

QC, Valenzuela home care rules

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THE local governments of Quezon City and Valenzuela City have issued a set of guidelines to manage home isolation amid the unabated rise in cases of the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) over the past weeks.

QC Mayor Josefina “Joy” Belmonte said home care is allowed for those advised for isolation, including probable and confirmed Covid-19 cases, either asymptomatic or with mild symptoms such as sore throat, fever, coughs and colds.

Close contacts who are exposed to suspect, probable and confirmed Covid-19 cases, and are asymptomatic or with mild symptoms, are also required to monitor their health and be confined at home, she said.

Meanwhile, individuals who are suspect, probable or confirmed Covid-19 cases belonging to vulnerable groups such as the elderly and with comorbidities, pregnant, children, and the unvaccinated, or those who have moderate or severe symptoms, will be prioritized and transferred to city-owned hospitals or HOPE Community Care Facilities.

“It has been reported to us that the majority of recent cases of Covid-19 are either asymptomatic or have very mild symptoms. These cases usually recover with minimal intervention and may be managed at home under proper medical guidance and monitoring,” Belmonte said.

In the same guidelines, individuals placed in home care shall be issued a quarantine order by the City Epidemiology and Disease Surveillance Unit (CESU) and will be automatically enrolled in the Community Case Management for Covid-19 Program.

Non-confirmed Covid-19 patients will be given a basic home care kit containing a thermometer, face masks, paracetamol, lagundi tablets, ascorbic acid and instructions handbook while positive patients will receive the home care kit which consists of alcohol, oral rehydration salts, pulse oximeter and vitamins.

The city government will also monitor individuals enrolled in the program on a daily basis either through tele-consultation through “BantAI Covid,” the health centers and city-owned hospitals, or through community visits and rounds conducted by the Barangay Health Emergency Response Teams.

Individuals who test positive but are asymptomatic or experiencing mild symptoms will be discharged and end isolation after at least 10 days from the date of testing, regardless of their vaccination status.

Close contacts who are fully vaccinated and are asymptomatic or experiencing mild symptoms are required to complete a minimum of seven-day isolation from the day of exposure while partially vaccinated or unvaccinated contacts must complete not less than 14 days of isolation.

Similarly, Valenzuela Mayor Rexlon “Rex” Gatchalian said they have now allowed home quarantine but only for fully vaccinated, asymptomatic, and those with mild to moderate symptoms.

About to end his own isolation after he tested positive for Covid-19, Gatchalian made it clear that allowed residents are those whose latest RT-PCR tests would start from January 8, 2022.

“We have decided here in Valenzuela to permit house quarantine/ isolation for those with mild Covid-19 symptoms because we also don’t want our local hospitals, as well as isolation facilities to reach their full capacity so that our medical frontliners can attend fully to those with severe cases,” he said.

For those who want to undergo home quarantine, he/she must make sure that there would be a separate room and rest room designed only for him/her and he/she must have his/her own utensils, hygiene kit and bedding, the city government said.

Those under home isolation can stay there for 10 days or depending on the doctor’s advice, it said.

In case those undergoing home quarantine would experience worse condition, they are advised to immediately call CESU through its hotline: 137160, the mayor said.

“The households, particularly those with close contacts, are required to undergo the same RT-PCR tests and the entire house will be totally locked down while waiting for the test results or all the members of the households are tested positive for Covid-19,” Gatchalian said.

He said CESU personnel will closely monitor those that will undergo home isolation as they are instructed to conduct surprise inspections to check if the patients are strictly adhering to the home quarantine protocols.

While they are now allowed home quarantine, Gatchalian clarified that they still prefer the city’s isolation facilities, even for those with only mild Covid-19 cases where they can expect to be attended well by the medical frontliners.

“Don’t hesitate to contact us through our hotline 137-160 and our CESU personnel and ambulance will quickly get to your place to pick you up and take you to the city’s isolation facility,” he assured the residents.

The Valenzuela mayor said their decision to allow home isolation was also in accordance with the circular from the Department of Health and resolution from the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases.

Belmonte and Gatchalian said the houses of those in home isolation or quarantine will be treated as granular lockdowns or special concern lockdown areas, therefore individuals who are under home quarantine are warned against leaving their homes earlier than prescribed.