- Communicable diseases / Epidemics / Pertussis

QC declares ‘whooping cough’ outbreak

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The Quezon City government yesterday declared an outbreak of pertussis, commonly known as “whooping cough,” following an upsurge in cases of the respiratory disease.

From January to March 20, the city government recorded 23 cases of pertussis, including four deaths.

No case of the respiratory tract illness was registered in the city during the same period last year. But a total of 27 cases and three deaths were reported for 2023.

At a press briefing yesterday, Mayor Joy Belmonte said the number of reported pertussis cases so far this year is enough to declare an outbreak.

The local government will mobilize its assets and resources to stop the spread of the disease, Belmonte said.

“There is no need to panic. We are making this announcement to make everyone more prepared,” she said. “Our declaration (of an outbreak) is an assurance that we are on top of the situation. We will do whatever it takes to curb the spread of the disease.”

Belmonte said city hall would procure the needed vaccines to keep children safe until supplies from the Department of Health arrive.

According to the city health department, pertussis is a highly contagious respiratory infection that can be transmitted through exposure to an infected person or contaminated items, including clothes and utensils.

Its symptoms are persistent cough for two or more weeks, mild fever and runny nose.

The city government advised residents, especially families with unvaccinated children to avail themselves of the routine DPT (diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus) vaccine.

The city’s Epidemiology and Disease Surveillance Division will administer prophylaxis to probable patients infected with pertussis.

Belmonte ordered the emergency procurement of vaccines and antibiotics for treatment of cases and provision of prophylaxis to close contacts.