

MARTHA HERRERA, RN

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Martha Herrera says reassuring and caring for patients has been the most rewarding aspect of her job in her 10 years as a staff nurse for NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham Health Vanderbilt.

"One of the most memorable moments during my time as a NYC Health + Hospitals nurse was when a patient of mine was newly diagnosed with cancer," she explains. "The patient was emotionally distraught and looked to me for comfort and guidance in what was to be expected.

"Being able to collaborate with other healthcare team members made it possible to provide the patient with the efficient care that she needed," Herrera continues, adding, "The outcome was a positive one for the patient and she was thankful, as was her family. This moment reminded me of why I take pride in being a nurse."

Herrera credits a neighbor with prompting her to enter the nursing profession. "When I moved to Staten Island, I was a stay-at-home mom," she recalls. "I had a neighbor who was a registered nurse and she inspired me to become a nurse as well. Through her guidance and encouragement, I attended nursing school to attain my nursing degree, which was a life-changing event."

Being a nurse in a public health system "is unique in the way that it enables me to serve the minority community," Herrera points out. "I am able to relate to the patients because throughout my years, I have required assistance the way they do."

Herrera says her patients are a constant source of motivation and inspiration for her, citing, "the satisfaction the patients display when I am able to assist them and knowing the patients are comfortable and trusting of my assistance," as key factors in dealing with patients.

Compassion also plays a vital role in Herrera's approach to nursing. "Compassion is a value that stands out in my way of practice," she remarks. "I find that with compassion comes understanding. I feel that as health care workers we should treat others as we would want to be treated."