

DOH sets school checks for vaccinated kids

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Health Secretary Francisco Duque III said he was set to conduct surprise inspections in schools where the controversial dengue vaccine program was rolled out as part of the Department of Health's (DOH) monitoring of more than 830,000 children who had been given Dengvaxia.

Duque said the school visits in Marikina, Pampanga, Cavite and Cebu would begin next week to check if DOH regional offices had implemented the department's awareness campaigns, like a plan to put up posters with crucial pieces of information on dengue immunization.

"We will do a program visitation, we will begin unannounced visit to schools so that the DOH people on the ground will know what DOH central office has put them to task,"

said the health chief in a forum on Friday.

Right size, spacing

Duque added that he would check whether the posters placed in classrooms complied with the required size and distance from each other.

He also said it was important not only to propagate information but also ensure the message was understood on posters that carried the department's "4S" dengue prevention campaign—search and destroy, self-protection, seek early consultation and say "No" to indiscriminate fogging.

In coordination with the Department of Education, all students vaccinated with Dengvaxia will be given letters containing updates on the vaccine and reminders about what dengue symptoms to watch out for, according to Health Undersecretary Rolando Enrique Domingo.

Domingo also said the DOH had already urged Sanofi Pasteur, manufacturer of the dengue vaccine, to come up with a test kit that would determine if a child's blood has dengue virus "so we can know which kids are at risk."

Dangerous

The health agency halted its massive dengue vaccine program, launched in April 2016, after the French pharmaceutical firm released an advisory saying its vaccine could cause severe dengue symptoms among those who had no previous exposure to the virus.

It has also formed a panel of experts from Philippine General Hospital that would study the circumstances behind the deaths of 14 children who were given the anti-dengue vaccine under the government's immunization program. INQ

* DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (DOH)
* VACCINATION - DENGVAXIA