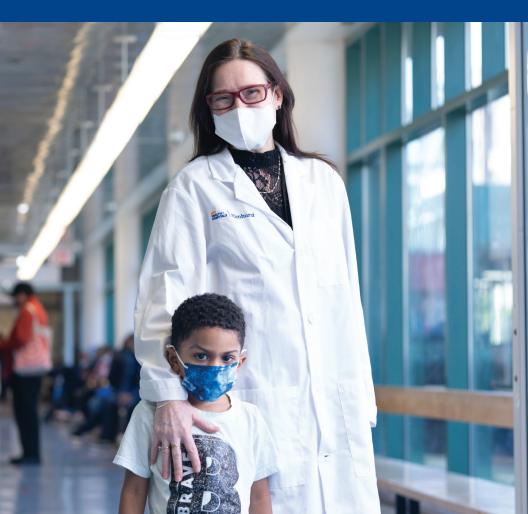
# Doctors' Day 2023

# NYC HEALTH+ HOSPITALS



## NYC Health + Hospitals Medical Directors

NYC Health + Hospitals/Bellevue Nate Link, MD

NYC Health + Hospitals/Carter Michael Schuster, MD

NYC Health + Hospitals/Coler Mohammad Rahman, MD

NYC Health + Hospitals/ Correctional Health Services

Patricia Yang, DrPH

NYC Health + Hospitals/Elmhurst

Jasmin Moshipur, MD

NYC Health + Hospitals/ Gotham Health, Belvis

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NYC Health + Hospitals/ Gotham Health, East New York

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Morris Gagliardi, MD

NYC Health + Hospitals/ Gotham Health, Morrisania

Jeremy O'Connor, MD

NYC Health + Hospitals/ Gotham Health Sydenham

Amin Hakim, MD

NYC Health + Hospitals/Gouverneur Sherry Humphrey, MD NYC Health + Hospitals/Harlem Maurice Wright, MD

NYC Health + Hospitals/Jacobi Michael Zinaman, MD

NYC Health + Hospitals/Kings County Rajesh Verma, MD

NYC Health + Hospitals/Lincoln Marshall Lewis, MD

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NYC Health + Hospitals/Metropolitan John Pellicone, MD

NYC Health + Hospitals/ North Central Bronx

Michael Zinaman, MD

NYC Health + Hospitals/Queens Dave Holson, MD

NYC Health + Hospitals/South Brooklyn Health

Terence Brady, MD

NYC Health + Hospitals/Woodhull Ross MacDonald, MD

MetroPlusHealth Sanjiv S. Shah, MD



# Doctors' Day 2023

May 9, 2023

# Welcome

**Mitchell Katz, MD** President and Chief Executive Officer

Machelle Allen, MD Senior Vice President, System Chief Medical Officer

# NYC Health + Hospitals 2023 Doctors' Day Recipients

#### NYC Health + Hospitals/Bellevue

#### **Robert Pitts, MD**

Medical Director, HIV Prevention and Pride Center

#### NYC Health + Hospitals/Carter

#### Pappathi Anbalagan, MD

Interim Deputy CMO and Nursing Facility Medical Director

#### NYC Health + Hospitals/Coler

Howard J. Finger, DO Attending Physician

NYC Health + Hospitals/ Correctional Health Services

#### Sady R. Sultan, MD

Psychiatrist

#### NYC Health + Hospitals/Elmhurst

#### Guandong Liu, MD, FACP, FASAM

Attending Physician, Internal Medicine

NYC Health + Hospitals/ Gotham Health, Belvis

#### Karam Abdul Karim Al-Shaikhly, MD

Primary Care Physician

NYC Health + Hospitals/ Gotham Health, East New York

#### Evlyn Brown, MD, ABFM

Primary Care Physician

NYC Health + Hospitals/ Gotham Health, Gouverneur

#### Anthony J. Dedousis, MD

Chief of Integrative Psychiatry

NYC Health + Hospitals/ Gotham Health, Morrisania

#### Deborah Ottenheimer, MD FACOG

Director, Women's Health Services

NYC Health + Hospitals/ Gotham Health, Sydenham

#### Thomas Richardson, MD Attending Physician, Pediatrics

Attending Physician, Fediatrics

#### NYC Health + Hospitals/Gouverneur Shilpi Ahluwalia, DMD Dentist

NYC Health + Hospitals/Harlem

#### Vel Sivapalan, MD, FACP

Director, Infectious Diseases Fellowship Training Program

#### NYC Health + Hospitals/Jacobi

Steven R. Hahn, MD, FACP

Attending Physician

NYC Health + Hospitals/Kings County Michelle L. Feinberg, MD

Attending Neurosurgeon and Medical Director of Neurosciences ICU

NYC Health + Hospitals/Lincoln Laura Z. Hyde, MD, MPH

Attending Surgeon

NYC Health + Hospitals/McKinney Beena Alexander, MD

Attending Physician

NYC Health + Hospitals/Metropolitan

#### Savi Mushiyev, MD, FACC

Chief, Division of Cardiology

NYC Health + Hospitals/ North Central Bronx

#### Yvonne Man-Yee Choi, MD, FACOG

Director of Labor and Delivery

#### NYC Health + Hospitals/Queens

#### Debra Ann Ferman, MD

Attending Physician, Queens Cancer Center

NYC Health + Hospitals/ Simulation Center

#### Daniel Lugassy, MD

Emergency Medicine Attending Physician and Director of Simulation

NYC Health + Hospitals/ South Brooklyn Health

#### Rafael Fazylov, MD, FACS

Associate Chairman, Department of Surgery

NYC Health + Hospitals/Woodhull Lisa D. Brabham, MD, FACOG

Director of Gynecology

MetroPlusHealth

#### Julie Myers, MD, MPH

Deputy Chief Medical Officer

# **Resiliency, Compassion, Dedication**



Mitchell Katz, MD President and CEO



Machelle Allen, MD Senior Vice President System Chief Medical Officer

When we read through the backgrounds of this year's Doctors' Day honorees, we were both struck by some common themes.

Although this group represents a wide variety of specialties and they come from diverse backgrounds and cultures, they all share stories of resilience, a passion for building bridges and closing equity gaps in medicine, and patterns of overcoming obstacles in order to become physicians. Some have lived through unimaginable hardship only to dedicate their lives to caring for others.

Not a single one of them walked down Easy Street into the careers they have today. But that is truly the profile of the NYC Health + Hospitals Doctor.

These 23 excellent physicians; psychiatrists, obstetricians, gynecologists, Emergency Medicine doctors, Primary Care physicians, Neurosurgeons and more, all deliver empathy, compassion, innovation and expertise, to some of the most vulnerable people in New York City.

While they take care of patients who need to be seen and heard whether it is because they are sick and have no resources, they are dying and have no family, they are marginalized and have no community, or they are simply new Americans who deserve good health care.

These doctors also take care of us, their colleagues. The excellence in service provided through the recent pandemic made NYC Health + Hospitals a sought after provider of choice by those who actually have choice.

Their work has improved lives, and likely saved lives. And despite the demands, every day they get up and do it again.

To these outstanding doctors, our 2023 Doctors' Day Honorees, we say congratulations, thank you, and keep going: we need you.

Mitch Katz

Machelle Allen

#### Robert A. Pitts, MD

Medical Director, HIV Prevention and Pride Health Center

NYC Health + Hospitals/Bellevue



# Providing Gender-Affirming Care for All

Dr. Robert Anwar Pitts' work has run the gamut from A to Z — a Howard Hughes fellowship in Argentina to a Fulbright fellowship in Zimbabwe — but as a biracial gay man, he plays favorites with the alphabet, giving a centrality to marginalized LGBTQ patients.

In 2018, he founded what's now known as NYC Health + Hospitals/Bellevue's Pride Health Center, which now cares for nearly 400 LGBTQ patients, 20 percent of whom are uninsured, 20 percent of whom speak a primary language other than English, and 80 percent of whom identify as either Black or Latino. In five years of care, none of them have become HIV-positive thanks to a suite of innovative and empathetic approaches, including a clinical trial for long-acting injectable PrEP.

"Essentially what we do is provide genderaffirming equitable care," Dr. Pitts says. "It doesn't matter your race, gender, where you're from, you deserve being treated equitably. That's what we're all about. Coming from a multiracial family and being queer has sensitized me to inequalities in healthcare — different populations who have poorer outcomes, not because they're innately unhealthy but just because those are representations of inequality." When the monkeypox (MPX) outbreak struck in the summer of 2022, Dr. Pitts became a national voice on the matter at platforms including Good Morning America and NPR. "As a queer provider," he says, "I had to stand up and do everything I could do to help my community get through that crisis."

His intersectional identity has played out in his professional efficiency as well. "Nothing can be accomplished or be sustainable without interdisciplinary teamwork nursing, admin, finance, pharmacy, environment. Every team member and every staffer is valued," he explained.

Bellevue's Chief Medical Officer Dr. Nate Link was effusive in their praise.

"Through his multilayered efforts, for so many vulnerable New Yorkers, Dr. Pitts was able to minimize the care inequalities that are so often demonstrated during infectious outbreaks," says Dr. Link.

"It is often said that the job of a leader is taking their group to a new place. Dr. Pitts' contributions serve as perfect examples of such transformational leadership. The programs have indeed taken us to a new place, providing an immediate and sustainable impact for our patients."

#### Pappathi Anbalagan, MD

Interim Deputy CMO and Nursing Facility Medical Director

NYC Health + Hospitals/Carter



# A Bright Light Shining in Harlem

Growing up in southern India, Dr. Pappathi Anbalagan was familiar with living in the shadows. Her father — a farmer in a tiny Tamil Nadu village — worked outside with plenty of sunshine, but Dr. Anbalagan knew their status as have-nots.

"We didn't have great healthcare in our village, so he encouraged me to become a physician," she says.

It wasn't that easy. She did volunteer work that sent her into medical care for folks in villages even poorer, smaller, and more remote than her own.

Once she arrived in New York, she couldn't land any residencies so she enrolled in a Catholic nursing school in Queens where a nun encouraged her to shift tracks into pharmacy. She also volunteered to shadow a pediatrician.

Now as Interim Deputy Chief Medical Officer and Nursing Facility Medical Director at NYC Health + Hospitals/Carter, she faces different health care challenges: caring for patients with dementia and battling uncertainty around the mysteries of COVID-19. "Medicine is a mystery," she says. "We cannot really know everything or cure everything. We have to really work on it. I cannot always give 100 percent assurance that this will be done, this will be cured."

It's not as defeatist as it may sound. At the height of the pandemic, Dr. Anbalagan served as Chief Medical Officer at Roosevelt Island Medical Center, a surge hospital, providing care to more than 500 patients and residents.

"During her enduring career she skillfully has transitioned between direct resident care and medical leadership duties and back, as the need arises," says Dr. Michael Schuster, Carter's Interim Chief Medical Officer. "An expert clinician, she has consistently demonstrated excellent leadership qualities while collaborating with other disciplines to produce outstanding patient outcomes."

#### Howard J. Finger, DO

Attending Physician NYC Health + Hospitals/Coler



# Coler's Longest Serving Physician Remains an Innovator

Having joined NYC Health + Hospitals/ Coler in 1985, Dr. Howard Finger is now the hospital's longest-serving physician and one of its most-innovative.

Last year, he was the lead author in a study published in The Journal of Clinical Ethics about an algorithm he developed in conjunction with the Bioethics Council to help care teams of unbefriended cases to make end-of-life decisions when the patients lack both decisionmaking capacity and next of kin or other surrogates.

For someone who joined Coler roughly when Mark Zuckerberg was born, Dr. Finger has leaned into the 21st century.

The algorithm basically synthesizes the opinions of the care team — attending physicians and nurses, the social worker, the nutritionist, psychiatrist and palliative care consultant. "The team is as close to many of these residents as anybody," says Dr. Finger. "They've been there for them for the long haul. They have a sense of who they are and are able to comfort them."

It's non-proprietary, as open to anybody as other clinical interventions like the Heimlich maneuver or Lamaze breathing. It's also urgent. Approximately 20 percent of Coler's patients are unbefriended (as opposed to a national average of less than 5 percent, Dr. Finger explained). Whether as a direct result of his work or not, Coler had no COVID-related deaths from June 2020 to December 2021 — a remarkable feat for a vulnerable population who are also about 73 percent non-White, Dr. Finger noted.

"In a sense, I look at myself as a late bloomer. With all my past experience, it's actually the last few years when I was able to accomplish the most," he says. "I hope that serves as an inspiration to others the way it has inspired me: it's never too late!"

#### Sady R. Sultan, MD

Psychiatrist

NYC Health + Hospitals/ Correctional Health Services



# An Empathetic Soul for Patients in Correctional Health

Dr. Sady Sultan knows the power of a simple pill or injection. As a month-old fetus, Dr. Sultan lost his 34-year-old father before he was even born. Pulmonary edema had taken him after rheumatic fever weakened his heart. A casual dose of penicillin could have prevented the chain of events, but it was unavailable in their Venezuelan home.

With friends and family telling him constant stories about what his father was like, Dr. Sultan learned the frailty of life from the moment he was born.

It drew him into child and adolescent psychiatry, where he worked at NYC Health + Hospitals/Harlem for 35 years. He was often a big brother or a father figure. "Many of the kids who didn't have a father figure, I related a lot to the issues that come out of that," he says. "It gave me an easy empathy."

His actions inspired his two sons to follow in his footsteps, one as a child psychiatrist and the other as a pediatrician. (His daughter is still in college — no pressure!)

In 2010, he pivoted to psychiatry for NYC Health + Hospitals/Correctional Health Services patients on Rikers Island.

There he lets patients be heard. As a bonus, he also is free to converse in Spanish with them — 25 percent of whom prefer to express themselves in that language.

"I try to get them to see themselves in their own future in a positive and optimistic way," he says. "When they feel like you're treating them like any other patient that you're treating them like they don't have a criminal record — that's when you really engage their humanity and their possibility."

He learned that, in a way, from his father.

His father fled the Civil War in Spain, having been tipped off by a friend in government that his protests against the dictator Francisco Franco had him scheduled for arrest and execution. It taught Dr. Sultan how easy it is to be labeled a criminal in a broken, biased, bitter system.

"I try to live up to his expectations," he says. In practice, he exceeds any expectations.

Dr. Patsy Yang, Senior Vice President for Correctional Health Services says Dr. Sultan could easily thrive in any healthcare setting. Yet, he has chosen to work with the incarcerated population due to his commitment to caring for the underserved.

"He has shown a remarkable ability to work with patients of all ages, exhibiting a sense of empathy and compassion that puts even the most-guarded individuals at ease," she says.

## Guangdong Liu, MD, FACP, FASAM

Attending Physician, Internal Medicine
NYC Health + Hospitals/Elmhurst



# An Adventure Every Day

As a child in China, Dr. Guangdong Liu lived through his mother's many chronic medical conditions and came to regard her doctors and nurses as heroes. It inspired him to become a physician himself. But in the early 1990s, when Dr. Liu was working as a pulmonary and critical care physician in a teaching hospital in Shanghai, he became fascinated by the new technologies that were revolutionizing the world. He began taking computer science courses, and when he moved to the United States in 1998 Dr. Liu decided to change careers, combining his interests to become a systems analyst for New York State's Medicaid Choice program.

And then 9/11 happened. "My office was at 30 Broad Street, and I saw the first tower on fire and then the airplane hitting the second tower," Dr. Liu recalls. "All the suffering made me decide to be a physician again. I became a first-year internal medicine resident 20 years after I graduated medical school."

Dr. Liu joined the Ambulatory Care Department of NYC Health + Hospitals/ Elmhurst in 2006. The position included stints supervising resident teams on the inpatient wards, and Dr. Liu became a favorite among the staff, who found inspiration in his come-early-stay-late work ethic and the natural rapport he had with patients. In 2015, Dr. Liu moved to the hospital's Internal Medicine Department. "As a hospitalist, you feel like you are a conductor of a beautiful symphony, everything well-organized and well-done," he says. "We see so many mysterious cases. It's like an adventure every day. I also love teaching residents and students. They keep me thinking and I learn a lot from them."

Dr. Liu's 17 years at Elmhurst have given him experience and expertise in a wide range of subspecialties. He is boardcertified in addiction medicine, obesity medicine and hospice and palliative care. Dr. Liu has also developed expertise in disaster medicine with the city's Office of Emergency Management. In 2012, he served as Medical Director of a shelter at Queens College for evacuees of Hurricane Sandy with special needs.

At Elmhurst and all of the city's public hospitals, Dr. Liu says, "Patients place a great deal of trust in us and they deserve the best."

#### Karam Abdul Karim Al-Shaikhly, MD

Primary Care Physician

NYC Health + Hospitals/ Gotham Health, Belvis



# In the South Bronx, Small Touches Create Strong Bonds

Iraqi-born and British-trained, Dr. Karam Abdul Karim Al-Shaikhly often sees a lot of the best of universal healthcare at NYC Health + Hospitals: "We treat everybody. We don't look at insurance. We don't discriminate. We treat everyone and I love it."

The other universality comes from the patients' side. "I love that you never know what's coming through the door. It can be anything. I like the general knowledge of being a general physician, the holistic approach. And it comes with this beautiful privilege of being seen by them as 'my doctor.' We're not the only doctor they see. But we're often the only doctor they know."

Those connections create bonds among family — a patient recommends Dr. Al-Shaikhly to their cousin or brings in their spouse or sibling or child. It's a lot of small touches. "I believe in the little things that you can add — the little details — to make a difference," she says. "With doctors who see all the details of your life, you may not need to see a hospital. Health and happiness are made of small moments, the little things in life." What kinds of little things?

Listening, for one. "A lot of people don't have anyone to listen to them," she says. "They think they're depressed but they just need to be heard. You listen a few times, they recover."

Or respect. "I see a lot of patients who just got out of jail, homeless, living in a shelter, going through a rough time. They don't expect respect. Give them hope and a little bit of positivity, and they flourish."

Aside from medicine, her specialty is putting the icing on the cake. Literally. While discussing her passion for baking, she can go into detailed description about the differences between frosting and mere buttercream. And she uses that knowledge and passion to make beautifully elaborate cakes that look like a wreath or melting candles or snowmen. They're a big hit with her three children: a 13-year-old, a oneyear-old, and a baby due in September.

She's humble about both her professionalism and her creativity. "We all study the same science," she says. "But how we do things varies. That's where the icing on the cake becomes important."

#### Evlyn Brown, MD, ABFM

#### Primary Care Physician

NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham Health, East New York



#### Healing Brooklyn's Underserved

For Dr. Evlyn Brown, being a physician in New York City's public health system ties directly back to her childhood in Aruba and the death of her 14-year-old brother when she was 12. "I'm from an island whose name evokes the exotic but where daily living is etched out along meager lives for most," Dr. Brown says. "I remember the anguishing visits to the hospital as my brother battled kidney disease, and I've often wondered about the quality of care he was given. It stimulated my desire to pursue a career in medicine, a resolve to provide exacting standards of care to patients regardless of their backgrounds and make a difference in the lives of both patients and their families."

Dr. Brown came to Brooklyn for college in 1976, graduating from Long Island University before going back to the West Indies to attend Ross University Medical School on a full scholarship. She practiced in Aruba for several years and returned to Brooklyn for a family medicine residency at Downstate Medical Center. After a career in private practice, she joined the adult Primary Care Department of NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham Health, East New York in 2020. "Being a physician within the public health system connects me to patients just like my brother. Treating underserved patients from economically challenged backgrounds reminds me of why I chose to practice medicine." She cherishes the gift she gets back from her patients: a simple "Thank you, Doc."

She recalls a recent case that was emblematic of that satisfaction: A 41-yearold woman who came in for a routine follow-up with no symptoms of any problems. But when Dr. Brown and the staff couldn't get a normal blood pressure reading on the woman's extremities, she called EMS.

"She didn't want to go to the hospital because she said she felt fine." But Dr. Brown insisted. "She was assessed at Kings County and then transferred to Bellevue ICU, where she was diagnosed with a pulmonary embolism. She was told that had there been a delay beyond that day there was a very high probability that she would not have survived to the next day. It is moments like these that underscore why I practice medicine."

#### Anthony J. Dedousis, MD

#### Chief of Integrative Psychiatry

NYC Health + Hospitals/ Gotham Health, Gouverneur



# Serving Mental Health Needs in Lower Manhattan

Dr. Anthony Dedousis says that being a NYC Health + Hospitals psychiatrist has an important benefit to him – and ultimately to his patients – that reflect what health care can be when profit isn't a factor. "Working for the city's public health system offers me the time and the opportunity to provide the encompassing care for my patients that would not be afforded to me at private institutions," he says.

It's an assessment based on a wealth of experience that Dr. Dedousis has had in numerous settings since joining the system nine years ago. He has been a psychiatric unit chief at NYC Health + Hospitals/Kings County, an attending on the teaching unit at NYC Health + Hospitals/Bellevue, and, since 2018, a psychiatrist with a ride-ranging portfolio at NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham Health.

Dr. Dedousis is a committed New Yorker. He grew up in Fort Hamilton, Brooklyn, earned his bachelor's degree at New York University and graduated from New York Medical College. He left the city for his residency and a fellowship at the University of North Carolina before coming home to join NYC Health + Hospitals in 2014.

As Chief of Integrative Psychiatry at Gotham Health, Gouverneur, Dr. Dedousis provides care to children and adolescents in the pediatric clinic, treats LBGTQ+ youth in the Judson Health Center and contributes to the family-oriented, culturally competent health care services at Gotham Health, Roberto Clemente. He also provides psychiatric consultation for peripartum patients in Gouverneur's women's health division and works closely with the Asian bicultural clinic.

"I love working with different populations," Dr. Dedousis says, and in all these settings, having the time and freedom to engage with patients and their families has often been the key to making breakthroughs. While working with youth with psychosis, for example, he was able to meet with patients in their residences. In another instance, he was working with an inpatient who had complex psychosocial and medical conditions that did not respond to treatment. Over time, he developed a trusting relationship that helped him forge a treatment plan that she participated in and improved her symptoms. One thing he's learned: "People feel and respond to compassion."

Collaborating with colleagues is another great benefit of being a NYC Health + Hospitals psychiatrist. "The city provides a supportive framework in which to practice medicine," Dr. Dedousis says. "Working with a team of very compassionate and motivated mental health professionals who are attracted to the important work of community psychiatry is a unique blessing."

#### Deborah Ottenheimer, MD, FACOG

Director, Women's Health Services

NYC Health + Hospitals/ Gotham Health, Morrisania



# A Champion for Women in the South Bronx

Back in her high school days when she was just "Deb," Dr. Deborah Ottenheimer worked as an options counselor at a family planning clinic and as a rape crisis counselor. That was the early 1980s, less than a decade after Roe v. Wade legalized abortion.

But that service shaped everything that followed: ethnographic research in Cameroon on contraception among Ewondu women: a senior thesis on patterns of injury against victims of domestic violence; consulting at a medical clinic in Rwanda: forensic medical evaluation of women seeking asylum; abortion services at Planned Parenthood here in New York; acute care for earthquake survivors in Haiti, as well as lectures to local midwives; a free clinic for uninsured survivors of Hurricane Sandy in Far Rockaway; development of evaluation for pediatric mass rape in the Democratic Republic of Congo; development of a

multi-specialty clinic for women affected by genitalia mutilation; and the establishment of a refugee health program for survivors of torture.

lt's a lot.

And yet Dr. Ottenheimer sees it all as never enough. Having joined NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham Health, Morrisania in the summer of 2021 as its Director of Women's Health Services, she has already nearly doubled the program's capacity for patient care. She has a voracious appetite for growth.

"My days are full of moments that make me proud," she says. "It's really the little things that inspire me — a nurse practitioner acquiring a new skill, a PCA going above and beyond for a patient, a student suddenly understanding a concept that had confused them. I always try to encourage members of our team to learn and grow and expand their horizons."

#### Thomas Richardson, MD

#### Attending Physician, Pediatrics

NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham Health, Sydenham



#### Improving Children's Health in Harlem

Dr. Thomas Richardson came to NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham Health, Sydenham, as a young pediatrician at a tumultuous time. It was late 2020. The two pediatricians who had staffed Sydenham for almost 30 years had retired just as the site was emerging from the pandemic that had upended the lives of the families it serves.

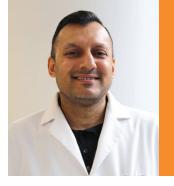
"Dr. Richardson was – and still is – the only full-time pediatrician at Sydenham," says Dr. Mary McCord, Sydenham's Interim Medical Director and Director of Pediatrics. "Not an easy situation for a first job out of residency. But Dr. Richardson did not flinch. He dedicated himself to the families and to the day-in, day-out needs of the pediatric practice. There were bumps in the road. Families were angry that the services they had been used to were different. But he saw it as an opportunity to learn."

Nearly three years later, Dr. Richardson is the backbone of the Sydenham pediatric practice. He has quickly gained the trust of families, evidenced by the annual increases in flu and HPV vaccine acceptance and serves as the supervising physician at three of Gotham's school-based health sites. He also started and coordinates Sydenham's Reach Out and Read literacy support program. Dr. Richardson grew up in suburban New Jersey with equal interest in science and the arts. He chose medicine after volunteering and shadowing at a local hospital, and he knew before finishing medical school at Rutgers that he wanted to work in a public hospital system. "Of course, our system has its challenges but there's also a greater sense of opportunity to help others," he says, citing not just the delivery of high-quality care but also the chance to increase patients' health literacy and ease their stress. The key to it all, he has found, is in how doctors see the role they play in their patients' lives.

"Maya Angelou said, 'People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.' " Dr. Richardson says. "Sydenham has deepened my understanding of the importance of respect in medicine. I understand my entire role as a doctor differently now than I did three years ago. I've learned I am here to give advice and to build relationships but not to take over, not to solve problems for people, and not to demand things from people. I have learned that my knowledge is meaningless and powerless if people can't feel respect emanating from every word, tone and gesture."

#### Shilpi Ahluwalia, DMD

Dentist NYC Health + Hospitals/Gouverneur



# **Transforming Lives Through Dentistry**

From a childhood playing with stray dogs in government housing in New Delhi, Dr. Shilpi Ahluwalia came to the United States at just four years old with his parents firmly set on him becoming a doctor.

In a profession where patients often face long paths and grim compromises, Dr. Ahluwalia gravitated towards dentistry for its ability to transform patients quickly and substantially.

"We can mitigate problems — pain right away with a quick root canal or patching up a broken tooth," he says. "People feel ashamed and we help them go back to their lives quickly. Immediate resolution for a lot of cases. It's transformative. Patients are very grateful. Their life has been fixed, at least for that day, that moment." In short, Dr. Ahluwalia restores patients' crowns.

"It's always been an intimate career, having your hands in a stranger's mouth. You don't get much more intimate than that," he laughed. "But, yeah, it has become a little more intimate. There's a lot of talking. You act like a therapist a little bit. I had patients return from the pandemic teary-eyed. They maybe didn't know how to react or respond or felt uncomfortable. I just told them, hey, it's good to see you again. There was a period that was bleak and hopeless, despair was high, but you give people new dentures and the first thing they do to try them out is they smile."

At NYC Health + Hospitals/Gouverneur, Dr. Ahluwalia often sees patients more frequently than their children do. He remembered a woman in the peak of the pandemic who took comfort that he reminded her of her son.

"Dr. Ahluwalia always rises to the challenges that present when caring for our frail elderly population," says Dr. Humphrey. "Providing dental care for dementia patients can present with multiple difficulties but Dr. Ahluwalia manages with a calm and gentle bedside manner."

Dr. Ahluwalia joked that he preferred child patients for their honesty. "You ask 'em 'Have you brushed today?' and they just say 'Nope,'" he laughed. "Brutally honest."

And he quipped that patients' newfound lease on life had him curious about a study he wanted to try: seeing if post-pandemic patients were finally flossing more.

## Vel Sivapalan, MD, FACP

Director, Infectious Diseases Fellowship Training Program

NYC Health + Hospitals/Harlem



# Teaching the Next Generation of Infectious Disease Specialists

In his Native Sri Lanka, Dr. Vel Sivapalan's parents — both teachers — raised a squadron of international doctors: a physician sister in Canada, a physician brother in the United Kingdom, and Dr. Sivapalan himself, who has been a physician at NYC Health + Hospitals/ Harlem since 1989, having fallen in love with the place during his residency.

But secretly he has followed in his parents' footsteps as a teacher: training HIV scholars in 2001 and infectious disease fellows in 2005, and serving as a formal mentor to a minority clinic fellow in 2009.

At Harlem, he is better known to his students as "Dr. Siva," having served as Director of the hospital's Division of Infectious Diseases' fellowship training program since 2005. He has also been Course Director of Columbia University's clinical infectious diseases elective as well as its major clinical year for the same stretch. Moreover, he has taught clinical medicine to third-year Columbia medical students since 1990. And since 1995, he has given an annual lecture to physician assistant students at the City University of New York's Sophie Davis school of biomedical education. "The key to being a successful clinician is not just education alone," he says. "To be a successful clinician earning the respect and confidence of the persons we interact with either being a colleague, coworker or patient is extremely important. Treating everyone with respect earns respect."

He certainly has the respect of Dr. Maurice Wright, Harlem's Chief Medical Officer, who says of Dr. Sivapalan: "During the COVID-19 pandemic, as an infectious disease specialist, he immersed himself completely into bedside patient care, COVID research and protocol design as well as supporting his coworkers and fellows. He is extremely hardworking and conscientious and approaches every aspect of his work with calmness, confidence, humility, competence, efficiency and a disarming smile."

Scratch the surface of that impressive medical career and you'll see little flexes — his quoting Alexandre Dumas' Three Musketeers motto of "all for one and one for all" or his Shakespearean title of a prescient oral presentation in 2019: "To Be Or Not To Be Vaccinated" — that show his parents that they taught him much more than the value of medicine.

#### Steven R. Hahn, MD, FACP

Attending Physician NYC Health + Hospitals/Jacobi



# Four Decades of Devoted Patient Care in the Bronx

In high school, Dr. Steven Hahn worked as a nature counselor at a sleepaway camp for inner-city kids. Back in the city one day, a young boy spotted him on a Harlem street and leaped into his arms at full speed. "I was overwhelmed that I'd had such an impact on this boy," Dr. Hahn recalls. "That experience has guided my entire professional life, applying my skills to help and do good for others."

It was also at that camp that Dr. Hahn played piano with a salsa ensemble. It began his lifelong love of Hispanic culture, and after graduating from Yale Medical School in 1977, he says, "I was drawn inexorably to the Bronx for residency." He completed programs in social medicine and primary care at Montefiore Medical Center and joined NYC Health + Hospitals/ Jacobi in 1982. And he never left. "Every day, I cross oceans. I listen to the stories of people who bring all of themselves into the room. I help our residents go beyond their patients' medical histories and listen to their stories." Dr. Hahn personifies the devotion of NYC Health + Hospital physicians to the city and the impact they can have in the course of their careers. At Jacobi, Dr. Hahn has directed numerous programs bridging internal medicine, psychiatry and psychology and bioethics, and earned a system-wide reputation for his expertise in the psychosocial aspects of patient care. As a faculty member at Albert Einstein College of Medicine since 1984 (and full professor since 2000), Dr. Hahn has taught and mentored generations of young physicians and been a prodigious researcher.

"I've been at Jacobi for 43 years and had many jobs," he says. "But I am most proud of the over 1,250 residents who have passed through Jacobi during my tenure, and most grateful to the thousands of patients who have let me into their lives."

It is both his patients and his colleagues who have kept Dr. Hahn at Jacobi for so many years. "Everyone who comes to work at Jacobi and makes it their professional home is committed to the patients and the community that we serve," he says.

#### Michelle L. Feinberg, MD

Attending Neurosurgeon & Medical Director of Neurosciences ICU

NYC Health + Hospitals/Kings County



# A Comforting Force in the ICU

From the day she joined NYC Health + Hospitals/Kings County four years ago, Dr. Michelle Feinberg has had an impact on patients and colleagues alike. "She is an indefatigable patient advocate, consummate team player and highly sought-after educator and mentor," says Chief Medical Officer Dr. Rajesh Verma.

Dr. Feinberg arrived fresh from her training in neurosurgery and neurocritical care, but barely six months later the pandemic hit and everything changed. As the hospital overflowed with COVID-19 patients, Dr. Feinberg helped convert surgical units into makeshift ICUs and quickly became an admired leader. When the surge ended, the nursing staff honored her with a plaque inscribed, "Thank you for your exceptional leadership with extraordinary courage, strength, and compassion. We would follow you into any pandemic."

Refocused on her specialty as the pandemic subsided, Dr. Feinberg played a key role in creating a new neurocritical care service and was awarded the hospital's Neurosurgery Physician of the Year awards in 2021 and 2022. "I am often meeting patients and families on the worst day of their lives," she reflects. "Although my primary responsibility is to treat the acute situation, I will always make it a priority to provide any bit of comfort to decrease the secondary trauma that comes with ICU admission." Among other things, she has partnered with The Juilliard School to bring live music and dance performances into the ICU.

Dr. Feinberg's humanistic approach grew out of an experience she had as a teenager, when her grandfather spent several months in an ICU and a team of doctors and nurses "performed a miracle" to keep him alive and eventually get him home. "From that moment, I knew my calling was to be a physician and to be part of that team."

After earning her medical degree at the combined Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education at CUNY and New York Medical College, Dr. Feinberg completed a neurosurgery residency at George Washington University and a neurocritical care fellowship at Duke University. Her commitment to reducing health care disparities brought her to NYC Health + Hospitals.

"It is a tragedy that every person is not granted equal access to medical care," she says, "and I am privileged to work in the country's oldest and largest public hospital system where we can provide superior medical care to every single patient who comes through our doors." She adds, "One of my favorite things to hear patients say is that Kings County is their hospital and they refuse to be treated anywhere else."

## Laura Z. Hyde, MD, MPH

Attending Surgeon NYC Health + Hospitals/Lincoln



# Honoring the Sacred Bond Between Surgeon and Patient

As an Attending Surgeon and Associate Director of the General Surgery Residency Program at NYC Health + Hospitals/Lincoln, Dr. Laura Hyde finds some of her greatest satisfaction in the accomplishments of the residents she teaches. When a patient needed an emergency hand amputation after being struck by a subway train, Dr. Hyde watched with pride as her senior resident led the operation without her help. "I love to notice and celebrate the moments when a resident is able to do something that they could not have done three or six months before," Dr. Hyde says.

It was only three years ago that Dr. Hyde was herself a resident, at the University of California, San Francisco, followed by a surgical critical care fellowship at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. Since joining Lincoln in 2021, she has quickly come to appreciate the challenges of working in New York's public health system. "Most of our patients face many obstacles that complicate their medical care," she says. "It is both difficult and immensely rewarding to partner with patients to ensure they receive optimal care despite these barriers." Dr. Hyde draws on personal experience to connect with patients at their most difficult times. When she was young, her grandparents' prolonged illnesses made an indelible impression. "I watched my mother and her siblings try to make decisions together, which gave me an appreciation for the subtlety of medical decision making." She also spent a year earning a Masters of Public Health at Columbia University, "which continues to inform my approach to patient care."

She also enjoys the variety: Emergency surgery for a traumatic injury one day, an appendicitis case the next. "And then I'll spend a week in the surgical ICU using my brain in an entirely different way to manage critically ill patients with multiorgan failure." In all cases, "To me, there is a sacred bond when a patient trusts you enough to allow you to operate on them. I don't take that for granted."

#### Beena Alexander, MD

Attending Physician NYC Health + Hospitals/McKinney



# Caring for the Most Vulnerable New Yorkers

As the daughter of a nurse who often recalled her experiences with labor and delivery, Dr. Beena Alexander grew up listening to stories of early life. "She would talk about holding newborn babies and how satisfying it is," says Dr. Alexander of her mother. "I didn't realize at the time how special that is. But now I do."

Now, as an attending physician running more than two units at NYC Health + Hospitals/McKinney, Dr. Alexander witnesses the other end of life: recovery from hip surgery, cardiac surgery, pneumonia or simple falls. There's also an epidemic of stubbornness. One patient, she recalled, didn't change his ways until a brush with heart failure.

Dr. Alexander's heart, by contrast, is working just fine.

"When I started years ago, I didn't enjoy nursing homes. I was young then and just wanted to stick around for two years. Instead of two, I stayed at that first job for 22 years because I really enjoyed it: seeing people face the challenges of aging with passion and purpose. It's more challenging, but also more interesting," she says. "So many of them are vulnerable and the hardest vulnerability is feeling unloved. They see us doing rounds every day. They're happy to be seen. It gives the rounds a lot of joy on both sides. It's surprising how much even one short visit can accomplish."

Her work has deepened her empathy with her own parents, uncles, aunts, and other elderly loved ones. "I'm more aware of what they're thinking and feeling," she says. "I see in my patients that small favors or even spending just, like, 10 minutes with them makes a big difference in their quality of life. They remember it. And I see that elderly relatives remember it as well."

She has taken the new challenges of loneliness in the pandemic and ongoing tensions and responded with new approaches to connectedness. Her secret weapon? Pineapples. A habit picked at her church's prayer services on Saturdays is her sumptuous hobby of baking, with pineapple cake being her specialty (as well as banana bread). But don't assume it's upside-down cake. "No," she says. "Everything I do is right-side-up."

It's an approach that has its own challenges of labor. And it delivers — down to Dr. Alexander's own daughter following in her footsteps. She's now a third-year resident.

## Savi Mushiyev, MD, FACC

Chief, Division of Cardiology NYC Health + Hospitals/Metropolitan



# **Mushiyev's Gambit**

Since the beginning of the pandemic, NYC Health + Hospitals/Metropolitan has had a nationally recognized Cardiology Department made all the more extraordinary by the fact that it has frequently had just one cardiologist on its entire campus: Dr. Savi Mushiyev.

"It's been very rough as a one-cardiologist department but I love what I do. It's what I wanted to do all my life," he says.

Call it Mushiyev's Gambit, a line of thinking he picked up from his days as a chess tournament champion. "You devise a plan and eventually there is a critical move. It's a lot of careful planning and execution. There are a lot of moving pieces. The heart is the only organ that moves. Just like in chess, strategy and execution. It's a simple modus operandi, but effective."

As a Bukharan Jewish immigrant from Uzbekistan — a faith whose traditional Shashmaqam music pulls from Arab, Persian, Sufi, and Yiddish traits — he is deeply familiar with the kind of cultural eclecticism of New York life. Remarkably, he was able to wrangle all those cultural variables to dramatically decrease cardiac mortality and morbidity: a 70 percent across-the-board reduction in hospitalization of coronary disease including arrhythmia, diabetes, hypertension, and stroke. "Basically, we were able to prevent admissions," he says. The CDC says so as well, recognizing Metropolitan as a Million Hearts Hospital — just the fifth hospital in the country to score the recognition.

Asked what kind of chess piece he would be, he was quick: King. Then he immediately explained: "All the other pieces can leave the board. The King stays, either he wins or dies with honor. I could have left the board. I could have quit. But I want to win."

He has ambitious plans for a cardiac CT program, a lipid clinic, and more. "This is my vision," he says. "This is my gambit."

Your move, New York.

#### Yvonne Man-Yee Choi, MD, FACOG

Director of Labor and Delivery NYC Health + Hospitals/North Central Bronx



## Advocating for Women's Health

Dr. Yvonne Choi is devoted to women's reproductive health. As the Director of Labor and Delivery at NYC Health + Hospitals/North Central Bronx, she wins plaudits for providing "the right care to the right patient at the right time," as a colleague puts it. And as an advocate in a fraught time in her field, she encourages the medical students she teaches to join her. "Women's reproductive rights are being challenged," she says. "I'm proud to serve our community and I'm hoping to motivate the next generation of doctors to follow in our footsteps."

Three things make her most proud, Dr. Choi says: "Every successful delivery, every hemorrhage stopped and every time a patient shows me a photo of their child that I delivered."

As an Assistant Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology and women's health at Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Dr. Choi serves as North Central Bronx's Medical Student Education Site Director, earning numerous teaching awards over the years. Born in Hong Kong, Dr. Choi loved biology and chemistry as a child and had several family members who were physicians. But it was her pediatrician who was her most important role model. "Not only was he knowledgeable but he had excellent bedside manner and a great sense of humor," she recalls. "I looked forward to each visit so much that I didn't mind getting shots! I learned from him that establishing a good rapport with patients makes all the difference."

Dr. Choi earned a masters in pharmacology before completing her medical degree at New York Medical College in 1996 and then a residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology and Women's Health at Montefiore Medical Center. She joined NYC Health + Hospitals/North Central Bronx as an attending physician in 2002, departing in 2013 – but only briefly. She realized North Central Bronx was her true love and returned a year later.

"Yvonne has embraced a lifetime of service and commitment to women's health, student education and leadership in the profession," says Chief Medical Officer Dr. Michael Zinaman. "She goes above and beyond the call of duty to care for the underserved patients in our community."

#### Debra Ann Ferman, MD

Attending Physician, Queens Cancer Center NYC Health + Hospitals/Queens



# **Motivated by Her Patients**

When Dr. Debra Ferman left private practice in hematology and oncology to join the cancer center at NYC Health + Hospitals/Queens, "it seemed like heaven on earth," she says. "I was able to give state of the art treatment to traditionally underserved patients with a wide range of disease pathology. I felt like a citizen of the world, caring for patients with different backgrounds, ethnicities and cultures."

Dr. Ferman has been an integral member of the team at the Queens Cancer Center since her arrival in 2015 and has made a mark by reshaping the hospital's approach to patients with sickle cell disease in ways that have made their care more coordinated and effective while significantly reducing the need to admit those in acute painful crisis. In 2019, the Queens Sickle Cell Advocacy Network honored Dr. Ferman with its Leadership and Dedicated Service Award.

"Dr. Ferman is the quintessential physician: knowledgeable, hard-working, dedicated, caring and compassionate," says the hospital's Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Jasmin Moshirpur. "Her passion and advocacy for her patients are remarkable." For her part, Dr. Ferman says she's motivated by her patients. "They have taught me so much. Seeing their physical and mental suffering, seeing death and dying, I've learned that showing compassion can be very therapeutic, not only for the patient but also for the doctor. It is a privilege to serve my patients and their families and be a part of their lives during a time of uncertainty and stress. And when I see my patients recover their health, I'm joyful."

Dr. Ferman is especially proud of the work she and her colleagues did to keep the Cancer Center open in the difficult early months of the pandemic. "Despite sparse staff with many falling ill each day, we were able to continue cancer care during a very isolating and uncertain time," Dr. Ferman says. "We were available to guide our patients, continue chemotherapy treatments and see them in the clinic and hospital. I was very grateful to be able to come to work every day."

#### Daniel M. Lugassy, MD

Emergency Medicine Attending Physician and Director of Simulation

NYC Health + Hospitals/Simulation Center



# **Compassion is Healing**

As a veteran NYC Health + Hospitals emergency physician - 13 years at NYC Health + Hospitals/Bellevue, the past year at NYC Health + Hospitals/Elmhurst -- Dr. Daniel Lugassy has been on the frontlines of the city's two major health crises. In 2012, when Hurricane Sandy knocked out power at Bellevue, he and his colleagues wore head-mounted flashlights to treat and evacuate patients in the dark. Eight years later, when the pandemic hit New York like a tornado, "every inch of the Bellevue ED was lined with intubated patients and equipment," he says. "The entire staff, without hesitation, leaped head-first into action for the patients."

Both events, he says, illustrate the spirit of NYC Health + Hospitals staff. "It was in these moments that I felt deep gratitude for the support I received from colleagues to find a way to persevere in what could feel insurmountable." The same ethic prevails in the routine of daily life in the public health system. "There is a special bond," Dr. Lugassy says, "because we are all striving to uphold the mission to provide equal access to care."

At Elmhurst, Dr. Lugassy splits his time between the Emergency Department and his position as Medical Director of the hospital's simulation training program, a role that has made him a leader in restructuring simulation throughout the system. "Daniel is a true team player, always looking for a way to help move an initiative forward," says Dr. Michael Meguerdichian, Clinical Co-director of the NYC Health + Hospitals Simulation Center. "He is constantly educating, looking for those teaching moments at the bedside, and eagerly shares his passion for equitable access to health care for everyone."

The son of immigrants from Morocco, Dr. Lugassy grew up in Queens and always wanted to be a doctor. "I was fascinated by the inner workings of the human body," he says. "In fact, when I was 11 years old I self-diagnosed my own hernia by doing book research at the public library."

After his graduation from Downstate Medical School in 2005, Dr Lugassy became specialized in emergency medicine as well as medical toxicology and health care simulation.

"As clinical providers, we care for thousands of patients a year and we can often lose sight of the individual," he says. "A kind approach, an attentive ear and welcoming demeanor can mean the difference between life and death. Compassion is healing."

#### Rafael Fazylov, MD, FACS

Associate Chairman, Department of Surgery

NYC Health + Hospitals/ South Brooklyn Health



# From Uzbekistan Immigrant to Devoted Brooklyn Surgeon

Dr. Rafael Fazylov went to medical school in his native Uzbekistan and began practicing urology in the early 1990s. Then, in 1995, ethnic upheaval forced him to leave with his family as part of a mass migration of Uzbek Jews. Most of the refugees went to Israel. Dr. Fazylov came to New York and began the long and arduous process of learning English, obtaining citizenship and becoming an American doctor.

After earning the required certification from the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates, Dr. Fazylov worked as a research assistant and volunteered in the cardiac surgery department at Maimonides Medical Center in Brooklyn while working toward full medical licensure. Eventually, he was accepted into the general surgery residency program at Maimonides and completed his training in 2006, 10 years after his arrival in the U.S.

Dr. Fazylov spent two years in the surgery department of New York Hospital Queens and joined NYC Health + Hospitals/Coney Island, now NYC Health + Hospitals/South Brooklyn Health, in 2007. He became Associate Chairman of Surgery in 2018.

"Dr. Fazylov has steadily progressed in his career by hard work, dedication, commitment and the highest degree of professionalism," says Dr. Terence Brady, the hospital's chief medical officer. "He goes beyond the call of duty to advise his colleagues in complex clinical problems, and he is clearly one of the role models for medical students, residents and physician colleagues."

In his 16 years at South Brooklyn Health, Dr. Fazylov has become expert in minimally invasive surgery and robotics and an advocate for its development and wider use. "It was a new field when I was in training," he says, but he found it appealing when he saw how much it lessened the ordeal of surgery for patients. "With open surgery, patients are in bed for a week with wounds and infections and pain. With minimally invasive surgery, you fix the problem and afterward they are smiling and ready to go. It makes a big difference and to me it is the field of the future."

As a role model, Dr. Fazylov has a straightforward approach: "If I see someone struggling and I feel I can help, I jump into that situation because my goal is to do best for the patient and someone's ego shouldn't affect it," Dr. Fazylov says. He appreciates his reputation as a teacher and mentor: "My grandpa said you can grade yourself however you want but the real one is how other people grade you."

## Lisa D. Brabham, MD, FACOG

Director of Gynecology NYC Health + Hospitals/Woodhull



# Ensuring Safer Labor and Delivery in Brooklyn

To her colleagues at NYC Health + Hospitals/Woodhull, Dr. Lisa Brabham is the backbone of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. For more than two decades, she's been a dedicated practitioner and admired mentor whose indelible presence on the labor floor has helped ensure safe birthing experiences for a generation of women in Brooklyn.

Dr. Brabham is lauded as her department's go-to doctor, a physician who exudes calm in a crisis and won't hesitate to come in from home to assist in an emergency. Two years ago, her leadership was recognized with her appointment as Director of Gynecology.

What Dr. Brabham finds most satisfying is caring for people in the community where she lives. "I have seen my patients in the grocery store, in the laundromat and walking past my house while I was gardening," she says. "It's gratifying to know I have a hand in the health of my community and it's what motivates me to come to work every day. Despite the challenges our patients face, they still show up for care at Woodhull and I have to show up to provide that care."

It's a special point of pride for her that three members of her family – her stepdaughter, niece and a cousin – have come to Woodhull for their prenatal care and given birth on her labor floor. "I was overjoyed that they put their faith in me and our women's health team," she says. "Knowing I had even a small part in the second generation of my family, and the fact that it occurred here at Woodhull, makes me very proud."

Dr. Brabham was inspired by her mother, a labor and delivery RN who became a nurse educator later in her career. "From the time I was very young, she stressed the importance of health for our family and caring for our community. I still hold those values close today." After she earned her medical degree and served her residency at Howard University, "my mother would tell everyone that would listen, 'My daughter is a doctor.' She's my most fervent supporter."

And there may be no stronger supporter of the women and families who come to Woodhull than Dr. Brabham. "Our patients have hard lives," she reflects. "Some may seem obstinate or defiant on the outside but inside they are scared for their families, scared for their lives or scared for their health. We must take that into consideration while caring for them and have compassion for their condition and their lives. Our mission is to try to improve their health, so they can improve their lives."

#### Julie Myers, MD, MPH

Deputy Chief Medical Officer
MetroPlusHealth



# Finding Joy in Patient Care

Dr. Julie Myers joined MetroPlusHealth in 2020, bringing to the city's public health insurance plan her considerable skills as a physician executive with deep experience as a leader of the city's responses to major public health challenges. After nine years in the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, seven of them as Director of HIV Prevention, Dr. Myers is now MetroPlusHealth's deputy chief medical officer, with responsibility for overseeing an array of programs including HIV services, care management, children's special services, housing services and managed long-term care.

Dr. Myers has had a busy three years at MetroPlusHealth: She has transformed the plan's HIV services department, been its COVID-19 expert and guided members and their providers on how to deal with the city's Mpox and RSV outbreaks. Her guiding strategy has been to build the skills of staff members to promote members' engagement in their care and improve their adherence to treatment.

"I am so proud to be in service to the city, working to address the needs of our huge, diverse population as part of a terrific team of professionals and support staff," says Dr. Myers. "We work dynamically and tirelessly on behalf of some of the neediest New Yorkers. We are resourceful and intrepid, showing grit and pluck but also empathy and compassion. I love that spirit, and it matches my own." One of her proudest moments was when MetroPlusHealth's HIV special needs plan, Partnership in Care, achieved the highest viral load suppression rating of the three special needs plans in the state. "Viral load suppression represents the ultimate health goal for people with HIV; once they achieve it, it has tremendous implications for their own long-term health and also means they can't pass HIV to their HIV-negative sex partners. Win-win! It was a major team effort involving many colleagues and partners."

Dr. Myers earned her undergraduate degree in biology at Yale and worked as a research assistant at The Rockefeller University and in a research lab in Spain before earning her medical degree at Cornell-Weill and later an MPH at Columbia. Since 2011, she has been an assistant professor in the Division of Infectious Diseases at Columbia Medical School.

Dr. Myers says she is moved and motivated by the bravery of those who struggle with chronic illness. "I relish the chance to connect with people individually," she says. "I love finding ways to coach people to help themselves, to self-manage their illness and their care, to navigate the health care system. And when that's not possible, I find joy and meaning in doing it for them. In my current role, I love helping others to take the same approach, training the next generation of coaches and caregivers."









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