HEALTH CARE HEROES

WE'RE ALL HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS, FIRST

Dr. Anyaogu (center) with North Central Bronx colleagues.

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My Role: When the surge of patients started, we had to switch into emergency preparedness mode and set up a command center. My typical day-to-day before this was already unpredictable. Then, seemingly overnight, we changed the whole way the hospital functions. We had to communicate with staff on a myriad of complicated issues and also support them as they heard all these concerning things in the media. We had to provide a solid, dependable place where they could look to for direction.

We built a team that is helping out by going into the surge units to talk to the providers. They are serving as a critical link between the patients and their families who are outside because visitation is limited.

Welcoming Volunteers and New Staff: Hundreds of health care workers from outside the hospital have come to help.

We have temporary health care workers coming through agencies. We have volunteers who answered the call and are here on their own volition. We have medical residents, and then we have seasonal workers who work elsewhere but are giving us some of their time. For each one, it's really important for me to connect with them. I meet with anybody who comes into this building who is working as a health care provider.

We've met so many interesting, wonderful people – some from out of state – who are willing to help. The common thread is that we're all health care providers first. That takes precedence over specialty titles. We all have a commonality that we're wanting to take care of patients. People are willing to step up and do what needs to be done.

Leading My Team: There's a lot of demands that need to be met and I know I need to step back and pace myself. Seeing the look in my team members' eyes gives me the feeling that I can't let them down. I can't stop. I have to do what needs to be done.