

Belmonte renews call to obey health guidelines

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QUEZON City Mayor Josefina Belmonte has renewed her call to residents to strictly follow health protocols to help prevent the virus from spreading amid the rise in the number of coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) cases in recent days.

“Keep in mind that we are all responsible for our health and the health of others around us, particularly our family, friends, and loved ones,” Belmonte said.

“So, we must act responsibly by obeying all health protocols so we can have a safe and happy Christmas celebration despite the pandemic,” she added.

Based on the latest report from OCTA Research, Belmonte has noted the spike in the average number of daily cases.

From an average of around 90 cases per day from December 9 to 15, the number rose to more than 120 cases per day from December 16 to 21, based on case reports from the Department of Health.

Dr. Rolly Cruz, head of the City Epidemiology and Disease Surveillance Unit noted the increase in the city’s reproduction number (R-naught), which indicates how contagious the infectious disease, to 1.54 on December 20 from 1.50 three days earlier.

The city started the month with R-naught of 0.92. From an average of just 0.79 in November, the city’s average R-naught this month is 1.13, far from the ideal number of 0.50 set by the World Health Organization (WHO).

When it comes to the positivity rate, Cruz said the city currently had an average of 8 percent from December 14 to 20, up from the 6 percent that was recorded from December 7 to 13.

Before this, the city achieved a positivity rate of 5 percent in three straight weeks from November 16 to December 6. The WHO recommends a positivity rate of below 5 percent. Meanwhile, the city government conducted an average of 2,197 tests per day from December 14 to 20, higher than the average of 2,102 the previous week.

Joseph Juico, head of QC Task Force on Covid-19, said the city government has boosted its contact tracing capability to 1:24, meaning it could quickly trace more people who had close interaction with possible or confirmed Covid-19 cases.

The city officials said the local government is prepared for a spike in cases but citizens should do their share by taking the necessary safety precautions, especially during the holidays.

It should be noted that the city’s first Special Concern Area Lockdown occurred after the index case, an employee working in Pasay, contaminated 19 others in a social gathering in Barangay Tandang Sora.