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Ospital ng Malabon to open human milk bank

MANILA, Philippines — Mothers in Malabon City who are unable to produce breast milk will no longer have to resort to baby formula with the opening of the Ospital ng Malabon’s human milk bank in September.

Dr. Mitzi Tanchoco, hospital medical director, told the Inquirer that the milk bank would give infants immediate access to breast milk in emergencies. Premature and undernourished babies would also benefit from its opening.

The Ospital ng Malabon was just waiting for its “mother-baby friendly” accreditation from the Department of Health so that it could open the human milk bank, she said.

Equipment ready

The hospital recently received the equipment it needed to operate the milk bank, including a pasteurization machine, human milk analyzer, peristaltic pump and freezer. These were donations from local Rotary International chapters.

“Our hospital is new [but] we have a certificate of commitment and we are one step away from becoming mother-baby friendly,” Tanchoco said.

The milk bank will get its supply through donations from lactating mothers. Malabon will hold a breastfeeding drive in its barangay health centers.

The collected milk will be analyzed, sterilized and pasteurized. If treated properly, it can be stored for a year.

While human milk banks supply breast milk for emergency situations, Ospital ng Malabon will also provide milk for infants whose mothers are sick or unable to breastfeed.

Free for residents

Residents will get the breast milk for free but the hospital will charge nonresidents. Tanchoco said they were looking at P300 to P500 per 88 milligrams, the usual price charged by other human milk banks.

“We expect mommies from Caloocan and Navotas to come here since it’s the only milk bank in the Camanava area, aside from Valenzuela City,” she added.