

From Andorra, the Message of Those Knowing the Side of Duty

By: Bertha Mojena Milian  
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Teresa Plana is a 92-year-old woman, discharged just a few days ago after being admitted to El Cedre Socio-health Isolation Center in Andorra for several weeks, when she was diagnosed with Covid 19. They say that when she said goodbye, she hugged tightly the Cuban Head Nurse, Arelys Roque de Escobar Ruiz, who hugged her, and despite her age and emotion for having survived the disease, she thanks in a clear and smiling way.

“The Cubans I’ve met are wonderful. I had never met any Cuban in my long life, but now, those I have met here are wonderful, both women and men. And thank you very much, Doctor”, she also says to another doctor from the Island who is accompanying her.

More than 38 thousand medical and nursing procedures and the direct contribution to the recovery of more than 600 patients with Covid 19 is, in a nutshell, the balance of the work of the Cuban Medical Brigade Henry Reeve that for more than two months has worked intensively in Andorra.

The dedication of our health personnel, together with the professionals of that country and following rigorous protocols from which they have also learned every day, have had an impact on the favorable results against the pandemic.

This was confirmed by Dr. Luis Enrique Pérez Ulloa, Second Degree Specialist in Hematology and head of the Cuban brigade, in dialogue via WhatsApp who tells us: “Upon our arrival in late March and the beginning of our work in the first days of April the situation was very unfavorable, a large number of confirmed cases, infected and admitted to ICU wards. Virtually all patients received were positive to Covid 19. Our brigade was distributed depending on the profiles we have: specialists in internal medicine, intensive care, anesthesia, and nursing graduates, which was the most solid part because at that time 25 nurses were distributed in the two institutions throughout these two months. There has been a huge improvement in the care of patients with Covid as well as the epidemiological situation”.

According to Dr. Pérez Ulloa, for several days Andorra shows no new cases of COVID-19, there has been a notable improvement in the situation of coping with the pandemic, there are zero cases in intensive therapy of positive patients, of the existing 22 at the arrival of the brigade. But in this result, the interrelation with Andorran health workers and adherence to their protocols has also been very important.

About the acceptance of the Cuban medical mission by patients and the Andorran authorities, he says: "Since the arrival on March 29th where the population sang the Cuban National Anthem, the residents living around the Hotel where we lived in and the applause at 8:00 p.m. every night, shouting ¡Viva Cuba! and singing our National Anthem and also, the patients constantly thanking our doctors and nurses in the hospitals and at the Cedre institution".

For the head of the medical brigade in Andorra, from a professional and human point of view, this mission represents something very important, and not just for him, but also for the doctors and nurses who accompany him, because it's "the first time that we arrive to a first world country, a country with very advanced technology and a highly developed computerization system for institutions, and on top of that, the performance of professionals is very high and this is perceived in every action taken. Our staff gradually blends in, learning new things because part of the technology, part of the input and the computer system was learned systematically, incorporating and adhering to the existing protocols in the country.

All the collaborators perfectly understand the work in their interrelation with the Andorran health personnel, they dominate all the computing side and the use of all the supplies used here. That is, it has been a very favorable mission and it has represented for each one of us something very important because the scientific exchange has been from both sides and both countries are learning.

And how are our collaborators? How about their mood, health? I ask. He immediately responds: "They are very healthy, in good spirits. There is no sick collaborator with Covid and in these three months, none has become ill. This means that our professionals keep high standards of protection and biosecurity and comply with them and the demands of the brigade to always keep the perception of risk. They are in good spirits, they are happy, they communicate with the family in Cuba and they are already in the final stretch of the mission to return to Cuba with mission accomplished.

At the moment, 23 collaborators (9 doctors, 13 Nurses and a Logistics specialist) are working tirelessly in that European region, who have extended their stay at the request of the country's health authorities.

They, who despite threats and slander against the humanistic sense of Cuban medical collaboration, know well whose side is the duty, ratify every day what Dr. Luis Enrique also told me: "We must tell to our Cuban people, to our government and health authorities, to the Cuban Ministry of Public Health, to trust us that the entire brigade is already returning and we are going to return with the mission accomplished, which is the duty with which we came to this country, to fight the Covid pandemic and practically upon our return we fulfilled our duty because the epidemiological situation of the pandemic has improved considerably in the country."

**Translated by Amikal Labañino / CubaSi Translation Staff**

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