

- Vaccination—Pertussis

QC procures vax, antibiotics vs pertussis

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The local government of Quezon City on Tuesday announced that it has already procured some P13 million worth of vaccines and antibiotics for the treatment of pertussis cases in the city. QC Mayor Joy Belmonte disclosed that the local government purchased more than 3,500 vials of 6-in-1 vaccine, 1,012 bottles of Azithromycin, and 1,000 bottles of Clarithromycin which will be given to children 6 weeks old and up who have yet to receive a vaccine for pertussis.

“We have approved the purchase of needed vaccines and antibiotics so we can immediately provide the required medical attention to current cases and protect our QCitizens from further spread. We are planning to purchase more should the need arise, given that the national government has limited supply of the vaccines,” she said.

Aside from pertussis, Belmonte added the 6-in-1 vaccine provides children with protection against diphtheria, tetanus, polio, haemophilus influenzae and Hepatitis B. Azithromycin and Clarithromycin are antibiotics prescribed for pertussis-positive patients.

As of 5 April, the Epidemiology and Disease Surveillance Division reported 41 pertussis cases in Quezon City, including 6 deaths. It added that at least 60 percent or 21 pertussis cases were infants less than 6 months old while the ages ranged from 22 days old to 13 years old, with a median age of 3 months.

The local government earlier declared a pertussis outbreak, enabling it to mobilize its assets and resources to stop the spread of the highly contagious disease, which is also known as whooping cough.

It is caused by the bacterium bordetella pertussis and can be transmitted through person-to-person respiratory droplets or contact with airborne droplets and exposure to infected things. Meantime, the Department of Health (DoH) reported that pertussis cases in the country are on the rise, as data from 1 January to 30 March show a total of 1,112 cases since the start of the year — almost 34 times that of the same period last year, at only 32 cases — with 54 deaths recorded.

In the past six weeks, the following regions showed a continuous increase in the number of cases: Eastern Visayas, Cagayan Valley, Caraga, Central Luzon and Cordillera Autonomous Region.

The DoH said it is cautious in interpreting trends as the number of cases may still change as there may be late consultations and reports.

Health Secretary Tee Herbosa, however, assured the public that outbreak immunization is underway even if the national government pentavalent vaccine stocks are running low.