

QC, Caloocan, Navotas allot P2B for Covid vaccines

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THE cities of Quezon, Caloocan and Navotas earmarked more than P2 billion for the purchase of coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) vaccines that will be used to vaccinate residents.

Mayor Josefina Belmonte said an initial P1 billion was allocated to purchase Covid-19 vaccines and other inoculation supplies.

The City Council on Wednesday allowed the mayor to enter into a tripartite agreement with the national government and a pharmaceutical company to ensure the advance procurement of vaccines.

“With the council resolution, we will soon finalize the tripartite partnership and begin the process of prioritizing our most vulnerable citizens,” Belmonte said.

She told The Manila Times that the budget could go even higher depending on the cost and supply of the vaccines, among other factors.

“As soon as we have rolled out this vaccination program, we will definitely prepare for the next distribution and budget,” Belmonte said.

She added that the city government was finalizing the procurement of an initial 750,000 doses of the Covid-19 vaccine from a reputable pharmaceutical firm.

The city’s 10,000 health workers, 300,000 senior citizens, 20,000 persons with disabilities and other priority sectors, as recommended by the World Health Organization, would be the first to receive the Covid-19 vaccines, she said.

Meanwhile, Mayor Oscar Malapitan said Caloocan City’s Sangguniang Panlungsod (City Council) led by Vice Mayor Macario Asistio 3rd has approved the release of P125 million for the purchase of initial batch of Covid-19 vaccines.

Malapitan said the city is willing to finance the vaccine procurement amounting to P1 billion through a loan agreement.

Caloocan City’s 1.7 million residents will receive the vaccine for free.

In Navotas, Mayor Tobias Tiangco said the City Council had approved the release of an initial P20 million to purchase Covid-19 vaccines.

He noted that the funds were sourced from the city’s Disaster Risk Reduction and Management.

Meantime, Tiangco appealed to the national government and the private sector for assistance to increase the local government unit’s vaccine procurement budget in order to inoculate all residents.