

DILG lauds Belmonte's stance on mass gatherings

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The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) commended yesterday Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte for her policy on mass gatherings and other violations of quarantine protocols.

“I’m really commending Mayor Belmonte sa kanyang proactive stance para siguraduhin na ‘yung mga barangay captains and local officials ay naipapatupad ang ating mga batas at ordinansa,” DILG Secretary Eduardo Año said in an interview on CNN Philippines.

Año was referring to Belmonte’s immediate actions in two incidents in Barangay Matandang Balara – the community pantry organized by Councilor Franz Pumaren and a wedding reception – that violated the prohibition on mass gatherings.

Belmonte has issued a show cause order on barangay captain Allan Franza for the wedding reception and a similar directive to Pumaren for the aid distribution.

The local government also filed cases against a homeowner’s association president for violating health protocols during the wedding.

Año said mayors are empowered to ensure that barangay captains are strictly implementing laws and guidelines set by the government to avoid the spread of COVID-19.

The DILG chief said they would assist the Quezon City government in holding responsible the people behind these incidents.

COVID cases in QC decreasing

The number of new COVID-19 cases in Quezon City continued to decrease in the past weeks, Belmonte said.

“Like in the entire NCR (National Capital Region), our trend in new COVID-19 cases is also downward,” Belmonte said at a press briefing yesterday. “From a high of about 1,100 cases per day, the city’s average cases dropped to about 200 plus.”

Based on its latest report, the OCTA Research Group said Quezon City recorded an average of 207 new COVID-19 infections per day from June 1 to 7, down 27 percent from 283 cases in the previous week.

Quezon City has an average daily attack rate of 6.56 COVID infections per 100,000 population, which is considered as moderate risk.

Hospital bed and intensive care unit utilization rate are at 59 percent and 58 percent, respectively, which are below the critical threshold set by the Department of Health.

Belmonte said the city government intensified measures to prevent another surge of COVID-19 cases.

With some of the new COVID cases linked to drinking sessions among neighbors and other unauthorized gatherings, Belmonte said their law and order cluster has deployed foot patrols to monitor alleys and inner roads where people congregate for social activities.

She also ordered those who will hold gatherings for community services or humanitarian purposes to notify the city government at least five days prior to avoid super spreader events.

Belmonte said city hall hired additional contact tracers, bringing the total to almost 3,500.

A total of 432,633 doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered by the city government as of Tuesday, including 334,211 for the first dose and 98,422 for the second dose.

Those who received their first dose represent almost 20 percent of the 1.7 million target residents, which is 70 percent of the city’s adult population.

With economic and government frontliners now allowed to be inoculated, Belmonte said they are planning to open more vaccination sites that will exclusively serve senior citizens and persons with comorbidities.