

QC, Parañaque enforce liquor ban

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A city-wide liquor ban and closure of select business establishments will be implemented in Quezon City to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

In a statement yesterday, Mayor Joy Belmonte said selling of alcoholic beverages is prohibited beginning today until March 31.

Belmonte also ordered the closure of fitness centers, spas and internet cafes.

Barangay officials were directed to start requiring quarantine passes to limit the movement of residents.

“The increase in the number of COVID-19 cases is very alarming. We want to stop the transmission as early as now so that we no longer have to implement another city-wide lockdown,” Belmonte said.

The local government also required returning overseas Filipinos staying in hotels in Quezon City to report to the city administrator’s office for documentation and monitoring.

Law enforcers in the city have been ordered to enforce health protocols.

The Parañaque government also enforced a liquor ban amid the surge in COVID-19 cases in the city.

Under Executive Order 2021-018 issued by Mayor Edwin Olivarez on Saturday, the permits of business establishments selling liquor would be suspended.

“To stop the rising cases of COVID-19 in the city, there is a need to control the movement of people and to limit public interaction by discouraging mass gatherings,” the order read.

Sale of liquor and other alcoholic beverages is prohibited in restaurants, bars, beer houses, groceries and convenience stores in Parañaque.

The liquor ban will be in effect until the end of the month, unless earlier revoked or modified. Starting today, local governments in Metro Manila will implement a uniform curfew from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m.

As of March 13, there were 10,042 cases of COVID-19 in the city with 9,243 recoveries and 245 deaths. There were 554 active cases.

Isko reduces workforce

In Manila, Mayor Isko Moreno yesterday announced a reduced workforce at city hall beginning today.

Moreno ordered a 30-percent workforce capacity in all departments, bureaus and offices, saying there is a need to reduce the the number of employees at city hall as a precautionary measure against COVID-19.

Frontline offices will not be covered by the reduction in workforce. These are the Manila Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office, Department of Public Services, Department of Public Service, Manila Traffic and Parking Bureau, Manila Health Department, Manila Department of Social Welfare as well as public hospitals run by the city government.

Moreno also ordered the Manila Police District to cancel all leaves of MPD personnel to increase visibility on the streets.

MPD director Brig. Gen. Leo Francisco reported that 17 members of the Meisic police station tested positive for the virus.

Contact tracing will be done to determine if the police officers were infected due to their beat patrols in the shopping hubs of Divisoria, Binondo and Recto, Francisco said.

There were 1,549 active cases of COVID-19 in Manila as of yesterday.

Swab test for quarantine violators

In Navotas, first time quarantine violators need not shell out money to pay fines.

Instead, they will be “penalized” with a free swab test in the city government’s effort to curb the spread of the virus, Mayor Toby Tiangco said.

The city ordinances penalizing the improper wearing of face masks and violating social distancing measures are amended to waive the fines and require swab tests instead.

“Since the common complaint is that they don’t have the money to pay the fines, then let’s get them tested,” Tiangco said. “The tests are free.”

First time offenders will be required to undergo swab tests. But they will be fined P500 and required to render 16-hour community service for the second offense. – Neil Jayson Servallos, Ralph Edwin Villanueva, Marc Jayson Cayabyab