QC expands healthcare access with gender-inclusive ordinance

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The local government of Quezon City has enacted a landmark GenderInclusive Health Ordinance, making it the first local government unit in the Philippines to adopt such comprehensive legislation aimed at providing accessible, respectful, and affirming healthcare services for all residents, regardless of gender identity or expression.

Authored by Councilors Bernard Herrera and Dorothy Delarmente, the ordinance establishes a robust framework for delivering genderaffirming primary care, mental health support and specialized medical services through the city's public health system.

"This groundbreaking ordinance reaffirms Quezon City's commitment to a healthcare system that is truly inclusive," Mayor Joy Belmonte said. "Every citizen deserves care that recognizes and respects who they are. With this legislation, we are ensuring that no one is left behind in our goal of achieving health equity."

Belmonte underscored the urgent need to remove healthcare barriers for gender-diverse and transgender residents.

"For far too long, members of the LGBTQIA+ community have faced discrimination and limited access to essential health services. This ordinance is a concrete step in addressing that injustice," said the mayor.

Under the new ordinance, all public health facilities in Quezon City will offer gender-affirming consultations and counseling, medical guidance and referrals to specialized services, and mental health support specifically tailored for gender-diverse and transgender individuals.

Herrera also cited that the ordinance prohibits all forms of conversion therapy and practices that suppress Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression and
Sex Characteristics, declaring them harmful and unlawful within the city.

The law also ensures that genderaffirming care will be integrated into existing public health programs, including HIV/AIDS prevention, disability services, and crisis support through the Quezon City Protection Center.

To guarantee effective implementation, the ordinance mandates the formation of a Technical Working Sub-Committee under the leadership of the QC Pride Council, in coordination with the QC Gender and Development Council and District Pride Councils.