

QC beefs up contact tracing team

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QUEZON City Mayor Josefina “Joy” Belmonte said on Thursday the city government will rehire 350 contact tracers whose contracts with the Department of the Interior and Local Government expired last month, in a bid to combat the spike in Covid-19 cases possibly driven by the highly transmissible Omicron variant.

“The additional contact tracers were already part of our contact tracing army until December 31 of last year. But since we still need their services, especially during this surge, we hired them under our emergency employment program so as to continue the important task of contact tracing among many other responsibilities borne out of the rapid spread of Covid-19,” Belmonte said.

City Epidemiology and Disease Surveillance Unit head Rolando Cruz said Quezon City has more than 1,000 contact tracers whose tasks include community case monitoring, data collecting and encoding, case validation, assisting in vaccination and implementation of minimum public health standards.

“Contact tracing is one of the key strategies that the city government has employed since the Covid-19 outbreak in order to contain the spread of cases. We were able to reach the ideal ratio of individuals traced per positive patient then, and we are still doing our best to reach the ideal numbers now despite the volume of cases,” Cruz said.

Belmonte also issued a clarification on the government’s “No vaccine, no ride” policy.

“Unvaccinated individuals who needed to acquire essential goods or services and those who have medical conditions that prevent them from getting vaccinated were exempted,” she said. The mayor added that unvaccinated individuals hesitant to get the jab would be asked to present a medical certificate why they should not be vaccinated.

Belmonte said that since Monday, more than 600 unvaccinated commuters were brought to the vaccination site at the Quezon Memorial Circle to receive their first dose of Covid-19 vaccine.

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