

QC distributes 1.2 M face masks to residents

The Quezon City government has started the distribution of 1.2 million face masks and 300,000 face shields to indigent residents following President Duterte's directive to detain those caught without or improperly wearing face masks.

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“We are giving out more face masks and face shields, especially to our indigent residents who cannot afford to buy, so that hopefully we can reduce the number of health protocol violators,” said Mayor Joy Belmonte.

She said face masks will also be given to vendors, drivers, senior citizens and other members of vulnerable sectors in the city.

Belmonte expressed concern over the large number of health protocol violators who were warned or fined in recent weeks.

While guidelines for the arrest of those improperly wearing masks are being finalized, Belmonte said the city will intensify its campaign to warn or fine those who are seen not wearing face masks or those wearing them improperly.

“We will exercise maximum tolerance and enforce our local ordinances in the meantime. As much as possible we want to avoid detaining them because we lack space in our detention facilities and the virus could easily spread in enclosed spaces,” Belmonte said.

“Only those who resist, defy or assault enforcers will be detained,” she added.

Data from the Quezon City Police District (QCPD) showed that from May 6 to 11, at least 825 individuals were arrested for failing to follow health protocols. Some 7,600 individuals received warnings, while another 7,886 were fined.

According to the QCPD, seniors, minors and those who temporarily lowered their masks to eat or drink are among those who receive warnings, while repeat violators are issued ordinance violation receipts that they have to pay within a reasonable period of time.

Among those arrested were violators who resisted or refused to comply with health protocols as well as those who were caught violating other ordinances such as those smoking in prohibited areas.