

QC to set up breast milk bank

By JANVIC MATEO

The Quezon City local government is set to open its first breast milk bank in time for the celebration of Breastfeeding Month this August, Vice Mayor Joy Belmonte announced yesterday.

Belmonte said the breast milk bank, which will be operated by the city-

owned Quezon City General Hospital, is expected to provide a healthy and cheap source of milk for infants.

She said the milk bank will be operated in compliance with the ordinance approved by the city council last year.

The measure, authored by councilor Aly Medalla, seeks the creation of human milk banks in all local government hospitals offering pediatric care.

According to Belmonte, the city's first milk bank was established with the help of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, which donated equipment including a pasteurizer, refrigerator and freezer.

Based on the ordinance enacted by Mayor Herbert Bautista on Sept. 17, milk banks would collect, screen, process, store, and distribute donated human milk in the pediatrics departments of all city-owned hospitals.

It will operate like a blood bank, where infants who do not have access to their own mothers' milk would be provided an alternative feeding option.

The milk bank shall operate on a non-profit basis, but a minimal processing fee may be charged for the screening process and administrative costs.

However, Belmonte said that inability to pay the fee shall not be a reason for non-availment

of the milk by infants in need of human milk.

The ordinance delegates the task of manning the milk bank section to trained health personnel knowledgeable in human milk banking and lactation management.

A lactation specialist will be tasked to interview and conduct physical examination on milk donors, while medical technologists are tasked to conduct laboratory tests after the initial screening interview and physical interview of donors.

The donated breast milk will be dispensed by prescription or by hospital purchase order to infants at the intensive care unit, pediatric wards, pay wards, and emergency rooms depending on various health conditions.

"No person, including hospital employees, other than the health personnel stationed in the human milk bank shall be allowed to allocate the breast milk collected unless otherwise sanctioned by this ordinance," read the ordinance.

"In the distribution of donor milk, priority will be given to service or private patients who are pre-term, post-surgical, or critically-ill newborns and for infants in disaster and calamity-stricken areas," it added.

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QC OKs Milk Banks Establishment

By **CHITO A. CHAVEZ**

The Quezon City government will soon establish breast milk banks in the local hospitals offering pediatric care to provide infants with the healthiest, most accessible and most affordable milk form.

Mayor Herbert Bautista approved the "Quezon City Human Milk Bank Ordinance," under the policy that breastfeeding is the normal way of providing young infants with the nutrients they need for healthy growth and development.

Second District Councilor Julienne Alyson Rae Medalla is the principal

author of the ordinance.

The ordinance calls for city-owned hospitals' pediatrics divisions to establish human milk bank sections that would store and collect, screen, process, and distribute donated human milk.

The section would basically operate like a blood bank where infants who do not have access to their own mothers' milk would be provided an alternative feeding option.

The milk banks, the ordinance states, shall be operated on a non-profit basis but a minimal processing fee may be charged for the screening process and administrative costs.

"However, inability to pay for the fee shall not be a reason for non-availment of the milk for patients in need," according to the measure.

The section would be manned by trained and dedicated health personnel in human milk banking and lactation management such as: a consultant physician; a lactation specialist or counselor who could be a nurse; a midwife; and a medical technologist.

A lactation specialist, assisted by the midwife, will be tasked to interview and conduct physical examination on milk donors as a specialist will also be responsible for the release of donated breast milk to recipients.

QC Breast milk Bank

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