

- Public health

## QC opens new dialysis center, offers 80 free treatments daily to underprivileged patients

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The newly opened dialysis center in Brgy. Bahay Toro, Quezon City, is expected to accommodate 80 “underprivileged patients” daily for free, utilizing 20 advanced dialysis machines imported from Japan “to combat the growing kidney disease crisis in the Philippines.”



According to Quezon City 1st District Rep. Juan Carlos “Arjo” Atayde, who spearheaded the launch of the Aksyon Agad Dialysis Center alongside Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte, kidney disease is a major public health issue in the country, leaving many Filipinos struggling to balance their health with their livelihoods.

Atayde said that many individuals know someone, a relative, friend, or neighbor, who has faced or is currently battling the challenges of kidney disease. For some, this has been a longstanding struggle, while for others, it has emerged suddenly, resulting in life-altering consequences.

According to data from the National Kidney and Transplant Institute (NKTI), approximately 2.3 million Filipinos are affected by Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD), with an estimated one person developing chronic kidney failure every hour, translating to about 120 cases per million population annually. Unfortunately, underdiagnosis continues to be a significant issue and if left untreated, people with this disease require hemodialysis or a renal transplant.

However, the cost of dialysis therapy is exorbitantly high, which is especially problematic in a developing nation such as the Philippines.

“Isang bagay lang ang tiyak, ang sakit sa bato ay hindi lamang pisikal na pahirap kundi isa ring pasanang pinansyal,” the lawmaker said. [One thing is for sure. Kidney disease is not only a difficult disease but is also a financial burden.]

Atayde explained that many individuals face a heartbreaking dilemma. While they want to recover from their illness, they cannot afford the treatment that could save their lives. He noted that countless Filipinos confront this tragic situation every day.

Based on the research study titled “Exploring the Financial Literacy of Long-term Dialysis Patients in the Philippines,” patients experiencing financial difficulties may have to deplete their savings, sell their assets, or incur debt to meet their basic needs and medical

expenses. Without sufficient personal resources to cope with deteriorating financial conditions, individuals may be compelled to stop their medical treatment.

Furthermore, Atayde addressed his constituents in the first district and said that it is his mission “to provide swift action, Aksyon Agad, on the issues that affect our everyday lives. Aksyon agad sa mga isyung nakakaapekto sa ating pang- araw- araw na buhay.”

“Access to proper healthcare should not be a privilege for a few but a right for all. Hindi dapat para sa iilan, kundi para sa lahat. This dialysis center is a product of that promise,” he said.

He added that free dialysis treatment is a significant benefit for those in need, as it offers opportunities for individuals to live longer and healthier lives without the burden of high hospital bills.

The **city government** plans to establish at least three additional Aksyon Agad dialysis centers in the first district through public- private partnerships dedicated to the development of these facilities.