

99 minors get COVID at QC orphanage

The Philippine Star · 10 Sep 2021 · 7 · – Neil Jayson Servallos

An orphanage in Quezon City has been hit by a COVID-19 outbreak, with 122 people, including children aged 18 and below, contracting the coronavirus.

Ninety-nine minors and 23 other people at Gentle Hands Orphanage in Barangay Bagumbuhay have tested positive for COVID-19, Mayor Joy Belmonte announced yesterday.

The management of Gentle Hands said they have yet to identify the carrier of the virus that caused the outbreak.

The orphanage assured the public that the patients in the care facility have varying symptoms of the disease and are exhibiting manageable conditions.

“Gentle Hands is equipped to treat the patients. We have several doctors and medical professionals coordinating with us. Nobody is suffering from respiratory distress,” Charity Graff, the orphanage’s executive director, said in a statement.

Quezon City’s chief epidemiologist Dr. Rolando Cruz said an asymptomatic carrier supposedly visited the orphanage and “unknowingly spread the virus,” which Belmonte said could have been prevented. The orphanage denied this. “It is not true that an asymptomatic visitor spread the virus. We have not received any visitors because some of the children are immunocompromised. We have prohibited non-members of the staff from going inside the facility,” Graff said.

Cruz said the orphanage has 163 residents. Of the number, 163 were tested for COVID-19. Swab results showed that 25 tested negative while 118 tested positive for the virus. Of the positive individuals, 86 manifested symptoms and 32 are asymptomatic.

The four index cases brought to 122 the total positive COVID-19 cases, Cruz said.

He said three employees of the orphanage reportedly went out of the facility on Aug. 13 to get vaccinated.

After six days, Cruz said one of the children manifested symptoms of the virus.

Belmonte urged private establishments and facilities to strictly implement health protocols to prevent outbreaks of COVID-19.

Belmonte instructed the city epidemiology and surveillance unit to monitor the health of the children in the orphanage.