

QC placed under state of calamity over COVID

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For the first time in recent years, Quezon City was placed under a state of calamity yesterday due to the threat of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).



The city council unanimously approved the resolution declaring the state of calamity during a special session. Six of 52 confirmed COVID-19 cases in the country are Quezon City residents. Some patients are also confined in hospitals in the city.

“This is the first time in many years, for as long as I can remember, that Quezon City actually declared a state of calamity. This was something that we feel is important, first and foremost because the President has declared a state of public health emergency in the Philippines,” **Mayor Joy Belmonte** said. “While this is not normally done and this is something that I do not want to do, it has to be done in order for us to empower our barangays to address the issues in their jurisdictions,” she added.

The resolution authorizes the release of the quick response funds to all of the city’s 142 barangays for the emergency procurement and distribution of goods and reprogramming

of funds for the repair and upgrading of public infrastructures and facilities in the context of responding to the health emergency. The processes would still be subject to existing accounting and auditing rules and regulations.

With the declaration, Belmonte said the city's barangays would no longer have to rely on the city government for resources to address the threat of COVID-19.

She noted that the national government declaration requires barangays to set up isolation rooms, disinfect their areas and monitor patients under monitoring and investigation.

"For them to be able to carry this out, they need to have the necessary resources. It only under the state of calamity that they would be able to utilize their quick response funds," said the mayor.

The mayor would meet with barangay officials and representatives from the Commission on Audit and other local agencies to orient them on the parameters of using the fund. The city government would also provide support to the police for the setup of checkpoints at Quezon City's boundaries with the provinces of Bulacan and Rizal, Belmonte said.

She would also issue an executive order on the policies concerning COVID-19.

She added that the city government is working on all fronts to maintain regular operations under a four-day workweek scheme to ensure regular services are delivered to citizens. Las Piñas residents urged: Stay home

Las Piñas Mayor Imelda Aguilar, on the other hand, yesterday called on residents to heed Duterte's advice and stay home, "practice social distancing and avoid crowded places."

She earlier confirmed that a 53-year-old male resident, who has no history of travel abroad, tested positive for COVID-19 at the Las Piñas General Hospital.

"The patient is now recovering and in stable condition," Aguilar said.

The city health office's surveillance team has started tracing the people with whom the resident came into contact.