QC gov't passes 1st genderinclusive health ordinance in PH

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The Quezon City government passed an ordinance aimed at making public healthcare services more accessible and responsive to the needs of LGBTQIA+ individuals, becoming the first local government unit in the country to institutionalize gender-inclusive health policies.

The gender-inclusive health ordinance was introduced by Councilors Bernard Herrera and Dorothy Delarmente, mandating that all cityrun health facilities offer services respectful and affirming of patients' gender identity and expression.

"This groundbreaking ordinance reaffirms Quezon City's commitment to a healthcare system that is truly inclusive," Mayor Joy Belmonte said in a statement.

"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," she added.

These include gender-affirming consultations, mental health support tailored to transgender and gender-diverse individuals, and referrals to appropriate medical specialists.

The ordinance also bans conversion therapy and other practices intended to suppress a person's sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression, declaring them unlawful and harmful within Quezon City.

"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," Belmonte said.

In addition to expanding healthcare services, the ordinance integrates gender-affirming practices into existing city programs such as HIV/AIDS prevention, support for persons with disabilities, and crisis intervention. The Quezon City Protection Center will serve as one of the main implementing agencies.

The implementing rules and regulations (IRR) are expected to be finalized within 60 days through a consultative process involving medical experts, LGBTQIA+ groups, and civil society organizations.