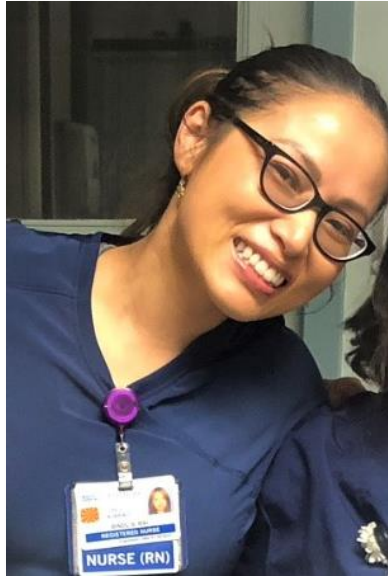


BINDU RAI, RN, MPA

Supervisor of Nurses, Emergency Department

NYC Health + Hospitals | Elmhurst Hospital Center



As a child in Nepal, Bindu Rai was fond of pretending to give “shots” to her two sisters, emulating her mother, who worked as a nurse in a small clinic.

“Seeing her interact with her patients and her staff, along with the people in the community who would often come to her for advice in regards to their well-being, inspired me to be a nurse,” she says. “My upbringing in Nepal, and medical missions over the years, have taught me what it is like to come to a country with no resources. I am constantly striving to learn and grow to ensure that because of me, there is some comfort to someone’s life.

“My goal as a nurse is to help provide care to the underserved population to help them grow and be a part of healthy community,” she continues. “The majority of the nurses who work at NYC Health + Hospitals/Elmhurst come from within the diverse minority backgrounds from the community it serves. As an immigrant myself, I am constantly reminded to be thankful for my opportunities.”

Working at the epicenter of the COVID-19 crisis as a surgical trauma ICU nurse was a life-changing experience, Rai declares. “The events that unfolded during these times cannot be compared to anything but a battlefield or a war zone,” she says. “Looking back now, I could say that I have never been more proud to be a nurse than I am today. The severity of the sickness, patients dying alone, the infectious nature of the disease, the fear of the unknown, and seeing ourselves, our families and coworkers contracting the disease took a toll on all of us.

“When I first heard that we had a COVID-19 patient, I immediately emailed my nursing director to let her know that I was available to volunteer to support the staff during these times of need,” Rai continues. “Based on my own personal experience as a volunteer on numerous medical missions, I knew that staff needed some sort of emotional support through this pandemic. Upon my director’s approval, I took it upon myself to learn about donning and doffing process from the nursing educators so I could facilitate teaching night nurses to smoothly transition through the PPE process.

I make rounds to different units each day, to help them with donning and doffing PPE, medication administration, assisting with ventilators, or simply talking to them about the changes rapidly taking place in the hospital.

"My goal was to listen and be present for the nurses in a way that relieved their sufferings," she added. "I feel like this has been a healing therapy for me as well, as I got to connect with the nurses and hear their stories." Rai collaborated with nursing leadership and administration on the Helping Healers Heal (H3) program, a system-side effort to support staff during the pandemic, making numerous rounds with the H3 team. "I have continued to make the rounds to this day to different floors in order to support the nurses and doing through have established a bond that I would have never known if I had not volunteered," she notes. The pandemic has changed the way I look at life. Over the months I feel like I have grown not only as a person but as a human being as well. Being present for the patients while supporting each other as nurses through the COVID-19 pandemic has to be my biggest accomplishment in my entirety of my career."

Rai recently was promoted to Emergency Department supervisor of nurses. "While this role has been challenging at times, I love the fact that I am transitioning in to a position of leadership where I will be able to listen to nurses, learn from them and implement changes in the future. Working together and rising above the challenges is what attracts me to continue working as a nurse within the constantly evolving healthcare field."