Wilfredo and Felicia, with fears, but not shying away from battle

By: Giusette León García / CubaSí
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Wilfredo and Felicia knocked the door. The taxi arrived! Shouted a childish voice. And yes, indeed, the driver and the nurse had arrived to take the whole family to an Isolation Facility assembled for contacts of suspected and positive patients of COVID-19.

This episode has been a daily routine for months in the life of Felicia Bárbara Dreque Mestre, Head of the Nursing Team working at the Carlos Verdugo Polyclinic in Matanzas:

“This is our task since the start of this mission. We are cadres and thus we are giving our full support to the municipal health department. They alone cannot do the job. We are working here since the days we were all afraid, as we did not know much about the disease and yes, we were still afraid. But we did not shy away from this battle…”

She tells me everything from the co-driver’s seat of a taxi driven by Wilfredo Reynoso, an old, shy man. But he confesses: “Fear is normal, but we take precautions.”

All taxies in the base are involved in this battle against COVID-19. Our job is to transfer suspected patients, he told me. SIUM[1] ambulance are in charge of transferring patients who tested positive for COVID-19.

She is much better talker. She has children and grandchildren at home. But she takes every precaution and cares for her and her family. And she did not waste time to give us some advices:

“Every measure is important, but washing our hands and wearing masks are essential. Not to mention physical distancing. But I tell you, washing out hands regularly is vital to prevent coronavirus or any other virus. Our hands are great sources of infection…”

“People are reckless sometimes. They believe they will not get sick,” she warns. But she is being responsible since the very beginning and wears proper clothes: white coat, mask, medical gloves, a pair of glasses, and a face

mask.

“Thanks to this, none of us has gotten sick, so far. We care for each other since we know what COVID-19 can do,” she states.

The area where she works has been battling really hard to prevent the spreading of the virus: “I have spent more than 15 days working non-stop. For instance, I worked voluntarily on Sunday in case-finding,” she says and warns again:

“The call is to increase our risk perception. There are several people who do not realize this virus can kill despite all the months we have spent facing COVID-19. And measures are designed to produce law-abiding citizens…You must go to the doctor if you feel sick. If you need to be admitted, so be it! COVID-19 kills you.”

“We arrived,” Wilfredo says. The nurse steps down in a hurry. They know they need to sterilize the taxi before another transfer’s call. Suddenly, another group of “masked men and women” comes out to welcome Wilfredo and Felicia’s passengers/patients. But we still have time to take some photos and show our gratitude for their dedication.

Translated by Sergio A. Paneque Díaz / CubaSí Translation Staff

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[1] SIUM (Integrated Service of Medical Urgencies)