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# DOCTORS' DAY 2019

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# DOCTORS' DAY 2019

April 30, 2019

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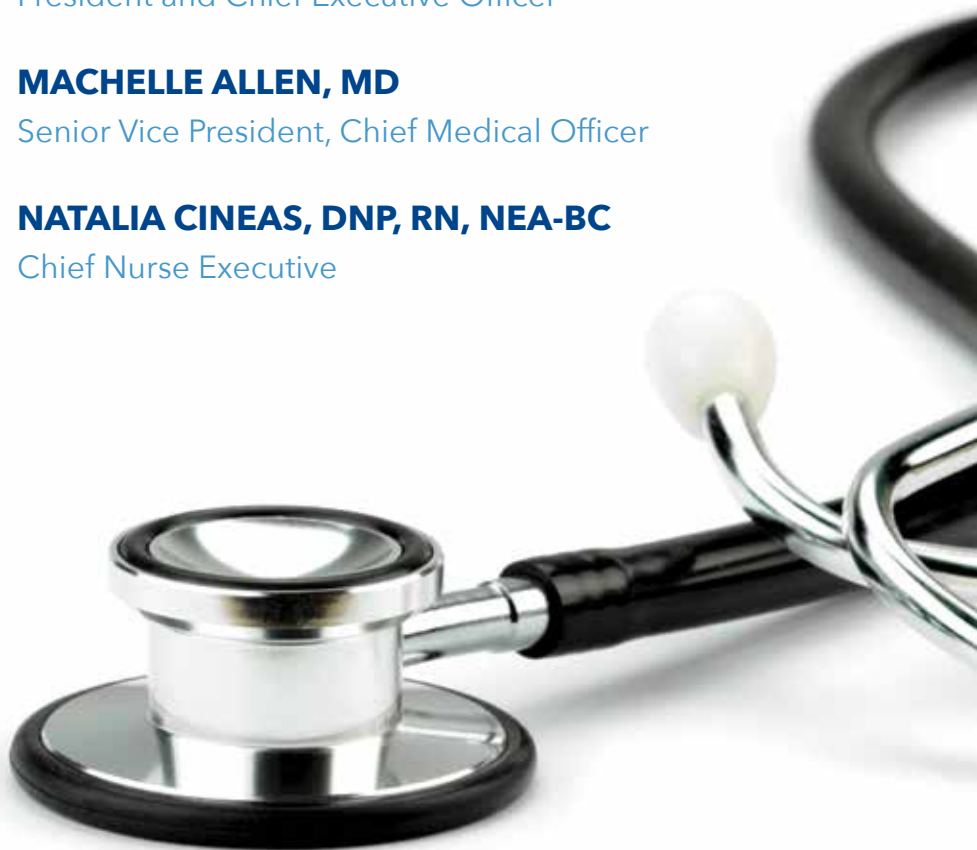
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# NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS 2019 DOCTORS' DAY RECIPIENTS

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**AMIT UPPAL, MD**

Section Chief, Pulmonary, Critical Care,  
& Sleep Medicine

NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS/CARTER

**YELENA SULER, MD**

Chief, Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS/COLER

**XIANG NONG LUO, MD,  
FAAPMR**

Attending Physician, Internal Medicine

NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS/CONEY ISLAND

**ARISTOTLE LYSSIKATOS, DDS, MS,  
FAGD**

Attending Dentist

Program Director of the Dental Practice  
Residency Program

NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS/ELMHURST

**MARITZA BROWN, MD**

Associate Program Director,  
Inpatient Medicine

Director of Inpatient Hemodialysis

NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS/  
GOTHAM HEALTH, BELVIS

**OYEBISI JEGEDE, MD**

Attending Physician, Infectious Disease  
and Internal Medicine

NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS/  
GOTHAM HEALTH, CUMBERLAND

**MAGALIE PIERRE-LOUIS, MD**

Pediatric Attending

NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS/  
GOTHAM HEALTH, EAST NEW YORK

**LLOYD P. HASKES, OD, FAAO**

Chief, Eye Care Services

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GOTHAM HEALTH, GOUVERNEUR

**NATHANIEL LIM YAO, MD**

Primary Care Physician,  
Family Medicine-Integrative Medicine  
Chief Medical Information Officer

NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS/  
GOTHAM HEALTH, MORRISANIA

**BELKIS J. VIZCAINO-REYES, MD,  
MPH, FAAP**

Attending Physician, Pediatrics

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Internist

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Chief of Optometry

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Director, Gastroenterology and  
Hepatology Fellowship Programs

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**LORENZO L. SCOTTI,  
DPM, DABFAS**

Director of Podiatry

# CELEBRATING OUR DOCTORS, 2019



**MITCHELL KATZ, MD**  
PRESIDENT AND CEO

In our rapidly changing health care landscape, with digital advancements to improve patient care and innovative strategies to strengthen our financial outlook, there is one thing that remains constant: the steadfast dedication of our doctors. Every year, with our celebration of Doctors' Day, NYC Health + Hospitals honors an outstanding selection of physicians who are blazing exciting paths toward a new era of health care delivery for our patients. Nominated from 23 facilities located throughout this great city, these doctors are among the thousands that uphold the system's promise to care for all.



**MACHELLE ALLEN, MD**  
CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER

This year's honorees include: Pediatricians, Primary Care Physicians, Optometrists, Dentists, ER Doctors, and more. They represent a range of specialties that ensure we can meet the needs of every person who comes to us for care. Beyond their medical specializations, our Doctors' Day honorees share a rich immigrant heritage, tracing their roots to nations such as Nigeria, China, Russia, Bangladesh, the Dominican Republic, Pakistan and others. Their diverse background reflects the breadth of nationalities that we find among the millions of patients we treat.

Aside from diversity, our doctors are unique in their embrace of this special calling to serve the public good. They are worthy of our recognition and unqualified gratitude.

Today and every day, we salute you, our doctors, for your excellence, your sacrifice and your commitment to our patients. As a Primary Care Physician and an Obstetrician, both of us are proud and honored to stand with you as we continue our mission and commitment to helping New Yorkers live their healthiest lives. Congratulations to all of you.



## AMIT UPPAL, MD

Section Chief, Pulmonary, Critical Care, &  
Sleep Medicine, Associate Chief of Medicine,  
Director of Medical ICU

NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS/BELLEVUE



# A Driving Force for Safety

Dr. Amit Uppal is hailed by colleagues as a driving force for quality and safety whose leadership at Bellevue has helped revolutionize care -- from boosting outcomes in sepsis patients to deployment of a Threatened Airway Protocol and "airway boxes" that are now in use hospital-wide.

He has had "dramatic experiences" at Bellevue, sheltering and evacuating patients during Hurricane Sandy and caring for an Ebola Virus patient. But his "proudest accomplishments," Dr. Uppal says, have come from working on a team "that made substantial and fundamental changes to the way we deliver care. Our efforts with regard to sepsis and airway safety impact patients on a large scale and in a sustained way."

Coming from a family of doctors, Dr. Uppal always knew medicine was his calling, and he finds working in the city's public health system "incredibly rewarding."

"Delivering high-quality, cutting-edge care to all members of our society gets right to the core of why I became a physician," he says. "There are very human moments when you connect with patients, there are cognitive challenges that change the way you think, and there are physical demands that push you to improve."

Dr. Uppal earned his B.S. at John Carroll University and his M.D. at The Ohio State University College of Medicine and Public Health. He completed his Internal Medicine internship and residency at University of California, Irvine; a fellowship in Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine at NYU, and a Master's in Health Professions Education at Maastricht University, Netherlands.

## YELENA SULER, MD

Chief, Rehabilitation Medicine

NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS/CARTER



## Motivated by Her Patients

Dr. Yelena Suler joined NYC Health + Hospitals in 2000 when she was recruited for the Cardiac Rehabilitation program at Coler-Goldwater Memorial Hospital. She was quickly recognized for her expertise, compassion and putting the needs of patients first.

Her responsibilities expanded over time to include clinical oversight of the Rehabilitation Medicine program, and in 2013 she was chosen to help staff the new Henry J. Carter Specialty Hospital and Nursing Facility, where she is involved in the care of nearly every patient. Her clinical contributions, combined with her leadership skills, have made Dr. Suler "indispensable" to Carter. In recent years, she has served as President of the Medical Staff and has assisted with clinical oversight of surgical specialty services, all while maintaining a full consultative case load.

Born and raised in Moscow, Russia, Dr. Suler credits her mother, "a very respected doctor in a local clinic," with inspiring her to pursue a medical career. "Her ability to help people in life-threatening situations made medicine a very attractive field to me," Dr. Suler says. "I wanted to have the same power, the same ability to save someone's life."

Dr. Suler graduated from Moscow State University of Medicine and Dentistry with a medical degree and worked for 11 years at the Moscow Center for Emergency Medical Care. She married and had two sons and eventually migrated to the United States, where she gained a specialty in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. She started at Coler-Goldwater in 2000 as a physiatrist, and moved up from Attending Physician to Chief of the Department, then moved to Carter.

"My biggest motivation," says Dr. Suler, "is the success of my patients. The ability to restore someone's life gives me the highest professional satisfaction."

## XIANG NONG LUO, MD, FAAPMR

Attending Physician, Internal Medicine  
NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS/COLER



## An Early Calling to Help

Dr. Xiang Nong Luo is praised as an outstanding multi-specialty physician who has assumed a variety of roles at Coler -- managing patients with complex medical issues, improving dementia care and working with the physical therapy department.

He has assumed a leadership role in the Department of Medicine, where he has assisted in preventing unnecessary hospitalizations and recently took on the challenge of improving the rehabilitation and nursing facility's dementia care program. He has also provided specialty consultations to NYC Health + Hospitals since 2000, and works diligently with Coler's Physical Therapy department to improve the speed and accuracy of consults and assist with prosthetics and orthotics.

Dr. Luo is also appreciated for imparting his Internal Medicine expertise to the staff through formal and informal education, and for his eagerness to cover other units and support his colleagues. In addition to his health system work, he has been in private practice in Queens for 14 years.

He earned his Doctor of Medicine degree at Hunan Medical University, Changsha, Hunan, China, followed by a Master of Medicine degree in Experimental Oncology at the university's Cancer Research Institute. Dr. Luo spent four years as a Research Associate in the Department of Medicine at Mount Sinai Medical Center and worked at Coler-Goldwater and Carter facilities as an Attending Physician in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, before coming to Coler in 2016.

The China of Dr. Luo's childhood was poor and short of doctors. Because of the shortage, his 7-year-old brother died from diphtheria. "Since then I swore I wanted to be a doctor when I grow up, to help patients," he says.

Dr. Luo says he is proud to see patients recover following his treatment. "When I see the patient, I always think of what I should do if she or he was my mother, father, sister or brother. I have to do my best to help."

## ARISTOTLE LYSSIKATOS, DDS, MS, FAGD

Attending Dentist, Program Director of the  
Dental Practice Residency Program

NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS/CONEY ISLAND



# Better Dental Care for Brooklyn

Dr. Aristotle Lyssikatos came to NYC Health + Hospitals/Coney Island in 2015 to establish a dental residency program, and under his leadership the program has quickly become one of the most desired residencies for dental school graduates in the city. With some 75,000 patient encounters in its first four years, the program has also had an impact on dental health in the community it serves. "By the time of graduation, our dental residents consistently tell me that this was one of the best experiences of their lives," says Dr. Lyssikatos. "Meanwhile, our patients have been very appreciative of the compassionate care they receive from our program."

Dr. Lyssikatos graduated with honors from New York University College of Dentistry in 2005 and served as dental director of Newark Community Health Centers for nine years before joining Coney Island. In addition to his clinical work, he has published research articles in the Journal of Oral Health and Community Dentistry

and represents his colleagues on the Facility-Based Collaborative Council, developing research projects with staff and residents. In 2015, Dr. Lyssikatos was designated one of the country's top young dentists under 40 by Incisal Edge Magazine.

Dr. Lyssikatos says he's proud to be part of a health system devoted to bringing care to people who often have complex medical and social needs. "We have patients with great hardships, and the emphasis is always on their needs," he says. "This system allows us to care for our patients without constraints. That is why I am not just a doctor here but a patient as well. We have talented doctors who work together and genuinely care about their colleagues, and we have an executive team that is very approachable and goal-oriented. We have a group of dental residents who enjoy learning and dental attendings who have a passion to teach."

## MARITZA BROWN, MD

Associate Program Director,  
Inpatient Medicine  
Director of Hemodialysis

NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS/ELMHURST



## Speaking with Compassion

Dr. Maritza Brown's compassionate approach to patient care is appreciated by those she treats and the future physicians she trains. She has served in a variety of key leadership roles since she arrived at Elmhurst in 2008, and is known for excelling in all of them.

Dr. Brown, a nephrologist, is Associate Program Director of Inpatient Medicine and Director of Hemodialysis. She is also Clerkship Site Director for the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. As a medical educator, she has received Elmhurst's Distinguished Ward Preceptor Award multiple times. She is also a distinguished leader in the larger medical community, serving on the National Kidney Foundation Advisory Board, and as an IPRO Chronic Kidney Disease Project Advisor.

Working at Elmhurst, she says, "allows me to fulfill two of my greatest passions -- direct patient care and being a part of the education of our young physicians, being a role model."

Dr. Brown received her B.S. from CUNY's Medgar Evers College and her M.D. from the Universidad del Noreste in Mexico. Her postdoctoral training - internship, residency, and nephrology fellowship - was at Brookdale Hospital/Downstate Medical Center.

She traces her ambition to study medicine to her childhood days translating for her grandmother, who spoke little Spanish, during doctor's appointments in Costa Rica. Dr. Brown was "awed by the doctors' knowledge," she says. "I wanted to be like them."

Compassion for patients resonates with Dr. Brown as a critical component of care. "Many of our patients speak very little English, and come here with very advanced disease, and have limited health literacy," she says. "They are fearful of what the doctor might tell them. Speaking to them with compassion helps to allay some of this fear and permits them to make informed decisions."

## OYEBISI JEGEDE, MD

Attending Physician, Infectious Disease and  
Internal Medicine

NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS/  
GOTHAM HEALTH, BELVIS



# Fighting Disease, from Nigeria to the Bronx

A few years after earning her medical degree in her native Nigeria, Dr. Oyeibisi (Bisi) Jegede decided she wanted her career to focus on improving the treatment of HIV and other infectious diseases. Immigrating to the United States in 2002, she earned a Ph.D. in cellular and molecular biology at the Cleveland Clinic, spent several years as a researcher in labs that were trying to develop new drugs for HIV and hepatitis C, then served a residency in internal medicine. Eventually she moved to New York for a Masters in translational science—the application of laboratory discoveries to patient treatment—at The Rockefeller University. “I wanted to do clinical studies to develop new therapies and also have the flexibility to be able to practice medicine,” she says. “The best of both worlds.”

In 2017, Dr. Jegede’s long road led to NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham Health, Belvis, where a position for an infectious disease specialist had been open for some time. It was a good fit.

“The central thing to me—and I wrote this all the way back in my graduate school application—is that health care should be affordable and accessible to everybody. At that time in Nigeria, a lot of people were dying without care so that is how I got interested in working in a public health system.”

At Belvis, Dr. Jegede has quickly become known as a kind-hearted doctor who has an exceptional way with patients. “What’s important to me is getting people to buy in to their care,” she says. “To do that, my approach is to speak to them in a way they will understand -- less jargon, more straightforward information, what the prognosis will be with and without intervention and what they can do to make things better. Once people understand what is at stake, whether it is an HIV patient or a diabetic patient, they’ll be the one to tell you, ‘This is what I’m doing.’ They take ownership and if they make progress that’s their achievement.”

## MAGALIE PIERRE-LOUIS, MD

Pediatric Attending

NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS/GOTHAM  
HEALTH, CUMBERLAND



# The Great Communicator

Dr. Magalie Pierre-Louis exemplifies some of the most important qualities of a doctor who practices in a community as diverse as the one she serves at NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham Health, Cumberland. "I think every doctor should have compassion and be considerate of the particular needs and cultures of their patients," said Dr. Pierre-Louis. Those aspects of her approach are one reason she's earned a reputation among both staff and patients for being a great communicator.

Dr. Pierre-Louis, a pediatrician who grew up in Haiti, cares for many families who speak her native Creole. Her Spanish-speaking patients also appreciate her ability to talk with them in their first language. It's all in service of Dr. Pierre-Louis's fierce commitment to making Cumberland's pediatric clinic a place that fosters strong personal and therapeutic relationships between staff and patients.

"I always wanted to be a pediatrician, since my own childhood," Dr. Pierre-Louis says. She immigrated to New York when she was 18 and began pursuing her dream at City College.

She went on to medical school at Temple University, returned to New York for her pediatric residency at Albert Einstein, and spent 14 years as an attending pediatrician at clinics in Brooklyn before joining the Cumberland team in 2007.

Colleagues laud Dr. Pierre-Louis as a strong advocate for her patients who is always seeking innovative ways to deliver the best care to her young patients and their families. Sometimes it's as simple as going the extra yard to connect with them—calling an adolescent patient herself to find out why they missed an appointment, for instance.

She recalls a teenage boy with a subtle abnormality that led her to refer him to a specialist, who diagnosed an unusual genetic condition, called Klinefelter's Syndrome that can affect various aspects of development. "As a result of my discovery he had the proper workup and treatment," she says. "That was a case where I was proud that I could really make a difference in my patient's life."

## LLOYD P. HASKES, OD, FAAO

Chief, Eye Care Services

NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS / GOTHAM  
HEALTH, EAST NEW YORK



# Caring for the Eyes of East New York

Ask Dr. Lloyd Haskes what he loves about being an optometrist at NYC Health + Hospitals and he might tell you about the patient who came into his clinic one day years ago, confused about why an outside provider had prescribed eye drops. Dr. Haskes did a complete workup and found that the patient had glaucoma. He carefully explained the condition, its treatment and prognosis. "I'll never forget the hugs I received," Dr. Haskes says, "as well as the nearly 10-year doctor-patient relationship since then."

Dr. Haskes is the chief of eye care services at NYC Health + Hospitals / Gotham Health, East New York, and director of the center's family practice/ocular disease residency and externship program with SUNY. Overseeing a clinical center that sees more than 350 patients a month, Dr. Haskes has had an important impact on the awareness and treatment of ocular disease in the East New York community. Known for his proactive approach, he's recently been focused on stepping up his department's

engagement with diabetic patients and improving their management of vision-related conditions.

In addition to his clinical duties at East New York, Dr. Haskes is a full-time clinical professor at the facility's affiliate, the SUNY College of Optometry, his professional alma mater. He earned his D.O. degree there in 1987, following his father into the field.

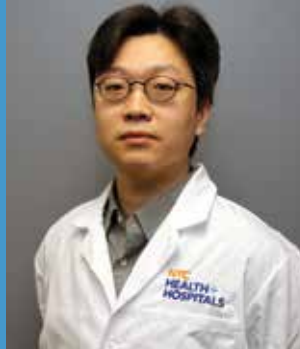
Three decades later, Dr. Haskes has seen thousands of patients and trained hundreds of doctors but his daily mission remains constant: To make sure his team sees every patient as an individual, addresses all their needs, answers all their questions, sends them home better off than when they came in. "Because of the immense size of our system, with a lot of moving parts, a patient may feel overlooked," he says. "My goal every day is for our patients to leave our care smiling. Nothing feels better than being told, 'Doc, don't ever leave East New York.' "



## NATHANIEL LIM YAO, MD

Primary Care Physician,  
Family Medicine-Integrative Medicine  
Chief Medical Information Officer

NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS/  
GOTHAM HEALTH, GOUVERNEUR



# EMR Champion

Dr. Nathaniel Yao, Primary Care Physician at Gotham Health, Gouverneur and Chief Medical Information Officer at Gotham Health, is passionate about treating patients and developing the potential of IT to improve care. A computer whiz since childhood, Dr. Yao, uses his IT skills to help colleagues navigate medical databases, and to fine-tune the functionality of electronic medical records. As Gotham Health's CMIO he works to improve EMR as a critical tool in delivering quality care.

One of his most memorable NYC Health + Hospitals experiences, Dr. Yao says, was realizing that his teamwork with other providers to substantially improve clunky prescription-writing software boosted their ability to help patients. The city's public health care teams "do more with less," he notes. "We deliver that world-class care when we work closer and depend on each other's strengths."

Dr. Yao is considered an extraordinary team player, teacher and colleague whose talents and dedication have produced significant improvements benefiting providers and patients. Patients also respond to his caring, easygoing style and professionalism.

Dr. Yao earned his B.S. in Biomedical Science at The Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education at The City College of New York and his M.D. at The School of Medicine at Stony Brook University Medical Center.

He was inspired to study medicine by the doctor who treated him and his family members, at very reasonable cost, after they came to the U.S., from the Philippines.

"Being able to take care of families, and experiencing their trust when your patient brings their newborn to you as well as their grandma . . . is humbling," he says. "I would not have it any other way."

## **BELKIS J. VIZCAINO-REYES, MD, MPH, FAAP**

Attending Physician, Pediatrics

**NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS/  
GOTHAM HEALTH, MORRISANIA**



# A Morrisania Grandmother

For Dr. Belkis Vizcaino-Reyes, her proudest moment—and it comes with increasing frequency these days—is when a patient she began treating years ago has a child herself and wants Dr. Vizcaino-Reyes to be their pediatrician. “That is when I become what I call a ‘Morrisania grandmother,’” she says. “I feel honored and proud to start the cycle all over again.”

Dr. Vizcaino-Reyes joined the pediatric service of NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham Health, Morrisania 26 years ago after a long and determined journey to become the doctor her mother wanted to be. “She is my inspiration,” says Dr. Vizcaino-Reyes, who grew up in the Dominican Republic. “She was never able to become a doctor because of the circumstances of her life. I took over her dream and made it a reality. All my life the only thing I wanted to do was become a doctor.”

She earned her medical degree from the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo in 1981 after an arduous seven-year pursuit. A few years later, she came to New

York to continue her education with a Master’s in public health from Columbia University, followed by a pediatric residency at Bronx-Lebanon Hospital, a second residency in social pediatrics at Montefiore Hospital and a fellowship at the nationally recognized Mount Sinai Adolescent Health Center.

At Morrisania, Dr. Vizcaino-Reyes is known for her easy smile, warmth, compassion and commitment to a public health system that doesn’t turn anyone away. “Health care is a right, not a privilege,” she says. “I like the fact that I do not have to think about finances when I see my patients.”

Dr. Vizcaino-Reyes was instrumental in the founding of the Facility-Based Collaboration Council at Morrisania and worked with her team to develop and implement a project to improve the flow of newborns in the pediatrics department.



## Caring for the Latino Community in Harlem

Colleagues praise Dr. Francisco Santoni for his commitment to exemplary care and for his service to the Hispanic community in Harlem. He is recognized as the highest-performing physician at Sydenham this year on his chronic disease metrics in both diabetes and hypertension.

Beloved at Sydenham since joining the medical staff in 1994, Dr. Santoni serves as a medical advocate for the Spanish-speaking population served by the community health center. He champions collaborative care of patients with both mental health and chronic disease and was an early adopter and champion of “cycle time” improvements.

He trained in Internal Medicine and Cardiology at New York Medical College and at Hospital Damas in Ponce, Puerto Rico. He credits his family doctor in the South Bronx, “who treated me and many others regardless of the ability to pay,” for inspiring him to become a physician.

That commitment resonates today as he serves a medically disadvantaged community “with higher morbidity and mortality rates due to less access to primary prevention and pre-morbid care, and discontinuity of care,” he says.

Accountability in the practice of medicine is an essential value for Dr. Santoni. “Excellence is ideal but not always obtainable,” he says. “However, accountability in our work and its product is essential for delivering the best health care that we can.”

What motivates his commitment to practice medicine, he says, is “knowing that when a patient leaves my room I have done my best to achieve the goals of all medical care: to relieve suffering, to prevent future suffering or to prolong life.”

## ANDREA N. COTLER, OD, FAAO

Director of Eye + Vision Services,  
Chief of Optometry

NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS/GOUVERNEUR



# A World Crisp and Alive

Blending clinical expertise with a warm, supportive manner, Dr. Andrea N. Cotler oversees Eye Care services and provides care for residents of NYC Health + Hospitals/Gouverneur. She is known as a dedicated doctor who will rearrange her schedule to meet residents' needs including urgent, serious and unresolved eye issues.

The day she walked out of her optometrist's office "wearing contact lenses for the first time" inspired Dr. Cotler to become a doctor. "The world appeared crisp and alive," she says. "Becoming aware of what I had been missing before that moment inspired me to help others experience that same joy."

Dr. Cotler earned her B.S. at University of North Carolina Chapel Hill and her Doctor of Optometry at SUNY College of Optometry. She did her residency in Ocular Disease/Primary Care Optometry at U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs - New York Harbor Health Care System, and worked in private practice. She has presented on eye disease subjects

at American Academy of Optometry meetings and academic venues.

She has worked at Gouverneur since 2016 and counts as one of her proudest accomplishments, improvements to patient access to ophthalmic diagnostic equipment used to screen for and manage sight-threatening diseases like glaucoma and macular degeneration.

"I am proud to say that we now provide same-day access for all of our diagnostic imaging equipment and have dramatically reduced time to next available visual field exam."

Dr. Cotler finds it particularly satisfying to help patients "solve problems." She is fortunate, she says, "to work with amazing optometry interns each day, and each patient encounter is an opportunity to share my experience."

"Interacting with my patients and students is rewarding and energizing," she says.

## CLARICIO DECASTRO, MD

Attending Anesthesiologist  
Director, Pain Management Service

NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS/HARLEM



# Easing Pain, Building Trust

Lauded as an outstanding clinician who treats patients with respect and is widely admired by colleagues, Dr. Claricio DeCastro is Director of the Pain Management Service at Harlem. He considers creation of the Service, which treats acute, chronic and cancer pain conditions, one of his proudest accomplishments. The “highest honor” he has received, he says, is his patients’ trust.

Dr. DeCastro is in the pain clinic five days a week, responds to in-house consults, performs pain procedures in the operating room, and works with medical and psychiatry residents. He was instrumental in developing Harlem’s hospital-wide Policy and Procedure for Pain Management.

His own childhood health issues including asthma, chronic bronchitis and surgeries, combined with the example of his older sister – a public-hospital physician in the Dominican Republic who came home after long hours to treat local patients for free – solidified Dr. DeCastro’s desire to pursue medicine. He earned his

medical degree at the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo, then came to Harlem Hospital for two years as a surgical resident.

He completed a residency in anesthesiology at Albert Einstein College of Medicine and was a fellow in Pain Management at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. Dr. DeCastro’s extensive CV includes training in clinical research at Harvard University, certification in medical acupuncture, and a long list of journal publications.

“We are able to provide the highest quality of care for the most vulnerable and underserved members of our society without regard for their ability to pay,” Dr. DeCastro says. “Every day spent in patient care at Harlem Hospital is memorable. From relieving the pain of patients in labor to providing comfort to the terminally ill, is a daily rewarding and humbling experience.”

## SHELDON H. TEPERMAN, MD, FACS

Trauma Medical Director

NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS/JACOBI



# Elevating Trauma Care

Dr. Sheldon Teperman, director of the trauma center at NYC Health + Hospitals/Jacobi since 2007, says there can be no better motivator to go to work every day than the likelihood that he and his colleagues will need to save someone's life. Multiply that by 365 days and it's not hard to understand why one of Dr. Teperman's proudest accomplishments is gaining certification from the American College of Surgeons for all six of the city health system's Level One trauma centers. "There were prominent national trauma surgeons who said Health + Hospitals could not do it," Dr. Teperman says. "With certification, our trauma centers are again receiving national acclaim for the excellent care we deliver to injured patients."

Dr. Teperman, who began his career at NYC Health + Hospitals/Jacobi as an attending surgeon in 1995, considers the strength of the trauma centers a vital part of providing high-quality care to all New Yorkers. "My colleagues and I at Jacobi and

Health + Hospitals have spent a lifetime leveling the playing field of health care," he says. He recalls his own mother coming into the Jacobi trauma center after a bad fall. "She received amazing, compassionate care—not because she was the mother of the trauma director but because she was an injured human being. Ask around and you will find my mom's story is shared by all kinds of New Yorkers. We are in it together."

Growing up, Dr. Teperman was inspired by his father, a Russian immigrant who became a lawyer, dentist and maxillo facial surgeon. "He dreamed that his children would also lead a life of service. He imbued us with that sense of purpose." Now Dr. Teperman himself is an inspiration to the students he teaches and trains—as they are to him. "On difficult days, and we have quite a few of those, I am buoyed by their compassion, dedication, wisdom and sense of humor. They inspire me to be a better doctor and a better teacher."

## ANDREW G. WINER, MD

Chief of Urology

NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS/KINGS COUNTY



# Devoted to Brooklyn's Underserved

Dr. Andrew Winer spent five years at Downstate Medical Center, completing his residency in urology in 2014. Then he moved across the East River for a two-year fellowship in urologic oncology at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. He was struck, if unsurprised, by the differences between the two institutions—in the demography of their patients, the access to health care they offered, and the clinical outcomes.

Experiencing the disparity firsthand triggered a pivotal career decision: After his fellowship at MSK, Dr. Winer went back to Brooklyn to accept a position as chief of urology at NYC Health + Hospitals/Kings County and an academic appointment at Downstate. "I'm able to pursue my clinical interests treating urologic malignancies while also being able to study them in an underserved population that is typically underrepresented in published research," he explains. Soon after his arrival, he was also appointed associate director of the urology residency program he had completed himself only three years

earlier. His passion for teaching was quickly evident: He was named the program's Teacher of the Year each of his first two years.

Dr. Winer's aspirations started forming early in his life, modeled on his parents' altruism, his grandmother's career as a nurse, and physicians he had the opportunity to shadow starting in middle school. His commitment to working in the city's public health system comes in part from feeling "a sense of freedom from the constraints that many private practitioners are subject to. I can simply provide the right care for the right patient, which was the ultimate reason I became a doctor."

And every once in a while there comes a day in a doctor's career when something truly exciting happens. For Dr. Winer, one "monumental moment that will forever stay with me" came a few months ago when he was part of the Kings County team that performed the first robotic procedure in the hospital's history. "The sense of hospital pride was like no other," he said.

## PRONoy KUMAR ROY, MD

Unit Chief, Inpatient Psychiatry  
NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS/LINCOLN



## Profound Lessons from Patients

As a young boy growing up in Bangladesh, Pronoy Roy was fascinated by doctors. In high school he volunteered at free clinics that cared for the poor and resolved to one day become a doctor himself. After earning his medical degree in his home country, Dr. Roy decided that psychiatry would be his way of helping people. He immigrated to New York in 2005, served a residency at NYC Health + Hospitals/ Metropolitan, then joined the inpatient psychiatry department of Lincoln.

"I always aspired to practice medicine in an underserved community and make a difference," Dr. Roy said. "The proudest moment of my career was my first day as an attending at Lincoln Hospital."

Dr. Roy has made quite a difference in the 10 years since that day. He became unit chief in 2015, and in addition to his empathetic care of his own patients he has made important contributions to the quality of treatment throughout the unit by conducting projects to improve patient engagement and reduce lengths of stay.

"I consider it a privilege to work in a community that is one of the poorest in the city and know that anyone can come in here and get help," Dr. Roy says. "Mental health problems are chronic issues that affect every sphere of a patient's life. We're continuously trying to help our patients lead productive lives."

Dr. Roy is also a mainstay of the hospital's teaching program, widely admired as a role model for medical students and psychiatry residents. But he's quick to point out that his work makes him a student as well: "I've learned many of life's most profound lessons through the stories, struggles and triumphs of my patients. Medicine puts me in a position to speak for those who may not otherwise have a voice. It makes my medical career a journey worth completing well."



## INNA SOSINA, MD

Attending Physician

NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS/MCKINNEY



# A Healer in the Purest Sense

Dr. Inna Sosina is a beloved doctor in a facility where patients need a lot of emotional support and care providers must have reserves of patience and compassion. Since 2004, she's been an attending physician at NYC Health + Hospitals/McKinney, a nursing facility in Brooklyn that provides long-term, sub-acute rehabilitation and adult day care. The work is some of the most demanding in health care but after 15 years Dr. Sosina says she can't imagine doing anything else.

"I chose NYC Health + Hospitals because I wanted to help people who are uninsured and unable to pay," says Dr. Sosina. "It's challenging because we have many patients who are very sick and have complicated social issues. But I'm proud that I stuck to my commitment to help them get their health back. For me it's the highest reward to see my patients feeling better."

Born in Ukraine, Dr. Sosina grew up in the last years of the Soviet era and got her first exposure to medicine from her grandmother. "She was a healer. I used to watch her gather

herbs to make potions that helped people with illnesses. In the eyes of a child it was a miracle to see how medicine helped people." Her aunt was a nurse in a local hospital and Dr. Sosina would spend her weekends there, reading to patients and talking with them about their lives. The experience sparked her interest in a medical career and taught her that a good doctor has to be a good listener.

Dr. Sosina underwent six years of medical training in Moscow before immigrating to Brooklyn with her family. She completed an internal medicine residency at Lutheran Hospital, an experience that led her to geriatric care and ultimately McKinney, where she's now vice president of the medical and dental staff and a dedicated preceptor for doctors, nurse practitioners and physician assistants in training. But she's admired most for being a loving caregiver who develops special connections with her patients and their families—a healer in the purest sense.

## JENNIFER M. HARLEY, MD

Chief of Gastroenterology and Hepatobiliary Diseases  
Director, Gastroenterology and Hepatology Fellowship Programs

NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS/METROPOLITAN



# Treating the Patient as a Whole

At a young age, Dr. Jennifer Harley's life was saved by a gastroenterologist, sparking her desire to "pay it forward and one day be able to make a positive impact on a person's life." Later, as an undergraduate at The Ohio State University, she was inspired by a speech by then-U.S. Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher on health care reform and advocacy. That turning point launched her "career mission" to provide exceptional medical care to the underserved and eliminate health care disparities.

Dr. Harley, Chief of Gastroenterology and Hepatobiliary Diseases at Metropolitan, has more than fulfilled her goals. Her medical portfolio includes saving and improving lives, and leading the hospital's gastrointestinal endoscopy service and all aspects of the division. She also directs the New York Medical College-Metropolitan Gastroenterology Fellowship program, shaping future generations of gastroenterologists.

"Compassion is the core of everything we do," Dr. Harley says.

"In every patient we should see ourselves: What would we want as a patient? How would we want to be treated?" She is motivated, she says, by hope for those she treats.

"No patient should have to suffer from a life-altering disease, especially preventable ones," she says. "I have the opportunity to treat the patient as a whole, providing not just diagnostic and therapeutic options but also holistic approaches."

Dr. Harley graduated from Howard University College of Medicine and completed her Internal Medicine residency and fellowship in Gastroenterology at New York Medical College-Westchester Medical Center. She was recruited to join Metropolitan's Department of Medicine as a gastroenterologist. Over the years she has participated in numerous gastroenterology-related healthcare initiatives, including a health fair at Metropolitan in March 2019 to promote colon cancer awareness.

## LORENZO L. SCOTTI, DPM, DABFAS

Director of Podiatry

NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS/  
NORTH CENTRAL BRONX



# Giving Patients Their Lives Back

When he was young, Dr. Lorenzo Scotti found his career aspiration in a podiatric physician who delivered special care to his patients. "I saw, first-hand, patients walking into the office in pain and leaving pain-free," he says. Now, like his mentor, Dr. Scotti is a podiatrist who focuses on severely diabetic patients with foot ulcers that can progress to amputation. "The most rewarding part of my practice is limb salvage," he says. "Treating and healing these patients feels like I am giving them their lives back."

Dr. Scotti is a mentor, too. As the director of podiatry at NYC Health + Hospitals/North Central Bronx for more than 20 years, he is a driving force with quiet humility, known for his comforting presence with patients and the care he puts into guiding young doctors. His colleagues regard him as the embodiment of selfless service both in the clinic and in his teaching role at Jacobi, where he is also director of podiatry.

"In order to treat patients, you have to have compassion in your heart," Dr. Scotti says. "My reward is seeing the gratitude and smiles on patients' faces every day. For me, the patient becomes part of a growing family."

Those sentiments are a reflection of the pride Dr. Scotti takes in being part of the city's health system. "We see patients from all walks of life," he says, "and we're committed to giving them the highest quality medical care, regardless of income or insurance. Helping people is my motivation. I love what I do."

Dr. Scotti earned his bachelor's degree in medical technology from St. John's University and his D.P.M. from the New York College of Podiatric Medicine. In addition to his duties with North Central Bronx and Jacobi, he is an attending podiatrist in the Department of Orthopedics at Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center.

## M. MARGARET KEMENY, MD, FACS

Director, Cancer Center

NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS/QUEENS



# Providing Patient-Centered Cancer Care

Dr. Margaret Kemeny, one of the first female Surgical Oncologists in the United States, has been Director of the Queens Cancer Center since its opening in 2002 and has built it into one of the city's most comprehensive, coordinated cancer treatment institutions.

Under her leadership Queens received the highest accreditation and recognition for excellence from the Commission on Cancer of the American College of Surgeons. Its commitment to research brought in one of the first National Institutes of Health grants ever given to NYC Health + Hospitals.

The center has "saved countless lives because of the integration of all the modalities of cancer treatment into one area," says Dr. Kemeny, who is also a Professor of Surgery at Mount Sinai's Icahn School of Medicine. "We have a very patient-centered environment that has helped thousands of patients through their course of cancer addressing all of their problems – medical, social and psychological."

Dr. Kemeny's career is distinguished by years of innovative clinical and laboratory research and by a technique she developed to treat patients with metastatic liver cancer that involves delivering chemotherapy through a pump into the organ's main artery.

Dr. Kemeny graduated from Harvard University, received her M.D. from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, and completed internship and residency at New York Presbyterian Hospital, University of Colorado Medical Center, and Downstate Medical Center respectively.

H+H is the first city public health system she has worked in and she says "it is a pleasure" to treat Queens's uniquely diverse patients. She is motivated, she says, "by love of the atmosphere I work in. The staff "is wonderful and I enjoy dealing with big, complex problems and helping people every day."

## MOHAMMAD KHALID, DDS

Chief of Dental Service, Vice President of  
Medical and Dental Board

NYC HEATH + HOSPITALS/SEA VIEW



# Treating Complex Dental Needs

Family dentist and civic leader Dr. Mohammad Khalid has been Chief of Dental Service at Sea View since 2014 and has been in private practice on Staten Island for 41 years. He takes great pride in the expansive dental services the rehabilitation center and home provides its patients, from fillings to surgery and dentures, and is proud that patients and their families appreciate the thorough care offered at Sea View.

Dr. Khalid started out in medicine following his parents' dream, and came to view his profession as a "God-given gift." "Growing up in Pakistan it was every parent's dream that their children would become a doctor and help people in their medical needs," he says. "I became a doctor in 1971 and I am so happy that I listened to my parents. This is the most noble profession on Earth -- helping other human beings."

Dr. Khalid earned his Bachelor of Dental Surgery, and did a General Dentistry Rotating Internship, at Khyber Medical College in Peshawar,

Pakistan. He completed his Doctor of Dental Surgery at the New York University foreign dental program.

Dr. Khalid takes pride in working for NYC Health + Hospitals and the agency plays a large role in his family as well. His wife is an NYC Health + Hospitals pediatrician and his attorney daughter is a NYC Health + Hospitals compliance officer.

He counts as a "great accomplishment" his appointment as dental chief at Sea View, which is "is very challenging" with patient needs "more complex and compromising than patients in private practice." He has worked closely with Sea View colleagues on infection prevention, educating the nursing staff in proper daily oral hygiene to prevent pneumonia – a strategy that keeps Sea View's pneumonia rate low.

Dr. Khalid says he considers it his "moral and ethical duty to help . . . and provide the highest care that you can. To me that's the best part of being a doctor every day."

## REGINA HAMMOCK, DO

Program Director,  
Emergency Medicine Residency

NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS/  
SIMULATION CENTER

NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS/CONEY ISLAND



# Finding Joy in ED Simulation

Some of Dr. Regina Hammock's earliest memories are of reading—and memorizing—a set of medical encyclopedias her mother bought. "I remember pulling them out to diagnose my family's ailments," she says. From then on, her path was set. Now she has a number of roles that fulfill her lifelong passion to be a doctor who advocates for her patients and a teacher who helps advance the field.

Dr. Hammock, a veteran emergency physician at NYC Health + Hospitals/Coney Island, found a new outlet for her calling when she began teaching at the Simulation Center, a facility serving the entire health system where simulation-based education is used to advance patient safety and carry out quality-improvement initiatives.

Dr. Hammock has taught several emergency medicine courses since joining the Simulation Center faculty in 2013 and she has gained a reputation as an exceptional and popular teacher. Dr. Hammock returns the compliment: The center's staff "opened my eyes to simulation in health care," she says, "and I've

used what I learned to bring back to my ED." She recalls an instance four years ago when the center's support made a difference in a difficult case: "I called on them and they helped us get back on track. I don't think I could form these kinds of relationships in any other system."

Teaching at the Simulation Center was also a catalyst for what Dr. Hammock considers her proudest accomplishment: starting an emergency medicine residency at Coney Island in 2015. "It's a small program, only 16 residents, but they have made a significant impact on the care we provide to the community," she says.

Dr. Hammock is a graduate of New York College of Osteopathic Medicine and chose emergency medicine because she considers it, among all the subspecialties, "the closest to what practicing medicine is all about. The ED is the place where I can take on all people and practice patient advocacy, sometimes for people who have never experienced it. This gives me joy."



## Connecting with Patients

When he first became an attending emergency physician a few years ago, Dr. Ershad Elahi was focused on the purely clinical—seeing a lot of cases and getting better at treating a wide range of acute conditions in the pressured environment of a city emergency department. But over time he realized something important. “In this fast-paced, high-volume health care system we are in, compassion is something I’ve noticed as being less commonplace,” he says. “As time has gone on, I have put more value on creating relationships with patients—to making a connection with them.”

Dr. Elahi, the son of Bangladeshi immigrants, grew up in New Jersey with an interest in science and serving the public good. But he majored in economics at Duke University and it wasn’t until the summer after his sophomore year that he chose his path. That summer he had two internships—one on Wall Street, the other a humanitarian mission helping provide free medical care to the indigenous population in the Peruvian Amazon. That clarified his ambitions.

Dr. Elahi graduated from New Jersey Medical School and has served NYC Health + Hospitals ever since. He was an emergency medicine resident (and chief resident) at Bellevue, completed a fellowship in emergency ultrasound at Kings County and been an attending at Woodhull since 2013.

He became vice chief of the department in 2015 and his area of expertise has made emergency ultrasound at the bedside an important tool of the hospital’s ED care.

“From the beginning of my residency, I have always had a commitment to providing care to this population and being a clinical advocate for those who otherwise may not have one,” Dr. Elahi says. “Some days we save a life or lives.” And some days “test the fortitude of the staff.” He recalls the day a few years ago when more than 30 patients came in after using the synthetic marijuana known as K2. “We were able to quickly identify that a surge was occurring and tailor clinical operations to deal with it.”

