

## QC finalizing talks with UK's AstraZeneca

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The Quezon City government is finalizing its talks with British pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca for the purchase of an initial 750,000 doses of its COVID-19 vaccine.

The city council approved a resolution authorizing Mayor Joy Belmonte to enter into a tripartite agreement with the national government and AstraZeneca for the advance purchase of the vaccines.

“We are ready to purchase. After implementing our test, isolate, and treat strategy, vaccination is our game plan now. This free vaccination program will definitely complete our efforts against this deadly virus,” Belmonte said.

Belmonte said the city's plan to procure the vaccine is not in conflict with the Department of Health statement saying only the national government can purchase vaccines.

Through the tripartite agreement setup, Belmonte said the national government will procure in behalf of the local government unit (LGU), which will provide funds for the vaccines.

“The LGU is not authorized to procure, only the national government is allowed because these are the terms of an emergency use agreement,” she said in a separate message to The STAR. “So the pharma allocates what it can to LGUs that signify intent.”

Belmonte said this locally funded allocation will be over and above the vaccines earmarked for the LGU by the national government.

The city earlier said that it has allocated an initial P1 billion in its 2021 budget to purchase vaccines and supplies needed for the inoculation. Part of this budget will be used for the initial purchase of AstraZeneca's allocated vaccine for Quezon City.