

FINDING HOPE IN HARLEM



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My Role: Like most other New York hospitals, our patient population is now predominantly COVID-19 patients. So, part of my role is to develop protocols and systems to keep all of the patients coming to Interventional Radiology safe - both those who have COVID-19 and those who don't.

I also make sure our COVID-19 positive patients get special monitoring during procedures because they are often more ill than our average patient. A lot of thought has gone into how to keep everyone safe.

Why I'm on the Front Lines: It's a privilege to be able to help

people by caring for them, communicating with them, reassuring them and treating them, especially in these frightening times.

At Harlem, I feel like there are deep ties to the local community. Many of our staff members live in the neighborhood, have received care here or were even born here. The hospital is a pillar of the community itself and really feels like a family. We are all in it together taking care of our patients.

Finding Hope: It's beautiful how we all celebrate the patients who are getting better at Harlem. There's music that we play when people get extubated like Gloria Gaynor's "I Will Survive" and Bob Marley's "Three Little Birds." When

we hear that, we are very grateful. I see our staff members care for every patient as if that person were part of their family. That's very heartwarming.

You would think that at a time like this, there is a tendency to be frightened and potentially be afraid to get close to patients, to hold their hand or care for them. But, with appropriate PPE and taking safety precautions, our staff members are even more caring because they know how devastating this disease is. The selflessness and heart that characterize Harlem have brought me a lot of optimism and joy during this difficult time.

Managing Stress: My Radiology Department colleague, Dr. Samantha Sung and I have also started some volunteer activities. For the last six weeks, we've been fundraising and delivering care packages to Emergency Departments and ICUs throughout the NYC Health + Hospitals system. We've gone all over the city: Elmhurst, Queens, Jamaica, Lincoln, Woodhull and Harlem. It's been really rewarding. There's something so special about the responses from our colleagues who feel recognized, remembered and supported. Even more than the physical gift, it's giving the feeling that we are not alone in this. That's been very energizing. It helps me relax.