

Helping Patients Breathe On Their Own Again

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My Role: My job is to direct patient care especially for those unable to breathe effectively on their own. I'm part of a new rapid response group of specialists called SPURT -- Special Pathogens Unit Response Team -- which includes an Attending Physician, Anesthesiologist and a Critical Care Nurse. Now, we call a SPURT code when patients need to be intubated. That's when our role becomes so critically needed to save a life. I assist with the intubation, place the patient on the ventilator and optimize the mechanical ventilator settings necessary for each individual patient's pulmonary needs.

Impact of COVID-19: In just 2 1/2 weeks, the number of intubated patients has more than tripled. There are instances in which we are running from one SPURT code to the next. We have even had multiple simultaneous SPURT codes. It's scary, as well as emotionally and physically draining. But crisis situations like this remind me why I have stayed at Bellevue for 13 years. We all know how to band together and do what's needed in order to provide safe and efficient care to the patients. Managing this crisis brings us all together like a family.

Why I'm on the Frontlines: I love my career and I take pride in bringing patients back to a point when they can breathe again on their own without a ventilator. It is important for me to help COVID-19 patients and I can't do that if I get sick. So, the goal at the start of every shift or when I am running to any emergency or entering a patient's room is to be safe and hand wash, hand wash, hand wash.

Managing Stress: My husband has been a great support. He is cooking and packing my lunch for work. He picks me up from work and drops me off because he knows I'm not getting enough sleep these days and I'm way too tired to drive.

