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Quick action to address meningitis urged

THE Philippine Foundation for Vaccination (PFV), in partnership with government organizations, medical societies, nongovernment organizations, academe, the Confederation of Meningitis Organization and the Pasay City Health Office, urged the public to seek immediate medical advice when they see signs or symptoms of meningitis.

“Meningitis is the inflammation of the protective membranes that cover our brain and spinal cord,” explained PFV Executive Director Lulu Bravo.

“It could be bacterial or viral, although there are also fungal forms of the disease. Bacterial meningitis, though rare, is the most serious form and without prompt treatment could cause paralysis, stroke, seizures, sepsis (severe blood infection) and even death,” she said.

Bravo added that even if a patient recovers from meningitis, other health problems might rise owing to the damage it causes to the brain. Among these are memory loss, permanent blurry vision, blindness and hearing loss.

But despite decreasing cases of meningitis in the country, Bravo reminded Filipinos to not be complacent about the potential danger they face.

According to PFV President Shelley Ann de la Vega, the most effective way to protect one’s self against certain types of bacterial meningitis is to get vaccinated, which doctors had proven to be very safe.

“This annual campaign encourages individuals, families and communities to learn the signs and symptoms of meningitis, the need to urgently treat the disease, and the fact that prevention is available through vaccination against some forms of meningitis,” she said.

De la Vega also explained the case of meningococemia, symptoms of which were not readily recognizable and often were mistaken for a bad case of the flu. The family should always suspect the worst if a member begins to exhibit anxiety, fever, headache, irritability, muscle pain, nausea and presence of rash with red or purple spots.

In celebration of the World Meningitis Day on April 24, as well as the World Immunization Week from April 24 to 30, the foundation conducted vaccination among children, a zumba fitness routine and a meningitis lay forum.