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SC seeks comment of DOH, DEPED, DILG on Dengvaxia monitoring

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**T**he Supreme Court (SC) ordered on Wednesday three government agencies to comment on a petition for continuing mandamus on the monitoring of children injected with Dengvaxia vaccine and the provision of free medical services and treatment if needed.

In a press briefing, SC spokesman Theodore O. Te said the Department of Health (DOH), Department of Education (DepEd), and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) were given 10 days to comment

on the petition filed by Gabriela Party-list led by Rep. Emmi de Jesus and the Association for the Rights of Children in Southeast Asia (ARCSEA).

Sought to be monitored by the three departments are all the more than 800,000 children in villages and regions who were injected with the vaccine.

The petitioners wanted the SC to compel the setting up of a registry of children who were injected with the vaccine to facilitate the delivery of the medical services needed.

The free medical services sought were for check-ups, consultations, medical treatment and blood tests.

In the petition, the SC was told to require the three departments to give free medical services until final determination by competent scientific experts that the threats posed by the Dengvaxia vaccine have been minimized or eliminated.

"These free medical services shall continue until it would have been determined and declared by competent medical and/or scientific experts that the threat/s brought about by the Dengvaxia vaccine have been minimized or eliminated," the petitioners said.

The petitioners also asked the SC

to compel the government through the DOH's designated task force to monitor and review the school-based immunization program involving the Dengvaxia vaccine and submit them to the Senate and House Committees on Health, which are conducting inquiries on the matter.

They also wanted the DOH to study and review further the safety and efficacy of Dengvaxia and to make public the results.

"There are reports that the DOH will provide monetary compensation to those who were inoculated with Dengvaxia. However, petitioners

maintain their position that monetary rewards are not enough to compensate for the injury brought to them by this medical scandal," they added.

"What is important for them is that they be ensured immediate and free medical attention and services in their medical needs that are attributable to the Dengvaxia vaccine," they stressed.

Earlier, the government had stopped the dengue immunization program using the Dengvaxia vaccine after admission by its manufacturer that the use of the vaccine must be strictly limited due to evidence that it can worsen the disease in people who have not previously been exposed to dengue.

"The horrors and risks being posed right now by the vaccine, which has been haphazardly administered to around 800,000 children, should be enough for the justices to act with urgency on our petition," De Jesus said after filing the petition.

- \* SUPREME COURT
- \* VACCINATION
- + DOH
- \* DEPED
- \* DILG