- Monkeypox

Quezon City reports first mpox case

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The Quezon City government reported on Saturday that it has recorded its first case of mpox (previously known as monkeypox), a week after the Department of Health (DoH) announced the country's first case this year.

The patient, a 37-year-old man and resident of Quezon City, is currently admitted at San Lazaro Hospital. He began exhibiting symptoms on 16 August, 2024, and was admitted to the hospital six days later.

Medical personnel collected the patient's specimen and sent it to the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM). On 26 August, the results confirmed a positive diagnosis.

Based on the initial case investigation report by the Quezon City Health Department's (QCHD) Epidemiology and Surveillance Division (QCESD), the patient has a recent history of local travel.

"As of now, we are closely monitoring the condition of the patient. We have identified 15 contacts, and they are under continuous observation," Mayor Joy Belmonte said.

In addition to the city's first mpox case, the QCESD is also monitoring individuals who were exposed at Infinity Spa and Fahrenheit Club, both of which have been temporarily closed by the city government.

Since detecting the first mpox case this year, the city has activated its prevention, control, and response protocols. All healthcare workers in the city have also undergone training in reporting and handling mpox cases.

Mayor Belmonte urged establishment owners to cooperate with the city's contact tracing efforts to curb the spread of the virus and ensure the safety and welfare of QCitizens.

To streamline and strengthen the city's response to mpox, the city government has established the
QC Task Force MPOX through Executive Order 14, series of 2024, consisting of various city government departments and offices.
Meanwhile, the Ospital ng Maynila Medical Center (OMMC) has assured the public of its readiness to handle potential mpox cases.
Dr. Marlon Arcegono, vice chairperson of the OMMC Infection Prevention and Control Unit, said that proactive measures are now underway to prepare for possible mpox cases at the hospital.
"We will request mpox vaccines from the Department of Health to ensure that our staff in the ER and dermatology departments are protected, as they are the most likely to encounter patients with mpox. While we await the vaccines from the DoH, we will implement protocols to safeguard our personnel and patients," Dr. Arcegono said.
"Our advice to every Manileño is to exercise extra caution with skin-to-skin contact. Let's remind everyone that mpox is not airborne; it is transmitted through direct skin contact. To protect yourself, wear long sleeves, a jacket, or arm coverings. If you've been out all day for work or school, it's best to take a shower and change into fresh clothes before hugging your loved ones. This is an effective way to guard against many types of germs. When engaging in sexual activity, ensure your partner has no pox or lesions on their skin," Arcegono also said.
The OMMC said it is committed to being fully prepared and equipped to respond effectively if mpox cases are detected.
Arcegono advised the public to take all necessary precautions and adhere to the protocols set by the government and the health department to prevent mpox.
He noted that lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic should be applied to prevent the spread of mpox in the community.
"Vigilance and adherence to universal precautions are crucial," Dr. Arcegono said. "Do not believe in myths or superstitions, and avoid consulting albularyos and quack healers if you have symptoms of mpox. It's important to seek help from doctors like us here at OMMC for the right treatment," Dr. Arcegono emphasized.
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