

## CHINA

## Coronavirus Outbreak

# People nationwide come together to help Wuhan

Individuals from all walks of life are contributing to the fight against the deadly disease. **Yang Zekun** reports.

**‘W**e are in a war against the coronavirus — there is no good reason to run away when you can be a fighter.’

That's what Zhang Zhan, a doctor from Wuhan, Hubei province, was thinking when she volunteered to work at the forefront of the "battlefield" against the coronavirus outbreak, which started in the city.

Before the outbreak, Zhang was a senior doctor in the outpatient clinic of the Department of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine of Renmin Hospital at Wuhan University. She does not know when she will return to her old job.

Faced with a rising number of confirmed cases at the hospital, Zhang volunteered to work in the observation room, where she would meet and interact with a large number of infected patients. That would place her at greater risk of becoming infected.

Zhang is an experienced doctor. She worked at Guangdong Second Provincial General Hospital in Guangzhou, Guangdong's capital, treating patients infected during the 2003 outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome.

As a result, she was fully aware of the risk of becoming infected with the coronavirus, especially as medical supplies such as face masks were in short supply.

She said being a long-stay doctor in the observation room allows her to observe the patients constantly and eases the burden on the other doctors — who rotate shifts in the observation room — as she provides the lion's share of the treatment.

"As a doctor, the battlefield can be everywhere," Zhang said in a petition she wrote when she volunteered for the job. She decided not to tell her husband about the petition, as he is a neurosurgeon at the same hospital and she didn't want him to worry about her.

Zhang submitted her application on Jan 18 and quickly obtained approval from hospital authorities. That was when life began to get hectic.

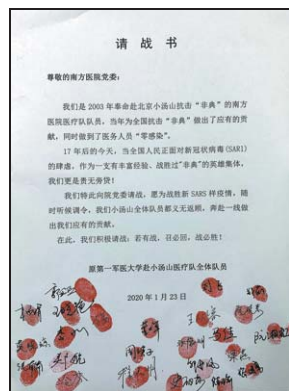
## Hectic working life

Since then, she has worked 8 am to 5 pm most days, but has also rotated to work night shifts. On a normal working day, she makes as many as 50 phone calls, checks more than 40 units and attends numerous emergency consultations. She has only taken one break while on duty, having rested for just 10 minutes at noon on Jan 20, when she had hypoglycemia.

Zhang often attends clinical treatment meetings during the day and conducts related research at night. She keeps thinking about the cases



Medical professionals from Nanfang Hospital in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, pose for a photo before heading to Wuhan, Hubei province, to help fight the novel coronavirus last month. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



A written request by a medical team to battle the virus. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

and writing down her thoughts at work, and later shares her experience with front-line doctors.

Her intense schedule is reflected in her log.

"January 19, night shift: I took charge of both the fever clinic and the observation room on the second floor. I began answering consultation calls before it was time for work. From 5 pm to 10:45 pm, there were 24 medical calls," Zhang wrote.

"Of course, I (worked hard) trying to understand the causes and come up with personalized treatment plans for those infected. There could be similarities in the treatment of the unexplained pneumonia. Although we don't have a proven, effective treatment for the coronavirus, it won't stop us from offering all the treatment we can to the patients."

## Commitment

She is not alone in her fight. Since the outbreak started, more than 7,000 employees of Zhang's hospital and tens of thousands of medical personnel from across the country have committed themselves to fighting the epidemic. Many gave up

their Spring Festival holidays to join the battle.

As of 8 pm on Feb 5, a total of 107 medical teams and 10,596 medical team members were assisting with prevention and treatment work in Hubei, including 9,061 medical team members in Wuhan.

Sun Chunxuan, a male nurse from Jiangsu province, volunteered to go to Wuhan when he heard that the Jiangsu government was recruiting local medical staff members to support the stricken city.

He even postponed his wedding after discussing the matter with his fiancée, a doctor who runs a clinical laboratory at a hospital. In turn, she volunteered to work at fever clinics in Nanjing, Jiangsu's capital.

"We have no regrets about our decision. We will marry when I return home after our victory," Sun said.

In addition to medical staff members, hundreds of thousands of people are actively seeking ways to make a contribution, either on the front line or through donations of money, food, face masks and other items, either from their homes or workplaces.

On Jan 28, about 45 sanitation workers in Wuhan volunteered to help clean local hospitals.

Cao Yinxu, a 47-year-old who has worked in the sector for 12 years, was one of them. Last year, the industry veteran participated in cleaning work at several major events, including the World Fly-in Expo and the World Military Games, which were both held in Wuhan.

Cao said she and her colleagues were well-prepared for the task. "If there's anything I can do to help, I will certainly try," she said, adding that she had to persuade her son that she would be OK, as he was strongly opposed to her decision initially.

When he heard about the spread of the coronavirus, Muhammad Usman Janjua, 29, who lectures in clinical internal medicine at Changsha Medical University in Hunan province, wrote to the authorities and asked for permission to join the fight in Wuhan.

Having arrived in China in 2007, the Pakistan-born practitioner graduated from Hunan University of Chinese Medicine with a bachelor's in 2012. He joined the Central South



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**Sun Chunxuan**, male nurse from Jiangsu province, who postponed his wedding and volunteered to go to work in Wuhan

University in Changsha to study for a master's in internal medicine in 2016, and became a lecturer at the medical university after finishing grad school.

"It is a doctor's duty and mission to heal the wounded and assist the dying. I am still awaiting approval. If I cannot go to Wuhan, I will do my best to help the hospital in Changsha and the students at the university, and give a professional interpretation of the virus and psychological counseling to overseas students," he said.

## Donations

Earlier this month, a series of photos made waves online. They were taken after people from a village in Henan province donated 50 metric tons of green Chinese onions to epidemic-stricken areas. Despite the residents' low incomes, more than 300 of them helped to harvest the onions and donate them to Hubei.

Similarly, people from a mountain village in Yunnan province donated 22 tons of bananas to Wuhan, with hundreds of residents transporting the fruit down the mountain on motorcycles. Moreover, many truck drivers have supported Hubei by delivering necessities such as food from other areas to places hit by the epidemic.

Doctors, nurses, teachers, sanitation workers, farmers, truck drivers and construction workers: Those groups and others have all made concerted efforts to support the people of Hubei. By Feb 1, the province had received donations of about 7 billion yuan (\$1 billion), according to the local government.

As of Feb 7, central government departments, along with other provinces and cities, had provided more than 10 million items of medical equipment for Hubei, while private individuals from all walks of life had donated more than 10 million pieces of protective medical equipment to help the province in its fight against the virus.

Contact the writer at yangzekun@chinadaily.com.cn

## Medics and public servants volunteer to take their places on the front line

### We will fight to win

*A written request to help fight the novel coronavirus, made by members of the Xiaotangshan medical team at the former First Military Medical University — now part of Nanfang Hospital in Guangzhou, Guangdong province — on Jan 23. The team members referred to their old hospital's name to emphasize their experience and abilities.*

Dear Party Committee of Nanfang Hospital.

We were members of the Nanfang Hospital medical team that was sent to Beijing's Xiaotangshan Hospital (an "instant infirmary" built quickly to treat patients infected with severe acute respiratory syndrome) in 2003 to fight SARS. That year, we made our due contribution to the national fight against SARS, and we

managed to ensure that no medical personnel became infected.

Now, 17 years later, people across the country are facing the ravages of the new coronavirus. So, as a group with rich experience that defeated SARS, we are duty-bound to help!

We hereby apply to the Party Committee of the hospital to allow us to help fight the new epidemic. We are ready to be at your disposal at any time, and every team member is willing to go to the front line to make a contribution.

Here, we actively ask to join the fight against the epidemic, if the need arises. We will answer the call to serve and will fight to win!

### I want to ease the burden on other doctors

*Application from Zhang Zhan, physician in the Department of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine of Renmin Hospital at Wuhan University, on Jan 18.*

In the war against an invisible enemy, no one will be spared! I am applying for a long-stay position in the observation room to carry out examination-and-sorting work on patients. That would reduce the need for constant in-hospital consultations, which would ease the burden on other doctors.



Zhang Zhan in her office. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

In addition, patients could receive continuous treatment, so beds in the observation room would be available for others in need.

If the hospital's leaders agree, please ask Professor Hu not to arrange any duties for me in the department and also to suspend my specialist clinic.

In addition, please strengthen prevention and protection of the observation room and regularize the arrangements with subordinate doctors in the observation room to prevent them from participating in tasks such as initial inspections and attending meetings.

I didn't tell Mingchang (Zhang's husband, Li Mingchang, deputy director of the first Department of Neurosurgery of Renmin Hospital at Wuhan University) about my decision. I don't think it's necessary, because as a doctor, the battlefield can be everywhere!

In 1918, Spanish flu killed tens of

millions of people. After many years, it was concluded that the virus was the primary cause of the deaths, but the panic it engendered prompted many people to rush to hospitals, where they became infected. That resulted in a large number of deaths.

This is not the first time a variant of the respiratory virus has infected humans, nor will it be the last. So, there is no need to panic, and clinicians today have far more extensive and better clinical experience than ever before.

### Doctors and police officers shoulder great responsibilities

*Written request for permission to officially join a publicity campaign, made by Guo Cong, a police officer in Liupanshui, Guizhou province, on Jan 30.*

I am a policeman with the Economic Investigation Bureau of the (Liupanshui) Municipal Public Security Bureau. My wife is chief inspection physician of the Clinical Laboratory Department at Liupanshui People's Hospital. Our first child is 3 years old, and my wife is nearly 70 days pregnant with our second, which I hope will be a boy. She offered to go to Wuhan (Hubei province) to fight the epidemic, but approval was withheld because of

her pregnancy, so she has blamed me as the "archcriminal" responsible for stopping her combating the disease in the epicenter of the outbreak.

Today, the sixth day of China's Lunar New Year, is the fourth day I have participated (unofficially) in street patrols and publicity for the youth commandos of the municipal PSB.

It also is the sixth day my wife has stayed at her post to assess specimens of the virus, and the seventh day of the local government's required quarantine and observation period following the outbreak.

In fact, I took the initiative to apply to take part in the street patrols and publicity because of my wife. I thought, "Why can't I — the head of the family and also a police officer — help control the epidemic, given that my pregnant wife can?"

Compared with my simple,



Police officer Guo Cong uses a walkie-talkie in his police car. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Medics sign a banner. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

YANG ZEKUN