

More than 11K new cases; drop noted in 2 Metro cities

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The Department of Health (DOH) on Tuesday said it had recorded 11,429 new COVID-19 cases, bringing the total case count in the country to 904,285.

In its daily case bulletin, the health department said there are currently 183,527 active cases, majority or 96 percent of which are mild cases and 2.8 percent asymptomatic; 0.4 percent are in critical condition, 0.5 percent have severe symptoms, and 0.3 percent are moderate cases.

Meanwhile, 856 patients have recovered, bringing the total number of survivors to 705,164. With 148 patients succumbing to the disease, the total death toll stands at 15,594.

Metro's most populous

In Quezon City, the independent OCTA Research Group noted a slide in the number of virus cases and said that the implementation of more stringent lockdown measures was behind the reversing trend.

Figures showed that Quezon City, Metro Manila's most populous city, logged 1,036 cases per day from April 8 to 14, an improvement from the previous count of an average of 1,152 cases per day from April 1 to 7.

'Critical zone'

In a press briefing organized by the Quezon City government on Thursday, OCTA Research's Guido David said the group was "optimistic" that the figures would go down further in the next two weeks. It projected that the city would see 912 cases per day in the next seven days, and 746 cases per day from April 22 to 28.

Meanwhile, in Pasay City, Mayor Emi Calixto-Rubiano said the city was no longer in the "critical zone," as its COVID-19 cases have continued to decline.

As of April 14, data showed that the city had 499 active cases, the lowest since Feb. 26. Pasay City's two-week average number of cases slowed down by 29.7 percent to 95 new cases per day, compared to the 135 new cases recorded daily just two weeks prior.

In March, experts from the OCTA Research group classified Pasay as a "critical risk area" due to the spike in the number of new cases, which reached almost 200 on a single day. The city's active cases peaked at 1,024 on March 25.

'Not out of the woods yet'

Despite the slide in the number of new COVID-19 cases in Quezon City, OCTA Research's Ranjit Rye warned that the city "[was] not out of the woods yet" as hospitals remain at high occupancy rates and the reproduction number of the virus has yet to go down below 1.

He added: "Because vaccinations are taking time for many reasons—supply, deployment—places in [the National Capital Region] with high density will always be vulnerable [so] we have to prepare them."

Interventions

As of Thursday morning, the **Quezon City government** logged 9,181 active cases. The attack rate of the virus per 100,000 population is 32.9, significantly lower compared to other cities in Metro Manila.

Rye said that early interventions such as accelerating the inoculation of residents are needed to prevent another surge. Quezon City has so far vaccinated more than 100,000 individuals from the priority group.

However, QC Task Force Vax to Normal cochair Joseph Juico said during the briefing that the city's vaccination for the first

dose of the vaccine will only be until Saturday as it has yet to receive additional vaccine supplies. The unavailability of supply has led the city to temporarily halt vaccine scheduling on its online platform.

2nd doses secured

But Juico assured the public that the supply for the second dose had been secured. The city government procured 1.1 million AstraZeneca vaccine doses, with the first batch set to arrive around June. Mayor Joy Belmonte, meanwhile, said that the city was set to receive 13,000 CoronaVac doses from the DOH, which will be allocated to residents with no internet access and were unable to secure a vaccination slot through the online platform.

More beds, hospital

In Pasay, the slowdown in the number of virus cases is being tapped by the local government as the break it needs to put up more isolation beds and a new hospital to cater to virus patients.

“We lack hospitals, that has always been our challenge,” Rubiano said in a television interview on Thursday. “We only have one city-run hospital (Pasay City General Hospital) and two private hospitals (San Juan de Dios Educational Foundation Inc. - Hospital and Adventist Medical Center Manila), all in full capacity.”

“We plan to build a new hospital in the city very soon, even just makeshift. We are looking for places, talking to private partners for support,” the mayor said, adding that looking for space was a problem because of the city’s small land area and very dense population.

Nonetheless, construction of the new hospital would start “very soon,” Rubiano said, without going into details.

Contact tracers

The mayor earlier attributed the decline in the number of COVID-19 cases in Pasay to the assistance provided by the national government and other cities in Metro Manila, particularly Caloocan, Taguig and Parañaque, which sent their contact tracers to augment Pasay’s personnel.

“From 7,000 in February, our COVID-19 cases reached 10,000 in March, so it was very difficult work for our 300 contact tracers,” Rubiano said. “We are very thankful for the 100 contact tracers our neighboring cities had sent to help us.”