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QC Mayor declares pertussis outbreak as cases keep rising

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QUEZON City Mayor Joy Belmonte has declared a pertussis outbreak in the city, as cases continue to rise.

The City Health Department-epidemiology and Disease Surveillance Division reported that from January to March 20, 2024 there have been 23 cases in the city including four Pertussis-related deaths of infants aging from 22 days old to 60 days old.

Belmonte assured the public that the city government is already mobilizing its assets and resources to stop the spread of the disease.

“There is no need to panic. We are making this announcement to make everyone more prepared and remain vigilant. our declaration is meant to ensure that we are on top of the situation, and we will do whatever it takes to curb the spread of this disease. We are mobilizing our own resources towards procuring the needed vaccines to keep our children safe, until such time as the DOH supply arrives,” Belmonte said.

Belmonte already directed the City Health Department, City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, and all relevant city departments to beef up its information, education and communication efforts by promoting awareness and preventive measures on Pertussis in the District Health offices and health centers.

She also ordered the emergency procurement of Pentavalent vaccines and Antibiotics for treatment of cases and prophylaxis of close contacts of patients reported to have acquired the disease.

“The increasing number of Pertussis cases is alarming and we are taking the necessary steps to prevent further transmission of the disease. We are extending our call to Qcitizens who are experiencing symptoms to seek medical care in our health centers,” she said.

Pertussis, also known as whooping cough, is caused by the bacterium *Bordetella pertussis*, resulting in a highly contagious respiratory infection. It can be transmitted through person-to-person respiratory droplets or contact with airborne droplets and exposure to infected or contaminated clothes, utensils, furniture, etc.

The disease’s symptoms include cough persisting for two or more weeks, mild fever, runny nose and cough. Pertussis is most contagious up to about three weeks after the cough begins, and many children who contract the infection have coughing spells that last four to eight weeks.

To prevent the deadly effects of Pertussis, a routine DPT (diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis) vaccination is often administered to infants and young children as early as 2 months old.

Meanwhile, the Epidemiology and Disease Surveillance Division will administer prophylaxis to all identified probable cases in the areas where the cases were reported, as well as isolation and treatment of patients.

In addition, the city government will increase its surveillance in high-risk areas including targeted testing to individuals exhibiting symptoms or those at risk.