

Partner with QC's COVID testing, businesses urged

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A Quezon City councilor has asked businesses in the city to partner with the local government to intensify community-based testing.

District 2 Councilor Mikey Belmonte, who chairs the city council's committee on trade, commerce and industry, underscored the importance of close coordination between the local government and the private sector in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We have an estimated 1.3 million members of the labor force in Quezon City, with over 60,000 enterprises registered here," Belmonte said, noting how their participation in the testing and isolation efforts is a big factor in pandemic response.

"This is why we're asking business owners to have their own COVID-19 testing and prevention systems in place and to use the services of the local government that are already available to the residents," he added. Belmonte urged business establishments to regularly inform their employees of the services offered by the city government, such as the online appointment system for free swab tests by the City Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit (CESU).

He also recommended expanding the health benefits and sick leave provisions of employees if necessary.

Pantry patrons

In a separate statement, the city government reiterated its call for those who went to the community pantry set up by actress Angel Locsin to undergo free swab tests.

Only four out of over 1,000 attendees have been tested for COVID-19. Three of them have no symptoms while the other manifested headache, loss of smell and taste. The results of the tests have yet to be released.

"We call on everyone who went to last Friday's gathering. Please report to us and have yourself tested. If there was a virus transmission and you were exposed, you may observe some symptoms manifesting already," said CESU head Rolly Cruz, noting that the incubation period of COVID-19 is approximately five days. Cruz said they have been receiving an average of 950 swab test requests daily from residents, although only 600 are approved due to limited testing capacity.

"We screen individuals who can avail themselves of free swab tests so we can allocate our supplies to those who need it most," Cruz said.

Residents who are prioritized for the swab testing are those who went to Locsin's community pantry, close contacts of COVIDpositive patients and residents manifesting symptoms as well as pregnant mothers and dialysis patients.