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Baguio eyes banning discrimination vs. unvaxxed folks

By Liza Agoot January 28, 2022, 12:25 pm

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(File photo)

BAGUIO CITY – The city council has passed on first reading a proposed ordinance that will prohibit the discrimination of individuals who have not been vaccinated from receiving services and goods.

Jordan Habbiling, Baguio City Council information officer, in a media statement on Friday, said the ordinance authored by Councilor Mylen Victoria Yaranon will declare as unlawful to discriminate against “vaccine-free” residents or to coerce them to get vaccinated.

“They shall be allowed to buy essential goods, access essential services, use public transport, and do outdoor activities within their properties,” Habbiling said, quoting the proposed ordinance.

He said the measure which was referred to the Committee on Health and Sanitation, Ecology, and Environmental Protection for review during the last legislative session also mentioned that the unvaccinated workers must not also be forced to be vaccinated but can be asked to comply with Labor Advisory No. 03-2021 of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) requiring the regular submission of a negative reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) test or antigen test results every two weeks at their expense before being allowed to do onsite work.

It also provides that “refusal to get vaccinated should not be taken against a person nor should it be a cause for discrimination in terms of tenure, promotion, training, pay, and other benefits among others, nor should it be a cause for termination from employment.”

The advisory further reiterates that a ‘no vaccine, no work policy’ shall not be allowed.

Habbiling said based on the proposed ordinance, the RT-PCR or antigen testing, however, shall not be required under the following conditions: the unvaxxed employee presents a medical certificate recommending that they shall not be vaccinated; they present a certificate of membership of a religious denomination that does not allow its members to be vaccinated, or they are partially vaccinated and are waiting for their second dose.

Meantime, the measure also urged the City Health Services Office (CHSO) to adopt in its Covid-19 vaccination program an information drive on the risks involved and put into place an adverse event reporting system to document potential side effects of the vaccine.

“This is to help residents make an informed consent on whether to get vaccinated or not,” the proposed ordinance stated. *(PNA)*

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