

QC gov't ready to vaccinate minors

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The Quezon City government is ready to implement the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination program for minors once it is approved by the national government.

“All we’re waiting for is the go-signal from the national government and of course the vaccines,” Mayor Joy Belmonte said during an interview with “The Chiefs” on One News/TV 5 on Wednesday night. “We have made a master list and we’re ready to go.” Belmonte had stressed the importance of vaccinating children to achieve population protection against COVID-19, noting that around 30 percent of the city’s residents are minors. City hall is closely working with private and public schools for the possibility of putting up vaccination sites in campuses once the government gives the green light to inoculate minors.

According to the local government, there are at least 267,000 students aged 12 to 17 enrolled in schools in the city, although the number could be higher as several students did not enroll during the pandemic.

The Quezon City COVID-19 task force is also coordinating with barangay officials for the listing of out-of-school youth, homeschooled and those enrolled in schools outside the city.

An online booking system will be activated once vaccination for children is allowed to enable them to schedule the date, time and venue of their inoculation.

As of yesterday, the city government had administered 3,212,273 COVID-19 vaccines, including 1.786 million first doses and 1.425 million second doses.

The number of first-dose recipients exceeded the original target of 1.7 million to achieve population protection.

Belmonte noted the improving indicators on the overall COVID-19 situation in the city. But she cautioned against proposals to downgrade the Alert Level 4 in Metro Manila, saying she would prefer to follow the advice of the health experts.

“They advised that we should at least have two weeks of negative growth rate prior to changing alert levels,” she said. “We’ve had one, and another week they say would not hurt, and that would ensure that this downward trend is sustained rather than just being a fluke.”

QC top earning LGU

Meanwhile, the national government has identified Quezon City as the top local government unit in terms of locally sourced revenues in 2019.

City treasurer Ed Villanueva said Quezon City collected P16.95 billion in revenues in 2019, topping the list released by the Bureau of Local Government Finance of the Department of Finance.

Villanueva attributed the high revenue collection rate to the good governance initiatives implemented by Belmonte.

“Mayor Belmonte’s good governance is the key to this enormous success, which earns the unwavering support of businesses and the public,” he said.

Local revenues include real property and business taxes, as well as other tax and non-tax revenues.

Since assuming office, Belmonte has implemented various policies to encourage payment of taxes, including staggered payment schemes for under-declared and undeclared businesses.

“We would like to thank our taxpayers for their support and trust to our administration,” Belmonte said. “We make sure that all taxes that we collect are being used to expand our services for all QCitizens.”

Villanueva said he is optimistic that Quezon City would get the same recognition for 2020 and 2021, adding that the local government continues to surpass its own tax collection target despite the pandemic.