

No 'meningo' outbreak in QC, just one patient

By Rio N. Araja

A QUEZON City government official on Thursday said there is no outbreak of the deadly meningococemia virus in the locality.

Novaliches District Hospital medical director Olivia Favor, however, said there was one patient with the disease.

“There was no outbreak at all. Everything is under control,” Favor said.

A picture of an 11-year-old boy, supposedly infected with meningococemia and confined at the NDH, went viral, along with a photograph of Favor’s memorandum ordering the closure of the hospital’s emergency room for quarantine and decontamination.

“The shutdown was a normal preventive measure. The risk has never been considered a threat,” said Favor’s message posted on the city government’s Facebook account.

“It was closed for 24 hours for appropriate decontamination of all the equipment used on the said patient. Preventive treatment was also given to persons who were exposed to the patient. It was a single case, and not an outbreak,” she added.

According to the city government, the “temporary shutdown of the emergency room of the NDH was a biosafety measure after a patient was taken to hospital for treatment last Jan. 4. The patient was immediately transferred to a specialized facility for treatment and isolation.”

Meanwhile, Vice Mayor Joy Belmonte on Thursday backed the passage of the HIV and AIDS Policy Act to strengthen the government's response in addressing the increasing number of human immunodeficiency virus and Acquired Immunodeficiency Disease.

She lauded President Rodrigo Duterte's signing of the law designed to make health services more accessible to HIV patients.

"I am happy that a more updated law for HIV/AIDS was finally signed. As an advocate of reproductive health, I commend the administration for addressing this issue since the number of HIV cases has increased exponentially," she said.

"This law reflects the administration's concern for those who are diagnosed with this disease. I hope through this, more people will turn to the government and get themselves checked because the assistance is now made more accessible," Belmonte added.

Last Jan. 8, the President signed Republic Act 11166 or the Philippine HIV and AIDS Policy Act mandating the government to deliver more assistance and treatment to persons living with HIV, and to eliminate the stigma and discrimination to patients.

In October last year, the vice mayor vowed to intensify the city's education and awareness campaign, especially to high school students, saying people living in big cities, such as in Quezon City, were the most vulnerable in terms of sexual infections.