



STRAFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

A recently discharged patient is sprayed with disinfectant in Wuhan

she says. She adds that protective suits and sterilisation equipment were in extremely short supply until 1 February, when more donations arrived.

A doctor working in Shanghai who asked to be identified only as Ryan estimates that 50 staff from his hospital have already been sent to Wuhan to help treat patients.

The remaining medical staff at his hospital don't have enough masks, he says, because most of them have been donated to Wuhan. They have resorted to reusing masks after irradiating them under UV light and have suspended all but essential medical services.

Wuhan hospitals have been overwhelmed, with many patients sent home to self-quarantine. Hospitals are being constructed to meet the demand, including the 1000-bed Huoshenshan Hospital, which was built in 10 days and completed on 3 February, and the 1300-bed Leishenshan Hospital, which is slated to open on 6 February.

People across China have donated medical supplies, but there has been widespread anger about their distribution. A report from the Hubei Red Cross revealed it had delivered only 200,000 of 2 million donated face masks, many to hospitals that didn't need them.

As lockdowns continue in more than 15 cities in Hubei, residents are trying to keep their spirits up. Across Wuhan, the morale-boosting chant *Wuhan jiāyóu!* (which means "come on" or "stay strong") has echoed out from apartment windows. People have coined the term *yún chī fàn*, which means "meal by cloud", as they virtually eat together via video calls. There is also *yún bài nián*—the same concept for Lunar New Year greetings.

But the uncertainty of when the outbreak will be contained is also taking its toll. "It's hard to stay positive," says Alex. "We're doing our best not to be too anxious." ■

Inside Wuhan's lockdown

Hubei residents are trying to stay positive as hospitals attempt to treat thousands infected by the new coronavirus, reports **Donna Lu**

THE streets of Wuhan in Hubei province are eerily quiet. The city of 11 million people, the centre of the coronavirus outbreak, has been locked down since 23 January, with all public transport, flights and trains suspended.

"You pretty much don't see anybody outside," says a man who lives in Wuhan and asked to be identified only as Alex. Private vehicles are banned in the downtown area. Highways are shut so residents aren't able to leave the city. The only places full of people are pharmacies, where queues await those trying to buy face masks, gloves and alcohol disinfectant.

Despite concerns about potential food shortages, large

supermarkets remain open and well stocked. Some stores won't allow customers in without a body temperature scan.

Following the outbreak, the Lunar New Year holiday—which was supposed to end on 30 January—has been extended across China. In Hubei, businesses will be shut until at least 13 February.

Alex doesn't know when he will return to work. "Every day we're at home, closely following the news," he says. The first few days of isolation were boring, he says, and now supplies of items like face masks are running short.

Alex considers himself lucky because none of his relatives have been infected to date. But friends and colleagues have been.

It has been estimated that at least 75,000 people in Wuhan have been infected with the 2019-nCoV virus (*The Lancet*, doi.org/ggjr7). Thousands of medical staff from across China have been sent to Wuhan. A nurse from Anhui province, who didn't want to be identified, says the 200-bed hospital in Wuhan where she is working is at capacity. Staff are supposed to work 4-hour shifts, but they often last 6 to 8 hours,

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