- Food—caloric content

Calorie counts on menus required for QC restaurants

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Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte has approved an ordinance that will require restaurants, fastfood chains and other food establishments to publish the calorie count of food items on their menus.

During a press briefing on March 21, Belmonte said the calorie labeling policy would soon be required in the city to help citizens make informed food choices.

"With calorie labeling, QCitizens have the power to make healthier food choices because they have the correct information," she said in Filipino.

The mayor clarified that carinderias and small eatery owners should not be worried as they are not covered by the policy.

"The ordinance does not cover small food establishments. But we will give them incentives if they voluntarily include calorie count in their menus," she added.

Based on the policy approved by the city council, the first year of implementation would cover restaurants or food businesses that are part of a food chain or franchise with five or more branches in the country.

The second year would cover the same businesses with two or more branches, while all restaurants or food businesses in the city should implement the ordinance on its third year.

Barangay micro businesses and micro, small and medium enterprises like ambulant vendors, hawkers and carinderia owners are exempted from the policy.

Based on data from the city health department, almost one in every five adult residents suffers from high blood pressure.

In 2018, data also showed that almost 20 percent of school children and 43 percent of adults were found to be overweight or obese.

The city is part of the Partnership for Healthy Cities, a network of 73 cities committed to save lives by preventing noncommunicable diseases and injuries by delivering high-impact policy or interventions in their communities.

Among its commitments in the partnership is to build "a food environment that will improve the overall health of its residents."