

- Monkeypox

41 close contacts of mpox patient compromised, 7 under quarantine

Manila Bulletin · 22 Aug 2024 · 1 · By ALLYSA NIEVERA

The **Quezon City government** has started tracing all those who came in close contact with the 33-year-old male mpox patient as he went to two establishments in the city and several other cities in Metro Manila, compromising at least 41 individuals.

In a press conference on Wednesday, Aug. 21, the local government disclosed that the patient went to a dermatology clinic on Aug. 15 for warts removal.

The dermatologist noticed skin lesions (rash-like) on the arms, face, trunk, back, and other parts of the patient's body.

He coordinated with the barangay to transport the patient to the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM) to collect specimens.

Initial reports showed that the patient went to a spa on E. Rodriguez Avenue, Quezon City on Aug. 11, where he had an alleged intimate contact, four days before the derma consultation.

Mayor Joy Belmonte said the patient had been to different cities before coming to Quezon City.

"He had been to two previous fun/entertainment industry (spa) establishments in other cities in Metro Manila," she said.

A total of 41 individuals were exposed to the mpox patient, seven of whom are residents of Quezon City.

Three spa workers and four spa clients are currently under quarantine.

Other close contacts are being monitored by their respective LGUS.

City Epidemiological Surveillance Unit (CESU) head Dr. Rolando Cruz said they are monitoring the individuals who were in contact with the patient.

"We are really monitoring, we call them every day if they have symptoms," he said.

Meanwhile, the city's **Business Permit and Licensing Department (BPLD)** has ordered the temporary closure of AED Infinity Wellness Spa Inc. on Tuesday, August 20 due to incomplete permits.

Belmonte said workers affected by the closure will be given financial aid under "Alagang QC" program.

"The three employees from Quezon City will automatically be given aid under our Alagang QC program,"

Belmonte said.

The program aims to give financial aid to residents who lose their jobs.

"This is an amount that they can use to support their family while looking for a job or in this case while their establishment is complying with all the requirements," she added.

Amid the local transmission of mpox, the Quezon City government called on residents not to "panic" about the situation.

“This should not be a cause for panic or alarm. We need to protect ourselves,” Dr. Cruz said.

President Marcos has ordered concerned agencies to continue monitoring areas and people most vulnerable to the viral disease even though the Department of Health (DOH) said that there is no public emergency over mpox.

“Continue surveillance, especially on areas and people most vulnerable to the disease,” Marcos told Health Secretary Teodoro Herbosa and other officials during their meeting on Tuesday, Aug. 20.

According to Herbosa, the most vulnerable to mpox are people who are immunocompromised.

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, World Health Organization director-general, had earlier determined that the upsurge of mpox in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and a growing number of countries in Africa constitutes a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) under the International Health Regulations (2005). (With a report from Betheena Unite)