

29 BPO firms ink deal for employees' free jobs

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Notable groups in the business process outsourcing (BPO) sector have sealed a partnership with the Quezon City local government (LGU) to have their workforce inoculated for free when the bulk of vaccines arrives in June.

In a statement, IT and Business Process Association of the Philippines president and CEO Rey E. Untal, along with Contact Center Association of the Philippines (CCAP) and Health-care Information Management Association of the Philippines, said they have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the QC LGU in order to fast-track the inoculation process of some 67,000 workforce.

Last week, the BPO sector was added to the A4 category by the Inter-Agency Task Force, following the request and push of Trade Secretary Ramon Lopez for the sector to be listed as "frontline employees," along with those in essential sectors, including uniformed personnel.

A total of 29 firms have already signed up under the program, with the first batch receiving their jobs at the Araneta Mega Vaccination Center.

"This is the first partnership of its kind and we hope that this will serve as a template for our ongoing efforts with other LGU. Early access to the vaccine is really top-of-mind for our sector and, as such, we are dearly and immensely thankful to the leadership of the **Quezon City Government**," Untal said.

Lawyer Lord Villanueva, QC Assistant Administrator, said the MoU provides that call center companies will provide a qualified medical team, including doctors and nurses, to administer the free jobs.

"There is no shortage of vaccination sites, but there is a shortage of qualified city-employed vaccinators. Hence, we are tapping the private sector to increase the number of vaccinators. On the part of the call center sector, while they might have to hire the medical team, in exchange they get their employees vaccinated earlier," Villanueva told Daily Tribune.

To recall, the IT-BPM sector joined other tripartite agreements to secure more than one million doses of AstraZeneca, Moderna and Novovax Covid-19 vaccines, which are expected to arrive starting in the latter part of the second quarter.