

## Charges await vax fraudsters in QC

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The local government of Quezon City on Thursday warned citizens of fines and criminal charges against groups and individuals behind the fraudulent sale, distribution, or administration of Covid-19 vaccines or vaccine slots.

Penalties were also raised against persons who falsify Covid-19 vaccination cards and other illegal acts related to the government's response to the pandemic.

Mayor Joy Belmonte ordered legal actions after receiving texts and email messages reporting such cases in vaccination centers.

The local leader approved Ordinance SP-3032 introduced by Majority Floor Leader Franz Pumaren, and Councilors Dorothy Delarmente and Diorella Maria Sotto-Antonio to thwart any illegal attempt to capitalize on the Covid-19 vaccination program.

"This should serve as a warning to those who want to take advantage of the city's vaccination program through illegal means. We won't take your illegal acts sitting down and we will go after you with the full force of the law," Belmonte said.

There were also reports of tampered vaccine cards. Fake vaccines were also being sold, Belmonte reported.

Under the Ordinance, among the prohibited acts include counterfeiting, forging, altering or imitating a vaccine card or any information, signature, seal or feature on the same.

Also, misrepresenting any information requested by authorities in relation to vaccination, including the information indicated in the vaccine card, for purposes of obtaining undue benefits or privileges;

Sale, advertisement, distribution, solicitation, or administration of Covid-19 vaccines for profit and commercial purposes without any authorization or permit issued by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA);

Purchasing Covid-19 vaccines, whether from a private individual or a government official/employee, without any authority, issued by the FDA;

Sale, advertisement, distribution, solicitation, or administration of fake or adulterated Covid-19 vaccines; Sale of Covid-19 vaccine slot/s originally reserved by the person applying for the same to others for the purpose of substituting someone other than the original and supposed applicant;

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Purchasing Covid-19 vaccine slot/s, whether from a private individual or a government official/employee;

Misrepresentation of vaccine status for purposes of fraud or deceit, including a fully vaccinated person pretending to be unvaccinated for purposes of receiving additional inoculations; and

Commission of any other deceit or fraud in relation to the government's Covid-19 vaccination program.

Violators will be meted with a fine of P5,000 or imprisonment of not less than one month but not more than six months, or both at the discretion of the proper court.

If the offense is committed by a firm, partnership, corporation or other juridical entity, the chief executive officer, president, general manager or such other officer-in-charge will be held liable.

Violators may also be charged for violation of Republic Act 9771 or the "Food and Drug Administration Act of 1991, the Revised Penal Code and other applicable laws.

No walk-in vaccinees are allowed in the sites.