

Kamuning residents face discrimination

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Residents of Kamuning, Quezon City are reportedly experiencing discrimination from the public following confirmation that the first case of the UK coronavirus disease (Covid-19) variant was a resident in the area.

In the Laging Handa briefing, Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte assured that the city government is working double time to locate all the individuals who have close contact with the patient of the new UK Covid variant.

“First, I felt sad when the DoH (Department of Health) came to our city right after they found out that this patient was positive for the UK variant. What we wanted is a communications plan because we do not want this to cause panic especially to the residents,” Belmonte said.

She clarified that the patient did not go home and was immediately transferred to the quarantine facility.

“Because it was prematurely reported that he was from Kamuning without describing the circumstance around his case. It was not indicated that he was not in the barangay. And because of that, this has caused a lot of panic, massive panic actually in the barangay to the point that the residents of Barangay Kamuning are being discriminated,” she added.

According to Belmonte, a number of residents were advised by their employers not to report for work.

“People don’t want to go to the market, groceries because of the fear. And I think that this is because again of misinformation, probably a lot of information, probably premature informing of the public without proper guidance,” she noted.

It was the DoH who confirmed that the first case of UK Covid variant was from Kamuning.

“We should anticipate the consequences so that we can avoid panic that is unnecessary. We can avoid outcomes like discrimination, which again, is not called for or has no basis,” she noted.

Belmonte noted that at least 143 individuals who are considered as first-generation contacts were already traced.

“So, those considered as first and second generation contacts, including passengers who were from Quezon City, the health workers, including members of BHERT who assisted the patient from the hotel to quarantine facility and isolation facility where he is now staying, they were all tested,” he said.

Belmonte added that more than half of the close contacts of the patients were already swabbed and are currently being quarantined.

She noted that only one of the eight passengers who were with the same flight with the patient is still being located.

“So, out of the eight passengers who are from Quezon City, seven were already contact traced, and only one is still missing as the contact details were not accurate, there is one individual that is missing,” she noted.

According to Belmonte, the local government is now awaiting the result of the swab tests conducted on the close contacts of the first UK variant patient.

“His girlfriend was also swabbed and she is now in the isolation facility. Again, we are still waiting for the results to come out,” she added. Belmonte said that the first UK variant patient is now recuperating. “I would like to assure the residents of Quezon City that we are ramping up testing; we are ramping up surveillance; we are ramping up our contact tracing. The city government is not remiss in its duties. We acted immediately,” she stressed.