

QUEZON City Mayor Joy Belmonte on Thursday called on all hospitals not only in the city but also in other parts of Metro Manila to assure the safety of their health workers amid the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

"We implore hospital owners and administrators to provide safer working conditions, more personal protective equipment and free virus testing to their staff and medical professionals," she said.

Failure to do so could lead to more COVID-19 cases, she said.

Data showed a high infection rate of

COVID-19 among Quezon City's residents who work in other hospitals, the city government said.

"They are already overwhelmed and exhausted. We must do our best to protect them as much as they care for our people," Belmonte said.

Citing the latest data by the Department of Health, Belmonte said 390 Quezon City residents who are healthcare workers have been infected with COVID-19 as of May 11.

The figure constitutes 24.7 percent of the city's total COVID-19 cases, which stands at 1,578 on the same date.

Most of these affected individuals are doctors, nurses, radio technologists, attendants and drivers among others, who work in hospitals in other cities.

Data also revealed that many of the city's recorded cases could be directly traced to health workers' family and household members.

"Besides putting our own frontliners at risk, leaving them unprotected and untested may cause them to become carriers of the deadly disease to their family and community," the city's chief epidemiologist Dr. Rolando Cruz said.

He said an example of such would be the

latest report where a health-care worker from Barangay South Triangle has tested positive for COVID-19 and infected some of her family members.

Cruz suggested that hospitals should consider providing their staff comfortable temporary housing facilities, where the latter could opt to stay after duty.

"A safe and convenient facility where they can rest physically and mentally would be beneficial. Being away from their family for the meantime will keep them from worrying that they're putting loved ones at risk," he said. **Rio N. Araja**

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