

- Cancer

QC first LGU to enact integrated cancer control ordinance

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Quezon City became the first local government unit (LGU) to establish an integrated cancer control policy following the approval of an ordinance authored by District 5 Councilor Alfred Vargas.

Mayor Joy Belmonte signed Ordinance SP-3285, S-2024 or the Quezon City Integrated Cancer Control Ordinance (QCICCO), which would benefit cancer patients and their families.

“This landmark public health ordinance is the first of its kind in the Philippines, establishing a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to cancer control at the local level,” Vargas said.

“The ordinance weaves together the mandates and resources of various departments and offices of the local government, such as the persons with disabilities affairs office, social services development department, among others. At the same time, it enhances the capacity of the city health department,” he added.

Based on the ordinance, Quezon City will designate cancer control coordinators, establish a cancer patient navigation and referral system and set up a local cancer registry to connect patients to available services and funding.

The ordinance is in line with Republic Act 11215 or the National Integrated Cancer Control Act (NICCA), which Vargas principally authored in Congress.

“Many Filipinos are still unaware of the benefits that NICCA has institutionalized, such as the Cancer Assistance Fund and other financing mechanisms. Our ordinance will facilitate access to these resources,” Vargas said.

According to the Philippine Statistics Authority, cancer is the second leading cause of death in the Philippines, with a 10.4-percent share in total deaths last year.

Vargas also acknowledged the support of the Department of Health and the technical assistance of experts from the Cancer Coalition Philippines, Philippine Cancer Society and other nongovernment organizations.

“Our objective is to bring back hope to cancer patients and their families. No one should feel hopeless because of a cancer diagnosis. This disease should not be a death sentence,” Vargas added.