

CYNTHIA SPEED, RN, BSN

Head Nurse, Ambulatory Care Services

NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham



A positive outlook and a strong commitment to the community have infused Cynthia Speed's 37 years in the nursing profession. "What inspired me to become a nurse is my desire, from my childhood years, to be of service to the community and to other people," she asserts. "I strongly felt a positive impact in one's life can make a tremendous difference in the outcome of one's life. To bring care and compassion to someone helped me to consider other people before myself."

Speed notes that being a public health nurse is unique. "I have the privilege of working amongst a very diverse population of patients," she points out. "I have found it most rewarding serving those who are, otherwise, forgotten about."

"The catchment areas that the public health system serves are often the indigent that receive little to no healthcare; many are uninsured and do not earn enough to cover healthcare costs," she continues.

"The private system tends to care for more of the insured, financially stable patient population. Although it often has the financial backing and resources, not many people remember those who lack the means to receive consistent, necessary care."

Speed is dedicated to improving health education among her patients. "My motivation to continue being a nurse each and every day is to make a difference in the lives of the patients I encounter; taking the time to provide health education, through teaching, to patients and parents that will help to improve their lives and outcomes," she comments. "I believe any area in which one serves has room for improvement. By improving things, the lives of patients and people can be impacted for the better. Some changes are inevitable; I look for as many positive changes as I can create."

As head nurse at NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham, Speed prides herself on delivering healthcare with integrity. "Integrity is defined as following your moral or ethical convictions and doing the right thing in all circumstances, even if no one is watching you," she explains. "As a nurse, I must apply those principles each and every time I provide care to a patient. In nursing, as you sharpen your skills, you are trusted to demonstrate your ability to serve your patients without someone taking you by the hand to ensure you do the right thing."

"Integrity helps you to receive that very trust that all care provided has been given honestly," she adds. "Integrity is a value I have utilized from the day I encountered my very first patient, and it is practicing integrity that has brought me to being the professional nurse I am today."