

## Belmonte: Prioritize vaccination in care facilities

The Philippine Star · 24 Sep 2021 · 9 · – Janvic Mateo, Robertzon Ramirez

Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte has ordered local health officials to prioritize the vaccination of those residing in closed-setting and care facilities, including religious centers, halfway homes and orphanages.

Belmonte directed the City Epidemiology and Disease Surveillance Unit (CESU) to conduct a survey of high-risk facilities following COVID-19 outbreaks in an orphanage and some religious centers in the city.

These include nursing homes, rehabilitation centers, homes for the aged, shelters for street children, halfway homes for victims of violence and abuse, religious centers, hospices as well as correctional facilities.

CESU chief Rolando Cruz said they have already visited 13 facilities, where 594 out of 1,027 employees and residents have yet to be vaccinated.

“We are working closely with the city’s vaccination team so inoculation can be done at the soonest possible time,” he said.

Belmonte expressed her condolences to the Congregation of the Religious of the Virgin Mary (RVM) where several nuns have died of COVID-19.

One more nun of the RVM Sisters succumbed to COVID-19 yesterday, bringing to nine the number of fatalities in the congregation.

“The fatalities were between 79 and 98 years old and with comorbidities,” the RVM Sisters said.

The congregation said of the 62 nuns infected with the virus, two have recovered, 13 are considered severe cases while the others are experiencing mild or moderate symptoms.

Aside from the RVM convent, COVID-19 outbreaks were also reported at the Stella Maris Convent, Convent of the Holy Spirit and Christ the King Mission seminary.

Belmonte said the local government remains committed to extending assistance to closed and long-term care facilities in the city to control the spread of the virus and prevent deaths.

She has instructed the city architect and engineering departments to craft guidelines that would ensure better ventilation in buildings, workplaces and other closed-setting facilities.

“We will send these guidelines to building administrators so they will learn how to better retrofit their facilities and make these more resistant to virus transmission,” Belmonte said.