

MM mayors OK unified COVID-19 alert level

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With the lack of clear guidelines on granular lockdowns, Metro Manila mayors said they should be included by the government's pandemic task force in deciding shifts in quarantine status in the region.

Marikina Mayor Marcelino Teodoro said local chief executives had decided to implement a uniform alert level for COVID-19 in the metropolis, noting that the unclear guidelines on granular lockdowns caused confusion.

"The mayors agreed to approach the problem as a group – as one. We recognize the fact that our population in the region is comingling. Our boundaries are porous so we agreed that we will adopt one alert level for the entire Metro Manila," Teodoro said in an interview with "The Chiefs" on OneNews/TV5 on Wednesday night.

He said there should be a framework under which mayors can determine from the national government the mechanisms before implementing an intricate policy such as a granular lockdown.

Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte lamented how mayors were provided only with "broad strokes" of the actual guidelines before they were supposed to implement the lockdown.

"Last Tuesday, which was a day before the granular lockdown was supposed to be enforced, that's when they met with us. But they did not present fine-tuned guidelines to us. It was more of a Q&A," Belmonte told CNN Philippines yesterday.

On Tuesday, the national government suspended the implementation of granular lockdowns with alert levels in Metro Manila and instead extended the modified enhanced community quarantine until Sept. 15. The suspension of the policy, according to the National Task Force Against COVID-19, was done due to unfinished guidelines.

Under the proposed granular lockdown policy over Metro Manila, only portions of a city or the region would be under hard lockdown depending on the number of COVID-19 cases in the area. Streets or barangays with low caseload would be under Level 1 and areas with rising COVID cases would be under Level 4.

Teodoro pointed out that Metro Manila mayors should not be given the burden of solely shouldering the resources needed for mass testing, quarantine and contact tracing measures.