



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
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Delay in Sputnik V delivery worries vaccinees

By HANNAH L. TORREGOZA

House Deputy Speaker Rufus Rodriguez urged the government to accelerate efforts to get more Sputnik V coronavirus vaccines into the country as takers of the Russian-made jabs fear losing the efficacy of

the first dose they got.

Rodriguez said almost 300,000 Filipinos who were inoculated with Sputnik V are still waiting for their second dose and they fear their first shot would soon lose its efficacy.

The Cagayan de Oro City's second district representative said some of

his constituents have complained about the long delay in the arrival of the second dose of the vaccines.

"I have more than 12,000 of these vaccine takers who received their first jab in June and who were supposed to get the second shot in July. It is now September ▶ 8





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and there is still no supply," Rodriguez said Wednesday, Sept. 15.

"I suppose this sense of fear, anxiety and uncertainty is shared by the more than 270,000 other Filipinos who had no choice but to take the Russian vaccine because that was the one delivered to vaccination centers like those in Cagayan de Oro by the Department of Health (DOH)," Rodriguez lamented.

The lawmaker said he has written Health Secretary Francisco Duque III and vaccine czar Secretary Carlito Galvez appealing for the immediate delivery of Sputnik V to his city and other areas that received their first shipment.

Rodriguez pointed out it was the government who urged Filipinos not to be selective and that they should get

whatever vaccine is available.

"Our constituents were forced to take Sputnik V because no other vaccine was available. But now they are in limbo and in fear. The government has left them hanging," he said.

If the government cannot guarantee that vaccine supply from Russia is forthcoming, the solon said the government should come up with a contingency plan for those who received their first shot of Sputnik V.

"They should say so if our people will get Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca, or another jab as their second shot, or if they would repeat their vaccination all over again," Rodriguez said.

'Unfortunate, unsatisfactory'

The World Health Organization

(WHO) likewise urged the Philippine government to intensify its efforts in vaccinating its elderly population against the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), describing the rollout of the vaccination program for senior citizens as "unfortunate" and "unsatisfactory."

"We have made progress but unfortunately, the progress in the Philippines has been painfully slow," said WHO Country Representative to the Philippines Dr. Rabindra Abeyasinghe in a public press briefing on Tuesday,

Sept. 14

Abeyasinghe said "nearly 3.6 million elderly people" in the country still have not received a single dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. "This is unfortunate, it's unsatisfactory," he said.

He said seven in 10 "deaths in the Philippines are reported in this group of above 60."

"There are areas in the country where the elderly vaccination coverage is just over 24 percent. This is unsatisfactory. We need to correct this as quickly as possible because we're

seeing a surge affecting many other regions. Many regions in the Philippines — the elderly coverage is still below 40 percent," said Abeyasinghe.

Vaccinating the elderly can help protect them from developing a severe disease.

"We need to do better and we urge local chief executives and local health authorities to prioritize, to create avenues so most elderly people can be vaccinated and their lives protected," he said. (With a report from Analou De Vera)

