

## QC in talks with other drug firms for vaccine

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The Quezon City government is in talks with other pharmaceutical companies for the purchase of additional COVID-19 vaccines, Mayor Joy Belmonte said yesterday.

Belmonte said they are eyeing to procure more vaccines from other sources, including Novavax and Janssen by Johnson & Johnson.

The local government has secured 1.1 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine from British-Swedish drug manufacturer AstraZeneca.

“AstraZeneca assured us that there would be no problem with the delivery of the vaccines. We stand by the word of the company. If there will be problems, it is their duty to inform us as stipulated in the contract,” Belmonte said during the Kapihan sa Manila Bay forum.

Quezon City has allotted P1 billion for the procurement of COVID-19 vaccines.

“We have the budget, we have been seeking out all pharmaceutical companies. Lahat ng vaccine manufacturers kinakausap namin,” Belmonte said.

Earlier, President Duterte said the European Union is holding COVID-19 vaccines hostage, particularly those made by AstraZeneca.

Belmonte said while Quezon City has signed a tripartite agreement with AstraZeneca and the national government for the vaccine procurement, no payment has been made.

She said the policy that would allow local governments to make 20-percent downpayment is still being discussed.

“Kung hindi mag-comply sa agreement, the contract would not be consummated,” Belmonte said.

Other local government units in Metro Manila are expecting to receive vaccines from AstraZeneca by July.

Quezon City’s vaccination plan has been approved by the national government’s CODE or Coordinated Operations to Defeat Epidemic.

The local government has partnered with Zuellig Pharma for the implementation of the vaccination program.

Once the vaccination has been rolled out, Belmonte said they expect to inoculate 10,000 residents daily or 252,000 people per month.

With 24 vaccination sites in place, the city government is expecting to meet its first vaccination target within seven months from the rollout.