

## QC health workers get vaccine jabs

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Physician Amie Guzon, head of the family medicine department of the **Quezon City General Hospital (QCGH)**, could not contain her excitement after receiving the first dose of the vaccine developed by Sinovac of China on Wednesday.



“It marks the start of the end of the pandemic,” Guzon told reporters during the rollout of the vaccines for QCGH personnel.

Guzon, who is a COVID survivor, was among the first five medical frontliners who received one of the 300 doses of CoronaVac allocated to the city-operated hospital.

“This completes the whole cycle of my pandemic,” Guzon said, citing her experiences as the manager of the HOPE quarantine facilities established by the local government and as a COVID patient. “I hope that other health workers and my family are proud of what I did for them.”

According to Guzon, she never hesitated about getting the China-made vaccine instead of the Pfizer vaccine.

“Any vaccine will do rather than zero vaccine,” she said. “I have experienced the whole cycle of the pandemic... We are going in circles. This is the only thing that will stop the cycle of COVID.”

When they first made a survey on who were willing to get inoculated with CoronaVac, QCGH director Josephine Sabando said only three out of over 1,000 personnel answered in the affirmative.

Most of the hospital employees were willing to wait for other vaccine brands, Sabando said. **Mayor Joy Belmonte** admitted that she was initially dismayed when she heard that only a handful were willing to receive the vaccine developed by Sinovac, which was granted emergency use authorization by the Food and Drug Administration.

Belmonte lauded Sabando for convincing more medical personnel to get vaccinated with Sinovac.

Sabando said 300 doses of Sinovac received by Quezon City have been allocated, with more on the waitlist.

The hospital director said she organized town hall meetings where she presented data about the efficacy of Coronavac, especially for severe COVID cases.

“It prevents mild cases of COVID-19 by 50.4 percent. For moderate, it is 78 percent. But for severe, it is 100 percent similar to AstraZeneca,” Sabando said.

“With this vaccine, we are preventing moderate to severe cases among our healthcare workers. Once vaccinated, there will be almost complete protection from hospitalization, intubation, even death,” she added.

Sabando underscored the importance of vaccinating health workers as soon as possible, citing the surge in the number of COVID-19 cases in Metro Manila.

Belmonte expressed gratitude to the frontline workers who consented to receive the China-made vaccine.

“This is a milestone in our COVID-19 response. We have begun the vaccination starting with our health workers,” she said.

“I want our doctors and healthcare workers to be protected in any way possible. This vaccine is the best right now considering that this is what is available to us,” she added.

The QCGH targets to inoculate 100 people per day.