INOCULATION BLUES

LAWMAKER CALLS OUT ‘PALAKASAN’ IN VACCINE ALLOCATION

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A lawmaker has criticized the supposed “palakasan” or preferential treatment in the “chaotic” allocation of COVID-19 vaccines in the country and called for a systematic and scientific method of distribution.

At the same time, House senior deputy minority leader and Iloilo First District Rep. Janette Garin urged vaccine czar Carlito Galvez Jr. to be “honest” instead of pointing to the Department of Health as the one in charge of vaccine allocation.

“Why don’t we give the vaccines because that is for prevention? And why do we base it on who calls you up, who is a friend of whom or who is angry? There’s no problem with that, but not at the expense of other areas that are wanting vaccines and other beneficiaries who need their second dose,” she said at a press conference on Wednesday.

Garin, a former health secretary, observed that Galvez seemed to be acting like a “fireman” who was using vaccines to stop the surge of COVID-19 in some areas.

“That is not how our vaccines should work ... Vaccines are supposed to be for prevention. Remember that if we are going to base it on the number of cases in a certain place, then we should no longer isolate. Let’s just allow the cases to increase so that we could also be entitled to more vaccines. Clearly, this is a big disincentive,” she said.

Come up with formula
Garin also called out the “palakasan” or preferential treatment in vaccine allocation for areas visited or inspected by Galvez and testing czar Vince Dizon.

“What is happening is that if you call them up, Dizon and Galvez will visit you and your area gets vaccines. If they cannot visit your area, you will have to wait,” she said.

According to her, Galvez told her to “wait your turn” as the government was prioritizing areas with surges of infection.

“I cannot accept to the order of Galvez to ‘wait for your turn, we are just catering to cities with surges,’” she said.

She added that people outside Metro Manila had been patient while the National Capital Region was being prioritized but the inequitable distribution and chaotic allocation never stops.” INQ