

QC traces contacts of UK variant positive patient

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THE Quezon City Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit (CESU) has immediately conducted contact tracing and testing in an area in Barangay Commonwealth where a man, quarantined for the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) in an apartment with another individual, later tested positive for the United Kingdom or B117 variant of the virus.

Mayor Josefina Belmonte instructed the CESU to quickly isolate the two and have them transferred to the Hope Facility after she received a report on February 10 from the Department of Health (DoH) that the man tested positive for the UK variant.

“We want to make sure that nobody was infected with Covid-19, especially by the much more contagious B117 variant. We are acting very quickly to conduct extensive contact tracing and testing in the area. It is unfortunate that we learned about this only now,” she said.

In its statement on February 5, the DoH referred to the man who hails from Liloan, Cebu as the eighth UK variant case, whose sample was collected on January 17.

The Health department tagged the man as an active case with mild symptoms.

He was a former overseas Filipino worker from South Korea, who returned to the Philippines last August 2020 and stayed in Cebu.

On Nov. 17, 2020, the man moved to Sucat, Parañaque City and made frequent trips to a manning agency in Malate, Manila, which he last visited on January 14 after securing another overseas placement.

While waiting for deployment, the man rode a taxi and stayed in a hotel in Manila on January 17.

On the same day, he underwent a swab test in Pasay City. The following day, he was informed that he tested positive for Covid-19 and his sample was sent to the Philippine Genome Center.

He continued to stay in the same hotel until January 21 and thereafter his agency booked a ride via a ride-hailing app for him to be transferred to an apartment in the riverside area of Barangay Commonwealth.

On February 5, his genome sequencing results showed he contracted the B117 variant. On February 8, he developed a mild cough and on February 10, his agency arranged another swab test wherein his companion was also swabbed.

“Their condition will be strictly monitored by our experts, and we assure them that they will be well taken care of in our facility,” Dr. Rolly Cruz, CESU head, said.

Belmonte said she was seeking legal advice to determine if the manning agency was liable for not following health protocols.

“This agency placed 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,” she lamented.

The mayor appealed to the Bureau of Quarantine to determine why the hotel released the man to the agency several days after he tested positive.

She also reminded “QCitizens” to continue practicing health protocols such as the wearing of face masks, frequent hand-washing and physical distancing.

“Our best defense is still strict adherence to health protocols so we can keep ourselves and our families safe,” Belmonte said.