

PROJECT ARK CONDUCTS 4,000 RAPID TESTS IN QC

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PRESIDENTIAL Adviser for Entrepreneurship and Go Negosyo founder Joey Concepcion announced the completion of a total of 4,141 rapid tests from Project ARK (antibody rapid test kits) in Quezon City in partnership with Mayor Josefina Belmonte.

The test kits were donated by the private sector partners, namely GT Capital, Wilcon Depot, RFM Corp. and the Federation of Filipino Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry Inc (FFCCCII).

The announcement was made during a the virtual press briefing that was attended by Quezon City

Association of Filipino Chinese Businessmen Inc. President and FFCCCII Director Joseph Lim Bon Huan, as well as by founder and Chairman Emeritus of Wilcon Depot William Belo. Also present were Project ARK Medical team leader Dr. Minguita Padilla, ARK Project lead Josephine

Romero, Project Pilot lead for the local government unit (LGU) Ginggay Hontiveros-Malvar, project coordinator for QC community-based testing Joseph Juico and QC epidemiologist and surveillance officer Dr. Rolando Cruz.

From the tested, 3,342 were negative; 642 were IgG positive, meaning they have had the virus but were able to recover and build antibodies; 20 were deemed IgM positive; 137 tested IgG/ IgM positive; and 30 were symptomatic. A total of 186 people were immediately directed to the appropriate hospital facilities for a complimentary reverse transcription-chain reaction (RT-PCR) swab testing.

“The efforts of both the government and the private sector are basically focused on saving lives and livelihood. The only way we can open the economy safely is to create greater visibility. Creating visibility is to do a lot of testing. Targeted mass testing is our approach, whether we use RT-PCR or rapid test kits, whatever testing methods are available out there that give us good visibility is what we have to do,” Concepcion said.

Project ARK will be rolled out in other cities in Metro Manila cities and in nearby provinces.

“We continue our efforts with the LGUs. Testing has to happen to create visibility,” Concepcion said.

Belmonte expressed her gratitude for Project ARK.

“We are great believers in testing and in fact we have already established six community-based testing facilities. When this project was brought up, I was really excited. We’re advised that rapid testing is always done in conjunction with the PCR test. I always believe that rapid test is a really good way for us to gauge and screen who should we administer

the PCR test, given that these tests are expensive so we embrace this project wholeheartedly," the mayor said.

Project ARK brings together private companies and business conglomerates to ramp up both rapid and RT-PCR testing in the country. With the data collected from these efforts, the government and different industries can gain better visibility of the enemy and develop better strategies to combat the virus.

Village-level implementation is part of Project ARK's bayanihan initiative. In addition to supporting the screening of employees to ensure safety at work, Project ARK encourages companies to lead the voluntary testing of those in villages.

To date, Project ARK has generated more than 1.2 million rapid test kits from 300 companies.

Project ARK has also conducted close to 30,000 tests with the cities of Pasig, Taguig, Makati and Antipolo to bring mass testing down to the community level.