

AstraZeneca may deliver vaccines by Q3 – Belmonte Taguig rolls out P1 B for vaccine

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British pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca may be able to deliver the 750,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines ordered by the Quezon City government in the third quarter of the year, according to Mayor Joy Belmonte. “Because we belong to the second batch that have registered our intent to reserve, we’ll probably get the vaccines in the middle of the year, probably in the third quarter,” Belmonte said in an interview with “The Chiefs” on One News/TV5 on Tuesday night.

“We are in talks with other pharmaceutical firms because definitely we have to procure more vaccines to be able to vaccinate at least 80 percent of our population,” she added, referring to the vaccination coverage needed to achieve herd immunity against the virus.

Due to high demand for vaccines, Belmonte said they were able to negotiate an amount good for 375,000 people.

She said they have reached out to other pharmaceutical companies to secure more vaccines, noting that Quezon City’s population is over three million.

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

While they are open to procuring other vaccines, Belmonte said she prefers AstraZeneca vaccine because it is affordable and has less demands in terms of storage and handling.

“It has been approved in the United Kingdom and India and other countries as well. So far, no side effects have been reported,” she said.

In Pasig, thousands of COVID-19 vaccines could be rolled out for health workers beginning next month, Mayor Vico Sotto said.

As President Duterte reportedly approved a deal that allows local governments to procure COVID-19 vaccines, Sotto said Pasig is in talks with various drugmakers for the sourcing of the vaccines.

“For medical frontliners, we can expect it as soon as February. This is for healthcare workers, may be a couple of thousands... that’s what we’re working on,” Sotto said.

Pasig has earmarked P300 million for its vaccination program, which would prioritize health workers, senior citizens and persons with disabilities. The city government of Taguig has rolled out its P13.5-billion recovery budget for this year, including P1 billion for the procurement of COVID-19 vaccines.

Mayor Lino Cayetano said he wants every resident to be vaccinated against the disease.

“As early as September last year, we have started planning for vaccination. It will complement other anti-COVID programs such as mass testing and treatment,” Cayetano said.

Taguig’s molecular laboratory and disease surveillance units will continue to receive funding this year.

“We are working with the Joint Task Force and the Department of Health for the procurement of vaccines for Taguig. We are also talking to other pharmaceutical suppliers for the purchase of our own vaccines once we are given the green light,” Cayetano said.