

JOHN RILEY, RN

Staff Nurse, Ambulatory Care Services

NYC Health + Hospitals | Woodhull



Staff nurse John Riley is no stranger to the frontlines of health care, having worked as a 911 emergency medical technician (EMT) prior to becoming a nurse. "In that capacity I was able to provide care for those in immediate crisis," he recollects. "Although I enjoyed my work, it became apparent to me that in a first responder role, my capacity to mitigate factors that contributed to the long-term health of my patients was limited. I began to realize that my personal approach to healing was more about connecting with people that it was about lights and sirens.

"It was this desire to connect with and get to know my patients better, that inspired me to pursue a career in nursing, and more specifically in community health-based ambulatory care," he continues. "I feel that connecting with the patients in my community enables me to facilitate changes that improve patient outcomes, and may potentially reduce long-term hospital stays."

In his five-plus years as a nurse, Riley has discovered, "a sense of camaraderie, belonging, and collaboration that for me is unique to Woodhull and NYC Health + Hospitals; it feels like more than a workplace to me - it feels like a community. "One of the things I am most proud of at NYC Health + Hospitals has been my involvement in Woodhull Hospital's Ambulatory Care Shared Governance Council," Riley points out. "Participating on the Council has provided me with an opportunity to facilitate positive change for both staff and patients, and to empower others to do the same.

Innovations like shared governance enable frontline nurses to have an active voice in regard to the direction of their respective practices. This process imbues a sense of ownership in our practices and can inspire us to become more invested in our areas, our facility, and our organization. All positive change has to start from within. Participation in shared governance is a fantastic way for all nurses to endeavor to be the change we wish to see in our facilities. Multiple individuals working together towards achieving the best possible product for ourselves and our patients represents perhaps the most noble goal any of us can strive for."

Being a nurse has allowed Riley to impact his patients and the community in unexpected ways. "The things that motivate me to be a nurse every day are not the things I thought they would be when I went to nursing school," he comments. "In my tenure at Woodhull I don't know that I have 'saved a life' in the traditional sense - there are very few STAT orders in my area, and I have not performed chest

compressions on an actual person since I left EMS. Despite this, I do believe I make a difference in people's lives. The simple things like the satisfaction a patient displays when they achieve a health related goal, the support of my leadership, and fellow staff, and the daily rapport I have with my patients have all been instrumental in helping me redefine my role in nursing. I do believe human connection can be a large component of the healing process. Striving to establish and maintain those connections is what motivates me to put my scrubs on every morning."

Riley says he believes strongly in the value of compassion in his work. "Compassion can make the difference in how a patient views their healthcare experience and can be instrumental in directing their individual approach towards health maintenance," he notes. "Any healthcare worker can provide treatment to address a medical issue, but those who practice compassion do more than treat the body, they humanize healthcare for their patients. They inspire and empower patients to play a greater role in managing their own health, because our compassion enables them to realize that they are cared for, and that they matter."