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50% of vaccinees miss second dose – IATF expert

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4-5 minutes

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MANILA, Philippines — About 50 percent of the country’s vaccinees have missed their second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, an expert from the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) revealed yesterday.

IATF data analyst and epidemiologist John Wong said some 2.1 million individuals who already received their first dose of the vaccine “should have come back by now for their second dose.”

But so far, only about a million vaccinees have returned to get their second shot, said Wong.

“So maybe about half of the people who have taken their first dose are missing out on their second dose, so we have to follow up on

these people,” he told a town hall session organized by the Department of Health (DOH).

Data showed that from March 1 to May 29, a total of 3,101,559 million individuals received their first shot of vaccine against COVID-19.

While the same number is supposed to return for their second dose, only 1.07 million or about half of the 2.1 million who should have already completed their two-dose inoculation have turned up at vaccination sites to date, Wong said.

He said they have yet to determine why these vaccinees failed to get their second jab.

At present, five vaccine brands are available in the country and each should be given in two doses. These include Sinovac, AstraZeneca, Pfizer-BioNtech and Gamaleya.

Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire underscored the need to complete the two-dose vaccination for full protection against COVID-19.

“All our experts are saying that the first dose is really not enough. You need to get your second dose because it provides you with maximum protection of the vaccine,” she said.

Vergeire added those who missed their scheduled second dose can just go to their vaccination sites to get inoculated again.

‘70 M Pinoys by yearend’

Yesterday, vaccine czar Carlito Galvez Jr. maintained optimism in reaching the government’s target of vaccinating 70 million Filipinos or 70 percent of the population against COVID-19 by the end of

the year.

Speaking with ANC, Galvez said he sees the target attainable with more vaccination sites set to be put up and the bulk of COVID-19 vaccines arriving in the coming weeks and months.?

“We will open up this coming Friday the Solaire. They can inoculate 3,000 to 6,000 a day. In August, we will open up our general public for inoculation,” he said, adding that the country expects the arrival of about 9.95 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines this month.

While the government has activated 3,000 vaccination sites nationwide, Galvez said the systematic approach is to inoculate 30 million of the most vulnerable and most active population first.

“Once we are able to get that, at least we will have population containment, disease containment,” explained the National Task Force against COVID-19 chief implementer, citing the experience of countries like Israel, the United States and the United Kingdom upon vaccinating 30 percent of their respective populations.

“We have seen the threshold that once we get the 30 percent (of the total population), it’s good. We can open up some restrictions. And then at 50 percent, we see that we can open up fully the economy. But still, our target is, because we have the numbers, we can still do 70 percent of our population by the end of the year,”

Galvez said. – **Jose Rodel Clapano, Cecille Suerte Felipe, Alexis Romero**

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