

UK COVID-19 variant case monitored in QC

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Residents of a community in Riverside, Barangay Commonwealth in Quezon City will undergo testing for coronavirus disease (COVID-19) after a 35-year-old patient, who was quarantined in the area, was found infected with the United Kingdom (UK) variant of the virus.

The Quezon City government made the announcement early Thursday when the City Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit (CESU) learned on Feb. 10 from the Department of Health (DoH) that the male patient had the new virus variant after his sample was sent to the Philippine Genome Center.

The patient and his companion, who was isolated at the same apartment, will be transferred to the city's isolation facility, the local government added.

Mayor Joy Belmonte expressed disappointment over the incident, saying: "It is unfortunate that we learned about this only now."

"We want to make sure that nobody was infected with COVID19, especially by the much more contagious B.1.1.7 variant. We are acting very quickly to isolate the two and to conduct extensive contact tracing and testing in the area," Belmonte said in a statement.

Citing information from the DoH, the local government said the patient was an Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) in Korea who returned to the Philippines in August 2020. He hails from Liloan, Cebu.

While processing his papers in Manila, he stayed in Parañaque City until he tested positive for COVID-19.

The local government said the patient was quarantined at an apartment in Quezon City after his agency transferred him there. Previously, he was isolated in a hotel in Manila. It is not yet clear if the apartment where the patient was brought to is an authorized COVID-19 facility.

Belmonte called out the patient's agency for placing "an entire community at risk by bringing a COVID-19 positive patient to our city, considering that both their agency and the quarantine hotel are in Manila."

Belmonte plans to hold liable the agency for "not following health protocols."