

DOJ chides groups for complaint vs Dengvaxia mess

By EVELYN MACAIRAN

The Department of Justice (DOJ) panel of prosecutors yesterday reprimanded lawyers of the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption (VACC) and Vanguard of the Philippine Constitution Inc. (VPCI) for giving incomplete information and documents against those allegedly responsible for the Dengvaxia fiasco.

Senior Assistant State Prosecu-

tor Rossane Balauag told the VACC and VPCI lawyers, led by Manuelito Luna, that while they provided the names of the 20 respondents including former president Benigno Aquino III, former health secretary Janette Garin and former budget secretary Florencio Abad, they failed to give the addresses of these individuals.

"The panel would first evaluate the documents to be submitted by the VACC and VPCI.

It is only after these have been submitted when the panel will decide if the respondents would be subpoenaed."

The complainants also asked that the members of the board of directors of Dengvaxia manufacturer Sanofi Pasteur and its local distributor, Zuelig Pharma, be included in the list of respondents.

But the prosecutors required them to provide specific names and addresses.

While it was earlier reported that the VACC and VPCI asked the panel to summon officials of Sanofi and Zuelig, they did not specify their phone numbers, names and addresses.

Balauag said the panel also declined the groups' request to subpoena documents from seven agencies, including the Food and Drug Administration and Department of Health, pertaining to the results of their investigation on

the anti-dengue vaccination program because "the panel does not collect documents" for them.

Luna withdrew their request for the subpoena of the documents, saying they already have them in their possession after these had been submitted to the Commission on Elections (Comelec) for its own probe into the Dengvaxia controversy.

The poll body is determining if Aquino and other officials violated election laws that ban government projects 45 days prior to an election. The VACC is also the complainant at the Comelec.

Luna asked that secretariat and record officers of the Senate Blue Ribbon committee and the Senate committee on health and demography be summoned.

The preliminary investigation is set on April 20.

- * DOJ - Dept. of Justice
- * Vaccination - Dengvaxia