

'Sensitive details on GMA health private'

By MARVIN SY

Malacañang denied that it was hiding the true health condition of President Arroyo but insisted "sensitive details" should be kept private.

Interviewed over *Radyo ng Bayan*, deputy presidential spokeswoman Lorelei Fajardo said the President herself had allowed public disclosure of pertinent details regarding her check-

up at the Asian Hospital earlier this week.

What was revealed to Palace reporters by Press Secretary Cerge Remonde last Friday was that the President had undergone a biopsy as a follow-up to her checkup last month.

"I have not seen all of the medical reports of the doctors. Whatever she

felt was important and had to be revealed to the public, these were revealed by Secretary Cerge (Remonde)," Fajardo said.

"I'm sure it's not that big an issue or problem, or anything that important that it had to be disclosed to the public," she added.

Turn to Page 8

Sensitive

From Page 1

Remonde said that before the President left for Japan last month, she had an MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) at the Asian Hospital as part of her regular gynecological check-up.

He said the MRI showed lumps in her breast and groin, which made it necessary for her to undergo a biopsy.

As certified by the President's gynecologist and attending physician at the Asian Hospital, Dr. Ma. Theresa Tankeko-Lopez, the lumps were benign and Mrs. Arroyo was discharged with a clean bill of health.

As for the other details of her checkup, including the reported removal of leaking breast implants, Fajardo said

these were very sensitive and private matters for the President and did not have to be disclosed.

She said the news that came out about the President's Asian Hospital visit were disrespectful of her as a woman and of the position she represents.

"Sometimes it's as if we forget that Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is still our President, the highest member of government and she is still representing the country," Fajardo said.

"So we should be careful sometimes about the things we say because we should never forget that again, we are not just talking about Gloria Arroyo as a person, but also as President of this country," she added.

"We should not make a big deal out of this. There is nothing to hide and I think the people can see for themselves the physical condition of the President when she goes out this Sunday," Fajardo said.

She said the President has some activities lined up for today but declined to elaborate because her schedule is not final yet.

Fajardo said the President would most likely want to make up for missed appointments and other activities as a result of her self-quarantine after her several foreign trips.

"The cancelled activities could be included in this Sunday's schedule. But for sure she will have activities this Sunday and she would be seen by the people," Fajardo said.

She said there would be def-

initely be changes in the President's work habits.

"The President is not used to being idle and staying in the Palace," she said.

Makati City Mayor and United Opposition president Jejomar Binay has criticized the Palace for its reported lack of transparency on the President's health.

But Sen. Loren Legarda, who is also a strong critic of the administration, defended Mrs. Arroyo's Asian Hospital stay and cried "foul" over reports on the President's breast implant.

"I think it's the right of everyone, whether you are a president or not, to have a checkup," Legarda said. "That thing about the breast implant, that's already foul. That's a bit too much already."

- With Christina Mendez