

CAPTIVE AUDIENCE

First Metro mayor to be infected says she's asymptomatic, in good condition

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Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte became the first Metro Manila mayor to test positive for the new coronavirus disease (COVID-19), following her announcement on Wednesday that she was battling the contagious disease.



In a statement addressed to residents, Belmonte said that she was asymptomatic and remained in good condition despite the outcome of her COVID-19 test. According to her office, she would not be going on sick leave. She would continue to monitor developments in the city while working from home, it added. After she was placed under quarantine as part of the protocol of the Department of Health, Belmonte said the city's Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit had started tracing those she came into contact with, including visitors.

Her office and common areas at Quezon City Hall were also temporarily closed for disinfection.

"Because of visiting our health centers, hospitals, special concern lockdown areas and communities to know their needs, we have known from the beginning that this could happen," she said.

No regrets

"But I have no regrets. I have already prepared myself and I whole heartedly accept this," she added.

On June 29, she led the launch ing of the city government's first mobile community testing unit that would be used to test residents in areas under special concern lockdown, or those with clustering and high concentration of COVID-19 cases.

Belmonte said she hoped that her case would serve as a reminder that COVID-19 was a different kind of disease that needed utmost attention, as she still got infected despite following safety protocols like wearing a face mask, frequently washing hands and maintaining physical distancing.

According to the city government, two other city hall employees had also tested positive for the coronavirus. Rolando Cruz, the city's chief epidemiologist, said that personnel who had come into contact with Belmonte and the two employees would undergo swab testing, in addition to those working at the third and 14th floors of city hall.

"Employees who will be tested need to undergo home quarantine until results are released as part of protocol," he added.

Quezon City, the largest city in Metro Manila in terms of land area and population, still has the highest number of COVID-19 cases in the region.

As of Tuesday, it had recorded 3,869 cases—1,301 of which were active cases.