

Mayor taps Big Dome in QC'S Covid-19 vaccination program

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THE **Quezon City government** is aiming to scale up its vaccination program when it announced on Thursday it would tap the iconic Smart Araneta Coliseum in Cubao as one of the city's mega vaccination sites. Inoculations are expected to start on Saturday.

Mayor Joy Belmonte said that the Araneta group has allowed the local government unit (LGU) to use the famous 15,959-seat historic coliseum as one of its vaccination venues to priority groups.

"We estimate that the Big Dome will be capable of delivering 1,000 to 1,500 Covid shots per day," said Belmonte. Before being rebranded as Smart Araneta Coliseum, the Big Dome has been the venue of historic events such as the 1960 world super featherweight championship bout between Gabriel "Flash" Elorde and Harold Gomes, the 1975 Thrilla in Manila heavyweight title bout of Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier and the 1978 FIBA world finals between the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Yugoslavia.

The mayor said that measures for indoor settings, such as air and fan systems for adequate ventilation, will be installed to ensure the safety of everyone who plan to get their jabs at the facility.

"The QC LGU is grateful to the Araneta Group for offering the Big Dome to this program for free. It is a suitable site for a massive and critical government health drive since it offers adequate space and accessibility to both our health-care workers and the public," Belmonte said.

"This will help us strengthen our efforts to provide our Qcitizens the protection they need against Covid-19. The faster we vaccinate our people, the sooner we can achieve economic recovery," she added.

Further, **Business Permits and Licensing Department (BPLD)** head Margie Santos said the Araneta Group also committed to provide their own medical personnel who would help inoculate people 60 years and older and individuals with serious health conditions or those belonging to A1 to A3 priority groups.

"We're grateful to our partners in the private sector as they continue to work with us in order to provide us with spacious and comfortable venues and to augment our manpower resources," said Santos.

She added that the Tzu Chi Medical Foundation Philippines, a nonprofit charitable organization, is also helping by sending their volunteer doctors, nurses, and staff to QC vaccination sites.

Just like the other partnerships formed earlier, Belmonte said she is confident of the success of the collaboration, adding, "We need an allof-city approach to overcome Covid-19 and ensure the speedy recovery of our economy." Earlier, the city government partnered with the Araneta Group in expanding its free Covid-19 swab testing initiatives. Araneta City was tapped in the fourth quarter of 2020 as a venue for the local government's free RT-PCR tests for the general public.

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