



New York City Council Hearing

Oversight:

State of Nursing in NYC

Committee on Hospitals

Natalia Cineas, DNP, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN

Chief Nurse Executive

NYC Health + Hospitals

November 18, 2025

Good afternoon Chairwoman Narcisse and members of the Committee on Hospitals. I am Dr. Natalia Cineas, Chief Nurse Executive and Co-Chair of the Equity and Access Council at New York City Health and Hospitals (Health + Hospitals). Thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding the state of nursing at Health + Hospitals. While Health + Hospitals is only one piece of the broader healthcare system and workforce in our city, we are immensely proud of the impact we make. Our team of about 9,600 nurses is at the core of our mission to provide care to all New Yorkers. Nurses at Health + Hospitals are consistently our first line of defense in our hospitals, clinics, and nursing homes, providing exceptional and empathetic care to our patients.

While the American Association of Colleges of Nursing reports that there is still a nationwide and industry-wide shortage of nurses, I am excited to share updates on how Health + Hospitals has made strides in hiring and retaining nurses despite the challenges health care systems face across the country. Regardless of these challenges, we continue to uphold Health + Hospitals' mission to provide uninterrupted care, and are excited to report that the nurse turnover rate at Health + Hospitals in 2025 is 10.3%, less than the national average of 16.4%. Down from 46% in 2019, this has saved the public hospital system more than \$88 million in turnover costs. In 2024, Health + Hospitals hired over 3,400 nurses, replacing temporary nurses, helping save more than \$150 million in recruitment costs. Additionally, this effort provides the opportunity for the health system to truly invest in its workforce for the betterment of its patient population.

Part of this investment is directly linked to our collective bargaining agreement, which took effect on July 31, 2023 and runs through 2028. With this exciting contract in place, our Nurses4NYC recruitment campaign, has provided a roadmap to encourage New Yorkers to apply for jobs throughout the health system.

Launched in 2024 and supported by social media advertising, this campaign showcases the wide range of benefits the public health system has for nurses, which includes the Nurse Residency program, fellowships, tuition reimbursement, loan forgiveness, and scholarship programs.

In addition to this recruitment effort, we are continuously focused on our efforts to engage the future nurses of New York City. Through a \$400 million endowment with CUNY, we have also strengthened our longstanding partnership to expand career pathways for newly graduated nurses entering our public health system. The five components of our partnership with CUNY include the Preceptorship – Student Clinical Rotation; Employment Opportunities at NYC Health + Hospitals; Quality Improvement/EBP Projects; the Student Pipeline; and the Residency Program. Each year, this partnership enables us to recruit from a diverse pipeline of approximately 1,800 CUNY nursing graduates and place them throughout NYC Health + Hospitals. Together, we are also establishing an academic–practice collaboration that will support joint research, enhance nursing leadership curricula, and promote health equity through shared training led by CUNY faculty and our own nursing leaders. In addition, our current nursing staff now have access to more than 50 advanced, credit-bearing certificate and degree programs across CUNY campuses. Today, NYC Health + Hospitals employs more CUNY-educated nurses than any other health system in New York City.

At Health + Hospitals, it is our goal to ensure that staff across the system feel confident and prepared to transition from student to professional. Through the Nurse Residency Program, newly graduated nurses automatically participate in a 12-month initiative which offers specialized training, education, and mentorship to support that transition. With the penultimate goal of job retention, this program is structured on essential areas such as ethics, decision-making, clinical leadership, communication,

patient safety and evidence-based practices. Since its launch in 2019, the program has served over 2,000 participants across all 11 acute care sites, as well as post-acute care, Gotham Health, and Correctional Health Services. This investment aims to cultivate a dedicated and skilled clinical workforce as clinicians pursue this career.

Additionally, our Nursing Clinical Ladder Program creates a clear pathway for internal advancement, offering outstanding staff nurses the opportunity to take their careers to the next level. Launched in 2020 and co-developed with the New York State Nurses Association, this program promotes professional development, shared governance, and enhances patient care delivery by recognizing nursing expertise through three progressive tiers. Participants receive professional coaching from experienced leaders, which validates their skills, boosts engagement, and strengthens professional growth and portfolios.

Alongside these clinical-based professional development programs, NYC Health + Hospitals will offer professional advancement opportunities through the Nurse Leader Academy. This Academy, launching in early 2026, will be available to both new and experienced nurses and will provide programming informed by a system-wide needs assessment and national nursing leadership competencies. It will offer intensive workshops to develop systems thinking and prepare nurse leaders for the evolving healthcare environment. The goal of the program is to equip current and future leaders with the skills, knowledge, and perspective needed to become transformational leaders throughout their nursing careers at NYC Health + Hospitals.

Throughout our nurses' tireless efforts to uphold the value and mission of our health care system, we have been honored to see their hard work recognized in various formats. Most recently in October, 16 of our nurses were recognized at the health system's fourth annual Doctoral Circle of Excellence event, which honors

nurses who have earned a Doctor of Nursing Practice, Doctor of Health Administration, Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor of Public health, or Doctor of Education in nursing. We have previously honored 146 other nurses at Health + Hospitals who have reached this level of distinction. Only 2.7% of all Registered Nurses across the country have a doctoral degree, and we are proud to be part of that representation. Additionally, Health + Hospitals nurses are recognized through the DAISY Award, an internationally recognized honor for extraordinary patient and resident care. Recipients are nominated and selected by patients, residents, families, and colleagues. In September, we proudly presented five of our registered nurses for the DAISY Award, and our Chief Nursing Officer for Post-Acute Care received the DAISY Lifetime Achievement Award for her dedication to nursing through active mentoring, role modeling, advocating for her patients and residents, and promoting the positive image of nursing. As public service professionals, our awardees continue to prove that our nurses will always provide esteemed care for their patients, no exceptions.

As part of our ongoing commitment to fostering a positive and supportive work environment for our nursing workforce, I want to highlight two accomplishments that reflect the strength of our nursing culture. This summer, NYC Health + Hospitals/Metropolitan became the first health care organization worldwide to receive the Pathway to Excellence with Distinction designation, which NYC Health + Hospitals/Carter became the United States' first and only long-term care facility to earn the Pathway to Excellence with Distinction designation. Recognized by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), this designation recognizes the highest performing pathway organizations around the world and is based on validation from the nursing workforce. I am pleased to share here with Council that in a survey of 350 nursing professionals, 96% of

respondents confirmed that the Health + Hospitals/Carter promotes a culture of excellence in person-centered care and created a positive practice environment.

Health + Hospitals continuously aims to deliver high quality health services with compassion, dignity, and respect to all, without exception. It goes without saying that our nurses are an integral part of helping reach this goal, and we are committed to ensuring they have the tools to succeed. Thank you to the committee for the opportunity to testify and for your continued support of Health + Hospitals. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.