

LISSETTE MAESTRE, BSN, RN

Assistant Director of Nursing

NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham Health, Sydenham



Being a nurse is all about building relationships for Lissette Maestre- relationships with patients, with the community, with co-workers and with the greater healthcare profession. "What motivates me to continue being a nurse every day are the relationships I have built with my patients," she relates. "I come in daily knowing they trust I will be there to assist them in the many challenges they face big or small.

"As a nurse professional, you manage different aspects of patient care and build trusting relationships to improve their lives as a whole," she continues. "As nurses, we have the opportunity to transform the healthcare system to create more accessibility and provide high-quality care for patients. Nurses should be involved in updating outdated policies, mitigating cultural barriers, and expanding upon our scope of practice. When nurses work at the top of their license we have our moment to shine as contributors to the health practice. When nurses participate in improving and making

changes it allows for us to build healthier communities."

Maestre points out that nowhere is this more important than in the public healthcare realm. "Being a nurse for the City's public health system is unique from being a nurse at a private hospital because it allows you to provide care for the most vulnerable populations who struggle daily with many social determinates of health," she explains. "Our healthcare teams work collaboratively across the system to link patients to the care they need regardless of ability to pay or immigration status. Our public health system has an abundance of resources to address the ongoing needs of patients."

NYC Health + Hospitals also provides expanded opportunities for professional development, Maestre notes. "Nurses have an opportunity to expand their growth potential through the various programs provided through our public health system such as RN to BS Career Enhancement, Nurse Residency Program, Nurse Leadership Education, as well as many other courses and trainings," she notes.

"During my time at NYC Health + Hospitals, I expanded my nursing skills by collaborating with IT and providers to create nursing intake templates for the Ambulatory Care Office-Based Buprenorphine Treatment program to assist in standardized documentation for individuals with opioid use disorder."

That collaboration led to a rewarding patient encounter, Maestre recalls. "My most memorable moment as a nurse at NYC Health + Hospitals was when a patient returned to thank me for making a difference in his life after two years of being 'Lost to Follow-Up.' He was struggling with opioid use disorder and sought treatment at our facility. However, after some time in care he was 'Lost to Follow-Up.' When he returned to thank me, I almost did not recognize him. He had gained weight, was smiling and full of excitement. He moved back to New York and reported he has maintained abstinence. He stated to me, 'I came here to tell you I am one of your success stories.' At that moment I realized he was not 'Lost to Follow-Up' - he found a new path in life."

Maestre says she values the role of compassion in caring for patients. "When one provides compassionate care, you are practicing good manners, show personal interest, take the time to think about what they have been through, and always acknowledge their feelings," she says. "That in turn builds trusting and respectful relationships with your patients."