

MARCH 31, 2020

## HEALTH CARE HEROES

As more patients pour into our facilities with COVID-19 symptoms, our staff continues to come to work, day and night, to provide comfort, care and healing. This week, we highlight an ICU nurse who works the overnight shift, a pharmacist who delivered medication to a quarantined patient, and some of the heroes helping to run our long-term care facilities.

### THE OVERNIGHT ICU NURSE

#### MALGORZATA POKRZYWA

STAFF NURSE, SURGICAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT (SICU), NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS/ CONEY ISLAND

**My role:** I work 7:30 p.m. until 8:00 a.m. I normally take care of surgical patients and occasionally, some medical patients. With the COVID-19 crisis, we had to suspend elective surgeries. Now I am taking care of COVID-19 patients only. They are very ill and require a lot of attention throughout the night.

**Why I'm Fighting COVID-19:** This is a first-ever crisis for me as a nurse. We are all learning something new every night. For all of us, health care workers, things as we knew them up to now will completely change. We don't know yet how or how much will change. But I know I'll be able to look back and be proud to say I was there, responding to all the changes, and helping patients from my community.

**Impact of COVID-19:** There is a lot to navigate with changing equipment and procedures. But



Pokrzywa, center, with members of Coney's ICU team.

our team is going through this together supported by a great head nurse, Mei Kong, who is doing her best to get us the answers we need to best protect our patients, our community, our families and ourselves.

**Managing Stress:** I try to sleep as much as I can during the day.

I have two Generation Z kids at home. They worry about me and I worry about them and it's hard to cope with these feelings and stay strong. Even though it's getting more difficult, we, nurses, try to have whenever possible a few minutes to talk and share to support each other.

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