# 11,515 QC residents tested for COVID

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The Quezon City government has tested 11,515 residents for COVID-19 who were found in contact tracing measures by local health authorities from Dec. 14 to 19.

In a statement yesterday, the City Epidemiology and Disease Surveillance Unit (CESU) said it surpassed the national government's weekly target of 7,500 swabbed individuals.

"We were able to reach as many residents as needed and exceeded the National Task Force's target by 53 percent because of our continuous expansion in terms of contact tracing and testing," CESU chief Rolando Cruz said.

"This is our response as we observed an increase in the number of COVID-19 cases during the holiday season," he added.

Cruz said they were swabbing more residents, especially market vendors and grocery employees due to the expected surge of Christmas shoppers.

The city has around 1,800 trained contact tracers, according to the local government.

Joseph Juico, head of the local task group on COVID- 19, said they have reached the ideal 1: 30 contact- traced individuals in the past week.

"At one point, we were at 1:30 ratio but given the increase of positive cases, we are now at 1:24 ratio, which is still a feat. The more people we trace, the faster we stop the transmission of the virus," Juico said.

City officials reiterated their call for the people to observe basic health protocols, especially during the holiday season. Mayor Joy Belmonte also appealed to the residents to defer visits to relatives and consider holding online Christmas parties.

Meanwhile, the city government has ramped up efforts to rescue street dwellers on major thoroughfares and bring them home to their respective barangays or provinces to protect them from acquiring COVID-19.

Belmonte said the city has reached out to 425 street dwellers, including indigenous people. The local government has helped 276 homeless persons return to their provinces.

"We make sure that in one or two days, they can head home. We arrange for their documents such as medical certificates and travel passes so they can return to their provinces," Belmonte said.