



FALL 2025 NURSING EXCELLENCE AWARDS

WITH OUR PATIENTS. FOR OUR PATIENTS

Welcome
to the
2025 Nursing
Excellence
Awards
Ceremony!

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2025 NURSING EXCELLENCE AWARDS PROGRAM

WELCOME REMARKS

Natalia Cineas, DNP, MSM-N, MBA, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, FADLN
Senior Vice President and Chief Nursing Executive
Co-Chair, Equity and Access Council
NYC Health + Hospitals

GREETINGS

Mitchell Katz, MD
President and Chief Executive Officer
NYC Health + Hospitals

INTRODUCTION OF THE KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Natalia Cineas, DNP, MSM-N, MBA, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, FADLN
Senior Vice President and Chief Nursing Executive,
Co-Chair, Equity and Access Council
NYC Health + Hospitals

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Ena Williams, SVP, PhD, MBA, RN, CNEP, FAAN, FADLN
Senior Vice President and Chief Nurse Executive
Yale New Haven Health

PRESENTATION OF THE EXCELLENCE IN CLINICAL NURSING AWARDS

Opeyemi Blessing, DNP, RN, CCRN, CPPS
Associate Director, Nursing Excellence/Research
NYC Health + Hospitals

PRESENTATION OF THE SYSTEM WIDE EXCELLENCE IN NURSING LEADERSHIP AWARD

Nicole Jie, EdD, RN, CCRN
Associate Director, Nursing
NYC Health + Hospitals

PRESENTATION OF THE SYSTEM WIDE EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION AND MENTORSHIP AWARD

Kimberly Keller
Director, Operations
NYC Health + Hospitals

PRESENTATION OF THE SYSTEM WIDE EXCELLENCE IN HOME, COMMUNITY, OR AMBULATORY AWARD

Kendra Stewart, MSW, BSN, RN, CCM
Director of Nursing, Case Management
NYC Health + Hospitals

PRESENTATION OF THE SYSTEM WIDE EXCELLENCE IN TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION AWARD

Devika Persaud-Singh, MSN, RN
Assistant Director, Nursing Informatics
NYC Health + Hospitals

PRESENTATION OF THE SYSTEM WIDE EXCELLENCE IN VOLUNTEERISM AND SERVICE AWARD

Roxanne Reid, DNP, MSN-Ed, RN
Director, Nursing Administration
NYC Health + Hospitals

PRESENTATION OF THE DAISY FOUNDATION AWARDS FOR NURSES ADVANCING HEALTH EQUITY

Tiffany Johnson-James, MBA, MHA, MSN, RN, C-EFM
Associate Director, OB Safety

PRESENTATION OF THE STRUCTURAL EMPOWERMENT AWARD

Natalia Cineas, DNP, MSM-N, MBA, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, FADLN
Senior Vice President and Chief Nursing Executive,
Co-Chair, Equity and Access Council
NYC Health + Hospitals

INTRODUCTION OF THE JOSEPHINE BOLUS NURSING CHAMPION AWARD

Natalia Cineas, DNP, MSM-N, MBA, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, FADLN
Senior Vice President and Chief Nursing Executive
Co-Chair, Equity and Access Council
NYC Health + Hospitals

PRESENTATION OF THE JOSEPHINE BOLUS NURSING CHAMPION AWARD

Michael H. Bolus, MSN, MS-Ed., BSN, BS, NP
Son of Mrs. Josephine Bolus

ACCEPTANCE OF THE JOSEPHINE BOLUS NURSING CHAMPION AWARD

Ena Williams, SVP, PhD, MBA, RN, CNEP, FAAN, FADLN
Senior Vice President and Chief Nurse Executive
Yale New Haven Health

PRESENTATION OF THE JOSEPHINE BOLUS SHINING LIGHT AWARD

Michael H. Bolus, MSN, MS-Ed., BSN, BS, NP
Son of Mrs. Josephine Bolus

CLOSING REMARKS

Natalia Cineas, DNP, MSM-N, MBA, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, FADLN
Senior Vice President and Chief Nursing Executive
Co-Chair, Equity and Access Council
NYC Health + Hospitals

WELCOME TO THE 2025 NURSING EXCELLENCE AWARDS



Natalia Cineas, DNP, MSM-N, MBA, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, FADLN
Senior Vice President and
Chief Nursing Executive
Co-Chair, Equity and
Access Council
NYC Health + Hospitals

Welcome and thank you for joining me for New York City Health + Hospitals' 2025 Nursing Excellence Awards, our system's highest recognition of nurses who exemplify excellence in patient care.

Each year, we celebrate the dedication, compassion, and professionalism of more than 9,600 nurses who serve 1.4 million New Yorkers across our network of more than 70 care sites citywide, including: 11 essential hospitals, five post-acute care centers, Correctional Health Services, Gotham Health community centers, and Community Care. The Nursing Excellence Awards honor the best of our profession; nurses who embody our mission to keep patients first while striving for excellence in clinical practice, education, leadership, and service. This celebration offers an opportunity to recognize the extraordinary contributions of our nurses, whose expertise and compassion make a profound difference every day.

Each year, our nursing leadership faces the challenging task of selecting honorees from among the many deserving and highly qualified nominees.

This year, the process was even more difficult as we received an impressive 524 nominations, reflecting the remarkable depth of talent and passion that define nursing across our system.

We are especially proud to celebrate a historic milestone: NYC Health + Hospitals/Metropolitan and NYC Health + Hospitals/Carter have each achieved Pathway to Excellence with Distinction which are the first and second designations of their kind in the nation. These honors affirm our leadership in fostering workplaces where nurses are supported, engaged, and recognized as vital partners in care and organizational success.

We also continue to celebrate the achievements of our facilities through the Structural Empowerment Award, now in its sixth year. This award recognizes a facility that demonstrates a sustained commitment to professional growth, certification, and infrastructure development supporting nursing excellence. This year's honoree, NYC Health + Hospitals/Metropolitan, is recognized for fostering an environment that encourages empowerment and continuous improvement.

We have selected 35 individual honorees, representing each of our facilities and clinical services including acute care, post-acute care, Correctional Health, Gotham Health, and Community Care each demonstrating excellence in a specific area. 25 nurses are receiving Excellence in Clinical Nursing Awards, and five nurses are being recognized with system-level awards: Excellence in Education and Mentorship; Excellence in Home, Community, or Ambulatory Care; Excellence in Nursing Leadership; Excellence in Technology and Innovation; and Excellence in Volunteerism and Service.

NYC Health + Hospitals was the first health system to present the DAISY Award for Nurses Advancing Health Equity and we remain deeply proud to honor nurses whose work advances health equity and helps eliminate health disparities rooted in social determinants of health.

WELCOME TO THE 2025 NURSING EXCELLENCE AWARDS

It is a true honor to celebrate all of our 2025 Nursing Excellence Award recipients, and to present our system's highest distinction, the Josephine Bolus Nursing Champion Award, to our distinguished keynote speaker, Dr. Ena Williams, SVP, PhD, MBA, RN, CNEP, FAAN, Chief Nurse Executive at Yale New Haven Health. Most recently she served as the SVP/Chief Nursing Officer at Yale New Haven Hospital (YNHH). She is the very first African American CNE & CNO appointed at Yale New Haven Health System and Yale New Haven Health. She currently serves as president-elect of the American Organization of Nursing Leadership (2024-2025) and will assume the presidency (2026 -2027). She also serves on the Board of Commissioners for the Joint Commission, and the American Nurses Association Foundation. Ena is a lifetime member of the National Black Nurses Association, a member of the Organization of Nurse Leaders (New England). It is an honor to celebrate Dr. Williams and her contributions to Nursing.

Please join me in extending sincere congratulations and heartfelt appreciation to each of our honorees for their exceptional achievements and unwavering dedication to our patients, families, and communities.

With warmest regards,

Natalia Cineas, DNP, MSM-N, MBA, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, FADLN
Senior Vice President, Chief Nursing Executive

GREETINGS FROM PRESIDENT AND CEO



Mitchell Katz, MD
President and Chief
Executive Officer
NYC Health + Hospitals

This is a special moment to celebrate Nursing Excellence at NYC Health + Hospitals.

We are experiencing something of a renaissance as more and more nurses are seeking to work here, and stay here.

This year we announced a major milestone: our nurse turnover rate has hit a historic low of just 7.3%. That's well below the national average of 16.4%. This marks a dramatic turnaround from 2019, when nearly half of all nurses left their positions, driving the turnover rate to 46%.

In addition, we hired 3,417 nurses in 2024, replacing many temporary nurses. More nurses who want to stay means our patients are served by permanent employees who are committed to our mission.

Our dedicated Chief Nursing Executive, Natalia Cineas is implementing myriad programs designed to support nursing professional development and staff engagement, and these initiatives are driving visible and consequential improvements in all facets of nursing.

We have several new fellowship opportunities in nursing education and emergency medicine, our Nurse Residency program is thriving, our clinical ladder program, now in its 5th year has seen participation double. And we just celebrated our 3rd annual Nursing Doctoral Circle of Excellence, to honor those nurses who have achieved the highest academic degrees in their fields.

Amid this growth, and these wonderful programs and opportunities, it comes as no surprise to me, that we are simultaneously seeing levels of nursing excellence that changing our culture, and bringing in awards, honors and recognition.

But as we all know, behind every award and achievement, are individuals. People who have chosen to give their all every day to make our patient care the best it can be. It is these individuals, and the excellence they shine forth, that we are here to celebrate today.

Please join me in honoring the best of the best, at our 2025 Nursing Excellence Awards ceremony.

Thank You.

Mitchell Katz, MD

President and CEO, NYC Health + Hospitals

Ena Williams, PhD, MBA, RN, CNEP, FAAN, FADLN

KEYNOTE SPEAKER & 2025 JOSEPHINE BOLUS NURSING CHAMPION



**Ena Williams, PhD, MBA,
RN, CNEP, FAAN, FADLN**
Senior Vice President /
Chief Nursing Executive
Yale New Haven Health

Ena currently serves as the Senior Vice President and Chief Nursing Executive at Yale New Haven Health. Most recently she served as the SVP/Chief Nursing Officer at Yale New Haven Hospital (YNHH), a 1541-bed three-time ANCC Magnet ® designated, level I trauma academic medical center. She is the very 1st African American CNE & CNO appointed at YNHHS and YNHH.

Ena began her career in Jamaica after graduating from the University Hospital of the West Indies. She migrated to the United States and in 1991 was employed as a staff nurse at Bronx Lebanon Hospital in New York. In 1992 she joined the staff at Yale New Haven as a staff nurse in the operating room and quickly progressed through several leadership positions: Laser Coordinator, Perioperative Educator, Patient Services Manager, Nursing Director, VP, and Associate Chief Nursing Officer for Patient Services. Ena assumed the role of chief nursing officer in 2018 and led the nursing team to their first ANCC Nurse Residency PTAP Accreditation in the state of Connecticut and the third ANCC Magnet ® designation in 2021.

During her tenure, Ena has led expansion and design of state-of-the-art operating rooms, oversaw the first DaVinci robotic surgical program implementation and, the first 3T MRI and Interventional ORs in the state of CT, and the integration of nursing across a newly acquired hospital. The hospital and teams have been recognized with several BEACON, Lantern, PRISM, an ANCC national nurse of the year (2022), and most recently, YNHH was awarded the 2024 ANCC Magnet Prize, sponsored by Press Ganey, for the development of a patient experience survey tool for psychiatric inpatients. Under her leadership, she partnered with development to increase philanthropy funds by more than \$1M and a special fund for Support Care Associates who are in the progress of attending nursing school, professional development and recognition. Funds also support the first High School Summer Immersion program in partnership with an academic partner to introduce high school students to health care careers. Her leadership has resulted in improvements in nursing quality, patient experience, and creating a strong nursing practice environment supported by a Nursing Professional Governance Structure.

Ena Williams, PhD, MBA, RN, CNEP, FAAN, FADLN

KEYNOTE SPEAKER &

2025 JOSEPHINE BOLUS NURSING CHAMPION

Ena serves numerous local, state, national boards, and committees, and is active in her community. She currently serves as president-elect of the American Organization of Nursing Leadership (2024-2025) and will assume the presidency (2026-2027). She also serves on the Board of Commissioners for the Joint Commission, and the American Nurses Association Foundation. Ena is a lifetime member of the National Black Nurses Association, a member of the Organization of Nurse Leaders (New England). Ena also serves on the University of Connecticut School of Nursing (UCON) DEIB Committee. She is an active member of her church community.

Ena has been recognized with numerous awards. The Mary B. Conceison Award for Excellence in Nursing Leadership from the Organization Of Nurse Leaders – New England (2025), named one of 50 Most Influential Clinical Executives by Modern Healthcare (2024); Albertus Magnus College Alumni of the Year Award in honor of her outstanding professional contributions and achievements (2024); the Dorsey Kendrick Community Service Award from the CT State Community College – Gateway (2024); Community Leadership Award from ConnCAT (2022), the Hometown Hero Award from the Gateway Community College in New Haven (2020), Leadership Award, The North American National Nigerian Nurses Association (2018), the Legendary Women Award (2018), the Trailblazer award from the National Black Nurses Association (2017), the Cornell Scott Health Leadership Award from the NAACP of greater New Haven (2015). She is a published author of nursing book chapters, journal articles and a frequent speaker at local, state, and national conferences.

Ena graduated from the University Hospital of the West Indies with a Diploma in Nursing, Western Governors University (BSN), Albertus Magnus College (MSM/MBA), and a PhD in Management and Leadership from Walden University. Ena is a graduate of the Johnson and Johnson Innovation Nurse Fellowship, the GE Health Management Nurse Executive Fellowship and is Board certified in Executive Nursing Practice from the American Organization of Nursing Leadership. She is also a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing (2023). Ena was named as one of the Inaugural Fellows of the Academy of Diversity Leaders in Nursing by the National Black Nurses Association (2024).

PLANNING COMMITTEE

EXECUTIVE SPONSOR:

Natalia Cineas, DNP, MSM-N, MBA, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, FADLN
Senior Vice President and Chief Nursing Executive

PLANNING COMMITTEE:

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Senior Project Manager

Kanish Patel, MPA
Director, Operations

Zenja Santos
Assistant Director

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NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham Health

Nancy Arias, BSN, RN
NYC Health + Hospitals/Correctional Health

Abbi-Gail Baboolal, DNP, FNP, MSN
NYC Health + Hospitals/Queens

Opal Sinclair-Chung, MSA, MSNE, RN
NYC Health + Hospitals/Kings County

Christopher Wilson, MSN, RN, CNML, CENP, NEA-BC
NYC Health + Hospitals/Metropolitan

Thank You

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Project Assistant

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Senior System Director, Professional Practice/Education

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Assistant Director, Special Projects

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Associate Director, Nursing Excellence/Research

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Director, Nursing Simulation

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Executive Secretary

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Senior Project Manager

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Senior Director, Nursing Quality

Lauren Darmstadter, MHA
Senior Project Manager

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Assistant Director

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Director, Nursing

Indira Hartman, CPT
Coordinating Manager

Gail Haynes, RN, NE-BC
Senior Director, Nursing

Nicole Jie, EdD, RN, CCRN
Associate Director, Nursing

Tiffany Johnson-James, MBA, MHA, MSN, RN, C-EFM
Associate Director, OB Safety

Kimberly Keller, BA
Director, Operations

Jamal Khan, MPA
Director, Behavioral Health Workforce Program

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Assistant Director, Nursing Informatics

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Director, Nursing Administration

Carla Sison, MBA
Director, Operations

Kendra Stewart, MSW, BSN, RN, CCM
Director of Nursing, Case Management

Leenoe Varghese, MBA, PSM
Assistant Director, Analytics

Selvin Wilson
Director of Development, BHA

Emerson Yaxte, MA, SHRM-CP
Director, Training and Development

Aleksandra Zlateva, MS
Director, Fiscal Affairs

2025 NURSING EXCELLENCE AWARD WINNERS

EXCELLENCE IN CLINICAL NURSING AWARDS

Ana Creglia, ADN, RN

NYC Health + Hospitals/Bellevue
Staff Nurse, Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

Cheryl-Ann D. Blondell, BSN, RN

NYC Health + Hospitals/PAC, Carter
Head Nurse, Long-Term Care

Milana Leviyev, BSN, RN

NYC Health + Hospitals/PAC, Coler
Head Nurse, Memory Care

Claudia W. Grenade, BSN, RN

NYC Health + Hospitals/Community Care
Staff Nurse, Home Health

Clautilde Maxi-Ligonde BSN, RN

NYC Health + Hospitals/Correctional Health Service
Patient Care Coordinator

Girly Kuruvilla, BSN, RN, CCRN, TCRN

NYC Health + Hospitals/Elmhurst
Staff Nurse, Critical Care

Carmela Reyes, BSN, RN

NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham, Belvis
Head Nurse, Ambulatory Care

Sylvia W. Seid, BSN, RN

NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham Health, Cumberland
Staff Nurse, Ambulatory Care

Marilyn Tessa Bathersfield, ADN, RN

NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham Health, East New York
Staff Nurse, Ambulatory Care

Kelly Rong, MSN, RN, RN-BC

NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham Health, Gouverneur
Staff Nurse, Ambulatory Care/Pediatrics

2025 NURSING EXCELLENCE AWARD WINNERS

EXCELLENCE IN CLINICAL NURSING AWARDS

Ivymae Yanson, BSN, RN

NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham Health, Lefrak
Staff Nurse, Ambulatory Care

Gilbert Guerrero, BSN, RN

NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham, Morrissiana
Staff Nurse, Ambulatory Care

Emelita Austria, BSN, RN, CCRN

NYC Health + Hospitals/PAC, Gouverneur
Staff Nurse, Sub-Acute Care

Shea Chenery, BSN, RN, CEN

NYC Health + Hospitals/Harlem
Staff Nurse, Emergency Services

Margarita Kenny, BSN, RN, MED SURG-BC

NYC Health + Hospitals/Jacobi
Staff Nurse, MICU

Marjorie Clarke, ADN, RN

NYC Health + Hospitals/Kings County
Staff Nurse, Behavioral Health

Karen Patricia Anderson, BSN, RN

NYC Health + Hospitals/Lincoln
Staff Nurse, Med/Surg

Chantone Saint Surin, BSN, RN

NYC Health + Hospitals/PAC, McKinney
Staff Nurse, Post Acute Care

Alina Grineva, MSN, RN, CCM

NYC Health + Hospitals/MetroPlus Health
Senior Director, Integrated Care Management

Leah V. Waga, BSN, RN

NYC Health + Hospitals/Metropolitan
Staff Nurse, Ambulatory Care

2025 NURSING EXCELLENCE AWARD WINNERS

EXCELLENCE IN CLINICAL NURSING AWARDS

Lourdie Jean-Pierre Chicoye, MSN, RN

NYC Health + Hospitals/North Central Bronx
Staff Nurse, Behavioral Health

Maria Luisa Ceniza, BSN, RN

NYC Health + Hospitals/Queens
Staff Nurse, NICU

Donald Doles, BSN, RN

NYC Health + Hospitals/PAC, Seaview
Head Nurse, Post-Acute Care

Veronika Orlova, MSN, RN, NE-BC, MEDSURG-BC, AMB-BC

NYC Health + Hospitals/South Brooklyn Health
Associate Director, Nursing

Jennifer Sawinski, MSN, RN, AMB-BC, CLC

NYC Health + Hospitals/Woodhull
Staff Nurse, Pediatric Primary Care

SYSTEM-WIDE NURSING AWARDS

Andrew J. Wuthrich, MBA, MSN, RN, ONC, NE-BC, CPAN

NYC Health + Hospitals/Metropolitan
Director, Nursing
Excellence in Nursing Leadership

Edwine Darby Joseph, MSN-ED, RN, GRN, GERO-BC, BLS-I

NYC Health + Hospitals/PAC, Gouverneur
Nurse Educator
Excellence in Education and Mentorship

Jin-Li Pai, BSN, RN

NYC Health + Hospitals/Elmhurst
Accountable Care Manager
Excellence in Home, Community, or Ambulatory

2025 NURSING EXCELLENCE AWARD WINNERS

SYSTEM WIDE NURSING AWARDS

Phillipa Maddan, DNP, MSN, RN, RNC-OB, C-EFM, CLC

NYC Health + Hospitals/Queens

Nurse Educator

Excellence in Technology and Innovation

Madeline Hernandez, MSN, RN, NPD-BC, CEN

NYC Health + Hospitals/Queens

Nurse Educator

Excellence in Volunteerism and Service

STRUCTURAL EMPOWERMENT AWARD

NYC Health + Hospitals/Metropolitan

DAISY AWARD FOR NURSES ADVANCING HEALTH EQUITY

Edner Cuvilly, MSN, RN

NYC Health+ Hospitals/North Central Bronx

Staff Nurse, Behavioral Health

Paulette McGee, BSN, RN

NYC Health + Hospitals/Correctional Health

Staff Nurse, Correctional Health

Gina Leong, BSN, RN

NYC Health + Hospitals/Community Care

Staff Nurse, Home Care

Dmitry Zakrevski, BSN, RN

NYC Health+ Hospitals/Gotham Health, East New York

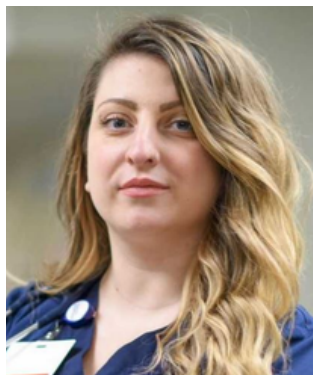
Staff Nurse, Ambulatory Care

Liyun Jin, ADN, RN

NYC Health+ Hospitals/PAC, Gouverneur

Staff Nurse, Long-Term Care

EXCELLENCE IN CLINICAL NURSING AWARD



Ana Creglia, ADN, RN
NYC H+H/Bellevue
Staff Nurse, NICU

"The world will need nurses who can bridge both data and devices intelligently while never losing sight of the person behind the diagnosis."

With two years of dedicated service to NYC Health + Hospitals, **Ana Creglia, ADN, RN**, has become known for her deep compassion, adaptability, and unwavering commitment to excellence. "What I think makes me a great nurse is the heart I bring to every moment," she reflects. "My deep compassion, resilience, and genuine desire to make even the smallest difference in someone's hardest day."

Ana's inspiration to become a nurse began at home. "My mother, the most selfless and compassionate person I know, showed me that true purpose in life comes from helping people, from being the light in someone's darkest moment," she shares.

Nursing, for her, was never just a profession; it was a calling. "To me, being a nurse isn't just what I do; it's who I am."

Among NYC Health + Hospitals' ICARE values, Excellence most closely defines her philosophy. "Excellence means never settling for 'good enough' when a life, no matter how tiny, is in my hands," she says. Each shift, she strives to rise above fatigue and uncertainty, delivering care that is "safe, compassionate, and trustworthy."

Integrating the new "ICARE with Kindness" initiative, Ana turns kindness into clinical practice. "Kindness becomes safety and dignity," she explains. Whether celebrating a milestone or holding space for grief, she ensures every family feels supported and seen.

Looking toward the future, Ana sees nursing evolving alongside technology while remaining grounded in compassion. "The world will need nurses who can bridge both data and devices intelligently while never losing sight of the person behind the diagnosis." She plans to continue growing through education and leadership, ensuring that empathy remains at the heart of progress.

EXCELLENCE IN CLINICAL NURSING AWARD



“... people need to feel seen and valued. It takes a team to do this work, and kindness holds that team together.”

With 20 years of nursing experience and 19 of them with NYC Health + Hospitals, **Cheryl-Ann D. Blondell, BSN, RN** is known for her kindness, empathy, and steady leadership. She believes that great nursing combines skill with humanity, and she strives to bring those values into every interaction. “I try to be approachable and supportive,” she says. “Whether it’s my patients or my colleagues, I’m always ready to help, to listen, and to get my hands dirty when needed.”

**Cheryl-Ann D. Blondell, BSN,
RN**

NYC H+H/PAC, Carter
Head Nurse, Long Term Care

Cheryl’s passion for nursing traces back to childhood. Inspired by her mother, who dreamed of becoming a nurse but never had the opportunity, she set her sights on the profession early on.

“When I was little and people asked what I wanted to be when I grew up, I always said ‘a nurse,’” she recalls.

That dream became a reality when she moved to the United States to pursue nursing. “This profession gave me the chance not only to fulfill my own dream but also to help people in some of the most vulnerable moments of their lives.”

Cheryl’s approach to patient care is deeply collaborative and centered on respect. She ensures patients and families have a voice in every decision and advocates fiercely for those who can’t speak for themselves. “I want families to know that their loved one is being cared for with heart, not as a task, but as a person,” she explains. “Care should always be compassionate, humane, and meaningful.”

Among the ICARE values, integrity stands out as the cornerstone of her philosophy. “Integrity means being honest, trustworthy, and consistent in character,” she notes. “It’s about doing the right thing even when no one is watching.”

She integrates the “ICARE with Kindness” initiative through small, intentional acts of appreciation. “One of my nurses once asked why I say ‘thank you’ so often,” she shares. “I told her it’s because people need to feel seen and valued. It takes a team to do this work, and kindness holds that team together.”

Looking ahead, Cheryl-Ann envisions technology, especially artificial intelligence, becoming a greater part of healthcare. Still, she believes education and empathy will remain essential. “AI can help us improve outcomes,” she says, “but we must use it to strengthen, not replace, the human side of nursing. I plan to keep learning, adapting, and using new tools to support better, more preventative care.”

EXCELLENCE IN CLINICAL NURSING AWARD



Milana Leviyev, BSN, RN

NYC H+H/PAC, Coler

Head Nurse, Memory Care

"This profession is so rewarding because you're able to help those in need."

With 25 years of service at NYC Health + Hospitals, **Milana Leviyev, BSN, RN** has built a career defined by compassion, patience, and deep human connection. She is known for her calm presence, her ability to communicate clearly, and her unwavering commitment to person-centered care. "I genuinely care about our residents and take the time to listen to their concerns, which helps build trust and comfort," she says. Her empathy ensures that every patient is treated as an individual and that compassion often makes a lasting difference in their well-being.

Influenced by several family members who were nurses, she always knew that this was her calling. "I always wanted to be a nurse," she reflects. "This profession is so rewarding because you're able to help those in need. I'm proud that I was able to achieve my dream." Over the years, her work with residents living with dementia has become both her passion and her purpose. She finds profound meaning in small but powerful moments of connection, like when a patient who rarely spoke suddenly began singing along to a familiar song. "For a few minutes, she was fully present; smiling, tapping her hands, and making eye contact. It reminded me how powerful small, person-centered interventions can be."

Milana integrates the "ICARE with Kindness" initiative into her daily practice by approaching every interaction with patience, empathy, and intentional kindness. Whether it's holding a resident's hand, offering a warm smile, or taking a moment to reassure a family member, she understands that these gestures have real therapeutic power. "In dementia care, kindness isn't just a gesture; it's a way to help residents feel safe and respected," she explains.

Milana's approach to nursing is also celebrated by her coworkers who say she "goes above and beyond to ensure that each patient receives quality and dignified care particularly in our challenging Memory Care unit. Not only does she encourage and implement safe strategies to reduce incidents and safety [concerns], but she also goes beyond to ensure a fun and active environment."

As healthcare continues to evolve through advances in digital technology and telemedicine, Milana believes nurses will remain the bridge between innovation and empathy. She plans to stay proactive through continued education in gerontology and dementia care while mentoring newer nurses to uphold the same compassionate standards that define the profession. Compassion, she believes, is the heart of nursing. "Many of my residents may not always remember my name, but they always remember how I make them feel."

EXCELLENCE IN CLINICAL NURSING AWARD



**Claudia W. Grenade, BSN,
RN**

NYC H+H/Community Care
Staff Nurse, Home Health

"Being present, listening, and keeping patients safe at home are the key principles of nursing excellence to me."

With 32 years of nursing experience and 18 of them proudly spent with NYC Health + Hospitals, **Claudia W. Grenade, BSN, RN**, has built a career grounded in empathy, respect, and a deep sense of purpose. "I am a good listener and able to empathize," she says simply, but those few words capture the essence of her approach to care. Her ability to truly hear and understand others allows her to connect meaningfully with patients and colleagues alike, creating an environment of trust and compassion.

Her inspiration to pursue nursing came from her mother, whose kindness and care left a lasting impression. "My mother was always caring for others," she recalls.

"I wanted to make a difference." That desire to help has guided her through more than three decades of service, shaping both her professional journey and her personal growth.

A nominator remarks that Claudia "is an astute clinician with strong clinical and critical thinking skills. She strongly advocates for her patients and is dedicated and devoted to providing the utmost patient care. She provides excellent customer service and this is evidenced by her frequent patient compliments. Claudia provides personalized education, emotional support and coordinates care for patients, families and the wider healthcare team, bridging gaps in the system."

The ICARE value that resonates most deeply with her is respect. "By showing respect for patients' homes, values, and preferences, we build trust and good working relationships," she says. "Ultimately, that leads to patient satisfaction and better outcomes."

She integrates the "ICARE with Kindness" initiative through compassionate action and teamwork. Recalling one memorable example, she shares, "With the help of my ADN, we were able to assist a patient who was going through a rough time after losing her job due to illness. After explaining her situation to case coordination, they acted the same day to guide her through the process. The patient was very happy."

Looking to the future, she envisions nursing evolving through greater diversity, an increased focus on preventative care, and expanded use of technology and virtual learning. She remains committed to adapting to these changes while maintaining the personal touch that defines her practice.

EXCELLENCE IN CLINICAL NURSING AWARD



**Clautilde Maxi-Ligonde, BSN,
RN**

NYC H+H/Correctional Health
Service
Patient Care Coordinator

"Compassion is the vehicle to establishing a positive and productive environment for effective care,"

With 41 years of nursing experience, including nine with NYC Health + Hospitals, **Clautilde Maxi-Ligonde, BSN, RN**, continues to exemplify dedication, compassion, and integrity in every aspect of her work.

Clautilde's journey into nursing was inspired by family and fueled by purpose. "My aunt had been a nurse for several years, and her love for the profession was infectious," she recalls. "Growing up seeing her in her element in a career she loved motivated me to pursue that career path for myself. Becoming a nurse felt like a calling, especially since my personality traits aligned so closely with the profession."

Her approach to patient care is rooted in understanding and empathy, particularly for the diverse population she serves. "My approach with the demographic that I serve is mostly understanding and empathetic, which is a courtesy I believe they don't get as freely," she explains. "I feel it motivates them to cooperate and participate more in their own care."

For her, compassion is the ICARE value that guides her most. "Compassion is the vehicle to establishing a positive and productive environment for effective care," she says. "Without this vital quality, the patient is nothing more than a number. I seek to make the patient as involved in their own care as they desire to be. You would be surprised at how eager these patients are to participate in the delivery of their care."

She embodies the "ICARE with Kindness" initiative through consistency and reliability. "Being consistent in my approach to the patient and maintaining their expectation of receiving the same high-quality care from the first interaction to the last," she explains, "is how I bring kindness into every encounter." Clautilde's peers remark that she "has always shown great respect for her role and worked diligently to learn in the new facility in order to maintain her level of accountability for herself and the team of nurses she was charging...You will always find her on the floor working alongside her nurses making sure the patients care is optimal."

As she looks toward the future of nursing, she hopes to see the profession return to its foundational values. "I believe that the current trajectory of the nursing profession is becoming increasingly disconnected from its core mission," she reflects. "The lack of patience, compassion, vulnerability, and empathy that I see in today's nursing force needs to be addressed. Until the end of my career, I will strive to mentor others and instill these values that contribute to the highest quality of care required in our profession."

EXCELLENCE IN CLINICAL NURSING AWARD



**Girly Kuruvilla, BSN, RN,
CCRN, TCRN**
NYC H+H/Elmhurst
Staff Nurse, Critical Care

"I believe in lifelong education and evidence-based practice. The tools may evolve, but the heart of nursing, compassion and advocacy, must always remain."

With 35 years of nursing experience and 31 of them dedicated to NYC Health + Hospitals, **Girly Kuruvilla, BSN, RN, CCRN, TCRN**'s career has been guided by compassion, adaptability, and an unwavering commitment to excellence. Her ability to remain calm, empathetic, and flexible, especially in high-stakes environments like the Surgical ICU, has defined her approach to care. "Flexibility allows me to adjust quickly to evolving patient conditions and collaborate effectively with the healthcare team," she explains.

Girly's inspiration to become a nurse came from a deep desire to make a meaningful difference in people's lives. "From a young age, I knew I wanted a career that allowed me to help others during their most vulnerable moments," she says. "Nursing stood out to me not just as a job, but as a calling rooted in compassion, service, and purpose." Over the years, that calling has only grown stronger as she has witnessed the power of nursing to heal, comfort, and inspire.

Among the ICARE values, Compassion resonates most deeply with her. "All the values are essential, but compassion defines nursing," she says. "To me, it means offering a gentle touch without a gloved hand and bringing humanity into every interaction." It is this belief that drives her to go beyond the clinical, ensuring that every patient feels seen and cared for.

She also fully embraces the "ICARE with Kindness" initiative, which she integrates into every encounter. Girly's nominators also attest that "Girly's compassion extends far beyond her clinical duties. She listens deeply to patients and families, offering reassurance and emotional support during some of their most vulnerable moments. Her impact often resonates long after discharge..." Some of Girly's most memorable moments have come when patients, some at the brink of death, return to say thank you. "A few of our trauma patients, who were close to 'not making it,' came back to visit," she recalls.

Having witnessed the transformation of nursing over the decades, she is optimistic about its future. "Technology has changed everything from electronic health records to smart devices and remote monitoring," she reflects. "These tools help reduce errors and improve efficiency, allowing nurses to focus more on direct patient care." Her approach to change is one of continuous learning and adaptability. "I believe in lifelong education and evidence-based practice. The tools may evolve, but the heart of nursing, compassion and advocacy, must always remain."

EXCELLENCE IN CLINICAL NURSING AWARD



Carmela Reyes, BSN, RN
NYC H+H/Gotham Health,
Belvis
Head Nurse, Ambulatory
Care

"I hope my patients and their families feel a sense of security with my care."

With 13 years of nursing experience, including the past two years at NYC Health + Hospitals, **Carmela Reyes BSN, RN**, has built her career on a foundation of empathy, respect, and integrity. "When I take the time to connect with my patients on a human level, I'm better able to sense what they truly need, not just medically, but emotionally and psychologically," she reflects. "Empathy opens the door to deeper, more accurate care."

For her, nursing is more than a profession; it is a calling rooted in the instinct to care. "There's something deeply human about the act of caring; it's instinctive for me," she says.

"Offering that care to others not only supports them, but also gives me clarity and purpose in my own life." That sense of purpose continues to inspire her each day, especially in moments when she sees the direct impact of her work. "It brings me genuine joy and fulfillment to know that my actions have made a meaningful difference in a patient's life," she shares. "This sense of purpose is what drives me in this profession."

Her approach to patient care centers on compassion and partnership. "My goal is to make every patient feel that they matter and that I'm truly here for them," she explains. "We're on the same team, aiming for the same thing: their well-being." When it comes to NYC Health + Hospitals' ICARE values, she finds her deepest alignment with integrity, compassion, and respect.

Nominators remark that she embodies the "ICARE with Kindness" by "embodying and upholding NYC Health + Hospital values in her daily practice. She maintains a high standard of professionalism through effective communication, compassion, and accountability. Carmela also understands the importance of bridging communication gaps in a diverse community. "One of the first and most important steps in meeting our patients' needs is identifying any language barriers," she explains. "If a barrier exists, it's essential that we provide the proper tools and resources such as interpreters or translated materials to help the patient feel comfortable and understood."

"Working at NYC Health + Hospitals is a privilege," she concludes. "I appreciate being part of an environment where diversity is not only respected but embraced, and where everyone, regardless of cultural background is given a fair chance to succeed."

Carmela believes that the future of nursing will continue to evolve alongside technology and preventative care, and she plans to embrace these developments fully. "I plan to stay committed to continued education and to embrace technology as a tool to enhance patient care while still maintaining a human connection."

EXCELLENCE IN CLINICAL NURSING AWARD



Sylvia W. Seid, BSN, RN

NYC H+H/Gotham Health,
Cumberland

Staff Nurse, Ambulatory Care

“When we all work together with empathy and kindness, the patient feels it,”

With a decade of nursing experience and eight years of dedicated service at NYC Health + Hospitals, **Sylvia W. Seid, BSN, RN**, is known for her kindness, empathy, and unwavering commitment to her patients and colleagues alike. She brings warmth and compassion to every encounter, believing that true healing begins with genuine care and respect. Her ability to connect with patients and staff, from providers and nurses to clerical, housekeeping, and security teams helps foster a more caring and supportive environment for everyone. “When we all work together with empathy and kindness, the patient feels it,” she says.

Sylvia’s path to nursing was deeply personal. After caring for her late husband, in-laws, and family members with chronic and mental health conditions, she was inspired to pursue formal nursing education to better understand how to provide quality care. Encouraged by mentors at Beth Israel Medical Center and the VA, she entered nursing school later in life, graduating from an accelerated BSN program at 60. “I wanted the knowledge and skills to make a real difference, not just for my family, but for others who needed someone to care for them with patience and respect,” she reflects.

The most rewarding moments of Sylvia’s career have been when patients approach her to say she made a difference. Whether it’s someone proudly showing improved blood pressure or diabetes logs, sharing how they lost weight and gained energy, or simply stopping her on the street to introduce her as “their nurse,” those moments affirm her purpose. “There’s no better feeling than seeing patients take charge of their health and knowing I played a small part in that,” she says.

Sylvia’s approach to patient care is grounded in advocacy, honesty, and compassion. She strives to make every patient feel heard and valued, communicating with warmth, humor, and cultural sensitivity and oftentimes in their own language. “I treat every patient like a family member or friend,” she explains. “I want them to feel that I genuinely care and that they can trust me to be honest and supportive.”

Sylvia aligns most strongly with the ICARE values of Integrity and Compassion, which guide her every day. “I always try to be honest and uphold high moral principles,” she says. “Patients trust us with their health, and that trust is sacred.” She integrates the “ICARE with Kindness” initiative by fostering patience, understanding, and teamwork across all levels of staff. “When the environment is supportive and respectful, everyone, especially the patient, benefits.”

As technology and AI continue to evolve, she hopes the nursing profession maintains its human touch. “Nursing is about compassion and connection,” she says. “We can use technology to improve care, but we must never lose sight of empathy and advocacy, which is the heart of what we do.”

EXCELLENCE IN CLINICAL NURSING AWARD



**Marilyn Tessa Bathersfield,
ADN, RN**

NYC H+H/Gotham Health,
East New York

Staff Nurse, Ambulatory Care

"Compassion builds trust, and trust builds healing."

With 26 years of nursing experience, including the past three with NYC Health + Hospitals, **Marilyn Tessa Bathersfield, ADN, RN** has built a career grounded in empathy, communication, and integrity. She believes that great nursing begins with listening, not only to what patients say, but also to what they don't. Her compassion and ability to meet patients where they are allow her to connect on a deeper level, tailoring education and care plans to each person's unique needs. "Effective communication and empathy open the door to understanding," she says. "That's how I help patients make meaningful, lasting changes in their health."

Nursing has always been part of Marilyn's family's story, and she considers it a natural calling. "Nursing is in my blood," she shares.

"Most of my family works in healthcare, and from an early age I knew that caring for others would be part of my life's work."

Her approach to care is deeply patient-focused and collaborative, emphasizing a multidisciplinary model that empowers patients to take ownership of their health. She strives to ensure every individual feels heard, supported, and capable. "I want patients to walk away feeling empowered and engaged and to know that I truly care about their well-being," she explains.

Despite the changes, Marilyn remains committed to lifelong learning and adapting her practice as the field advances. Integrity and Compassion, she says, are the values that best define her approach to nursing. "Integrity includes respect, accountability, and excellence which all essential to patient care," she reflects. "But Compassion is just as vital. If patients don't feel that you care, they won't listen. Compassion builds trust, and trust builds healing."

She integrates the "ICARE with Kindness" initiative into her daily practice through intentional, respectful communication, using therapeutic conversation, minimizing interruptions during patient visits, introducing herself clearly, and using the teach-back method to ensure understanding. "Kindness shows in the small things," she notes. "It's about being present and ensuring patients know they matter."

After more than two decades in healthcare, she remains as passionate as ever about nursing. Mentoring new nurses has become one of her greatest joys, as she helps guide the next generation of caregivers. "Even after 26 years, I'm still learning, still growing," she says. "It's a privilege to be part of this evolving profession that continues to touch lives and make a difference every single day."

Looking ahead, Marilyn envisions nursing continuing to evolve alongside a growing aging population. She foresees an even greater emphasis on homecare, ambulatory services, assisted living, and hospice, all guided by evidence-based practice.

EXCELLENCE IN CLINICAL NURSING AWARD



"Respect is the foundation of trust"

With 18 years of nursing experience and 17 of them with NYC Health + Hospitals, **Kelly Rong, MSN, RN, RN-BC**, exemplifies professionalism, empathy, and excellence in every aspect of her work. Kelly believes that what makes her a great nurse is a combination of technical expertise, strong communication, and a deep commitment to the ICARE values. "I bring critical thinking, compassion, and strong communication skills to my practice," she explains. "Most importantly, I ensure that every patient is treated with dignity and respect. These qualities allow me to connect with patients and their families, offer emotional support, and build trust that leads to positive outcomes."

Kelly Rong, MSN, RN, RN-BC
NYC H+H/Gotham Health,
Gouverneur
Staff Nurse, Ambulatory
Care/Pediatrics

Kelly's inspiration to pursue nursing came from a deeply personal experience while watching a nurse care for her mother in the ICU.

"I'll never forget the passion in the nurse's eyes as she cared for my mother," she recalls. "It was then that I realized nursing is not only a profession but a calling that brings rewards to both the caregiver and the patient. I wanted to be that person who could bring comfort and make a difference, not only for my patients but also for my own family and community."

Kelly's peers say that she "fosters a strong culture of teamwork by consistently encouraging open communication and mutual respect among all members of the care team. She actively collaborates with physicians, medical assistants, front desk staff, and care coordinators to ensure that each patient encounter runs smoothly and that no detail is overlooked. Kelly always approaches team interactions with professionalism and a solution-focused mindset. Her ability to listen, support, and lead by example creates a positive environment where interprofessional collaboration thrives. She is often the bridge between disciplines, helping align efforts toward shared goals and continuous improvement in patient care."

Of all the ICARE values, Respect most closely aligns with her personal philosophy. "Respect is the foundation of trust," she emphasizes. "We live in a culturally diverse society, and by listening carefully and respecting each patient's background, we can reduce anxiety, promote healing, and provide truly holistic care."

Kelly embraces the ICARE with Kindness initiative wholeheartedly. "I integrate kindness into every patient interaction by showing empathy, offering respect, and being fully present," she says. "Small acts of kindness, like listening without judgment or offering a comforting word, can make a profound difference in how patients experience care."

Looking ahead, she believes the future of nursing will continue evolving toward preventive care and technological integration. "We're moving from a disease-centered model to one that emphasizes prevention and health promotion," she explains. "As technology and artificial intelligence become more integrated into healthcare, nurses will need to stay current through continuing education and professional development to adapt to these advancements."

EXCELLENCE IN CLINICAL NURSING AWARD



Ivymae Yanson, BSN, RN
NYC H+H/Gotham Health,
LeFrak
Staff Nurse, Ambulatory Care

"Every patient deserves to be treated with dignity and respect"

With 17 years of nursing experience, **Ivymae Yanson, BSN, RN**, has built her career on adaptability, empathy, and an unwavering commitment to compassionate care. Her ability to adjust to each patient's unique needs, both medically and emotionally, defines her strength as a nurse.

Nursing runs deep in Ivymae's family and has always been a part of her life's foundation. "I grew up surrounded by nurses. From an early age, I witnessed the dedication and resilience that this profession requires." Inspired by their compassion and strength, Ivymae chose to follow in their footsteps, viewing nursing not only as a career but as a meaningful way to serve others.

nursing not only as a career but as a meaningful way to serve others. Some of Ivymae's most rewarding moments have been the simple yet profound expressions of gratitude from patients and their families. "When a patient or family member thanks me for the care and service they received, it means so much," she says. "Those words remind me that my efforts have made a real difference in someone's life."

Her approach to patient care centers on compassion, respect, and genuine listening. "I think it's very important to listen attentively to patients," she emphasizes. "It helps build trust and shows them that their voice matters." By fostering open communication and empathy, she ensures that her patients and their families feel heard, valued, and respected throughout their care journey.

Of the ICARE values, Respect and Compassion resonate most deeply with her. "Every patient deserves to be treated with dignity and respect," she explains. "By combining compassion with respect, we honor the humanity in every person we care for." These principles guide her daily practice, shaping every interaction she has with patients, families, and colleagues alike.

She also embodies the "ICARE with Kindness" initiative through her mindful and empathetic approach. Through her work at the LeFrak Clinic, her coworkers note that she is "able to create environment where every team member feels valued and empowered to speak up about patient care concerns or improvement ideas." Another nominator also says Ivymae "exemplifies clinic excellence, compassionate care, and leadership in the practice environment. [She] consistently goes above and beyond to ensure the highest standard of patients care."

Looking ahead, Ivymae sees the nursing profession continuing to evolve especially with advancements in technology and evidence-based practice. "It's important to embrace lifelong learning," she says. "Staying current with emerging technologies and new research allows us to provide the highest quality care." Her commitment to continuous growth ensures that she remains adaptable in an ever-changing healthcare landscape.

EXCELLENCE IN CLINICAL NURSING AWARD



Gilbert Guerrero, BSN, RN
NYC H+H/Gotham Health,
Morrisania

Staff Nurse, Ambulatory Care

"I approach every patient with kindness, empathy, and understanding and turn ordinary moments into opportunities for healing and hope."

For **Gilbert Guerrero, BSN, RN**, nursing is more than a career; it's a calling. "I see nursing not just as a job, but as a calling to care for others wholeheartedly."

Gilbert's journey into nursing was inspired by his mother, whose unwavering love, patience, and strength shaped his understanding of what it means to care. "My mother has always been my greatest inspiration," he says. "Through her example, I learned that caring for others is one of the purest ways to serve. Nursing became my way of continuing that legacy."

Throughout his career, there have been countless meaningful moments, but one stands out vividly.

During a quiet night shift in a nursing home, an 85-year-old resident held his hand and said he had "a heart of gold." The woman prayed for his and encouraged him to continue his calling despite the challenges. "That simple act of gratitude reminded me that even the smallest gestures of care can leave a lasting impact," he recalls. "It reaffirmed my belief that nursing is not just about healing bodies; it is about touching lives and offering comfort that goes beyond medicine."

Among the ICARE values, Compassion resonates with him most deeply. "It guides my decisions, especially in challenging moments, and it keeps me grounded in my purpose to care with both skill and heart," he shares. "Through compassion, I approach every patient with kindness, empathy, and understanding and turn ordinary moments into opportunities for healing and hope."

He embraces the "ICARE with Kindness" initiative in both simple and meaningful ways by offering reassurance to patients, following up after procedures, or stepping in to help a colleague. "These small gestures create a caring environment where everyone feels valued and supported," he says.

Gilbert's coworkers would attest to his compassionate nature. "Mr. Guerrero is an excellent, caring, compassionate and hard-working nurse. A real team player assisting not only patients but colleagues when needed and goes the extra mile when needed. He is a hard-working, punctual and reliable worker. A true asset to this facility-institution."

Looking ahead, Gilbert envisions nursing continuing to evolve through innovation, collaboration, and lifelong learning. "As technology becomes more integrated into healthcare, our role as compassionate caregivers will be even more important," he remarks. "I plan to keep learning and adapting while holding onto the heart of nursing, which is to serve people with excellence and empathy."

EXCELLENCE IN CLINICAL NURSING AWARD

"I want patients and families to feel valued."



**Emelita Austria, BSN, RN,
CCRN**

NYC H+H/PAC, Gouverneur
Staff Nurse, Sub-Acute Care

With over 19 years of experience in nursing, compassion and diligence are at the heart of everything **Emelita Austria, RN, BSN, CCRN**, does. "I show my patients that I care by being attentive to their needs and conscientious in doing my work," she shares. Her calm presence, empathy, and commitment to quality care define her daily practice and inspire those around her.

Emelita's passion for nursing began at home, guided by two aunts who were both nurses. One aunt, who worked at her town's community health center, became a particularly strong influence. "I used to help her prepare presentation boards," she recalls. "From her, I learned the important role nurses play in health promotion." That early exposure to education and advocacy shaped her understanding of nursing as both an art and a science."

When it comes to patient care, her approach is simple yet profound: treat everyone with respect, even in challenging situations. "I want patients and families to feel valued," she says. That sense of dignity and understanding is something she brings to every encounter, creating an environment of trust and comfort.

Among the ICARE values, Compassion resonates with her most deeply. "I recognize how vulnerable patients can be, so I try to help as best as I can, even with simple requests like a blanket or a pitcher of water," she explains. "Those little things make a big difference."

She also integrates the 'ICARE with Kindness' initiative into her everyday practice by maintaining reliability and responsiveness. "If a patient rings the call bell, I respond as soon as possible," she says. "And if I tell them I'll be back, I make sure I keep that promise."

Emelita's peers confirm her commitment to the I-CARE values. A peer affirms that "Emelita brings ICARE values to the 6th floor subacute rehab unit. She knows patients by name, anticipates their needs, and advocates for their well-being in every interaction. It is this blend of clinical skill and genuine compassion that makes her truly deserving of this recognition."

Looking ahead, Emelita sees the future of nursing moving toward higher specialization and professional development. "Many nurses are pursuing advanced education and becoming more specialized," she notes. "To adapt, I stay proactive by joining professional organizations, taking online courses, and continuing to grow within my field."

EXCELLENCE IN CLINICAL NURSING AWARD



Shea Chenery, BSN, RN, CEN
NYC H+H/Harlem
Staff Nurse, Emergency
Services

"Throughout my nursing career, some of the best moments have been when patients thank me for making a difference in their day, or when I'm able to reassure a nervous or anxious patient."

Shea Chenery, RN, BSN, CEN, has shown an incredible capacity for empathy, composure, and teamwork. Working in the emergency department (ED) at Harlem Hospital, she thrives under pressure, saying, "What makes me a great nurse is my ability to stay calm, think clearly, and connect with people when things are at their worst." In the unpredictable world of the ED, where she may be treating trauma one moment and comforting a scared family member the next, these traits are essential. "I think the traits that help me most are composure, empathy, and curiosity," she explains. "My desire to learn has really helped shape me as a nurse."

Shea's decision to pursue nursing was influenced by her upbringing, surrounded by parents who worked in the medical field. "I've always been drawn to nursing, even as a young child, but it wasn't until the pandemic that I felt truly inspired. Watching healthcare workers step up during uncertain times made me realize how powerful and meaningful it is to care for others in their most vulnerable moments."

Of the five ICARE values, Shea feels most aligned with Excellence. "In the ER, excellence isn't just about knowledge or skill; it's about consistency, preparation, and showing up at your best no matter what the day brings," she explains. "Excellence means taking ownership of my practice, staying current on evidence-based care, earning my CEN and TNCC certifications, and learning from both experiences and my peers." To her, excellence isn't perfection but commitment: "I hold myself to the same standard of care for every patient, no matter their acuity, socioeconomic status, or how they treat me."

As part of the "ICARE with Kindness" initiative, Shea embraces the impact of small gestures. "Kindness is something I try to integrate into every part of my practice," she says. "Small acts of kindness don't take long, but they completely change how patients and family experience their care, like taking an extra minute to explain what's happening to a worried family member, adjusting a blanket on a cold patient, or checking in on a patient who's been waiting for hours."

Looking ahead, Shea acknowledges that the nursing profession is changing rapidly. "Technology is advancing at an incredible pace, and people are getting sicker than ever before," she observes. "For me, adapting means staying curious and committing to growth, whether through advanced certification, leadership opportunities, or mentoring new nurses and learning from them as much as they learn from me." However, she is confident that some aspects of nursing will always remain the same, especially patient-centered care. "As much as nursing may change, the one thing that will stay the same is being present, compassionate, and human at the bedside."

EXCELLENCE IN CLINICAL NURSING AWARD



**Margarita Kenny, BSN, RN,
MED SURG-BC**
NYC H+H/Jacobi
Staff Nurse, MICU

“I just try to care for my patients with empathy and compassion, paying attention to the details and treating everyone with the respect they deserve.”

With 18 years of dedicated service at NYC Health + Hospitals, **Margarita Kenny, RN, BSN, MED SURG-BC**, has built her career on empathy, compassion, and respect. Though humble about her achievements, she brings genuine care and attention to detail to every interaction, ensuring that each patient feels valued and treated with dignity. “There are so many great nurses,” she says. “I just try to care for my patients with empathy and compassion, paying attention to the details and treating everyone with the respect they deserve.”

Margarita’s passion for nursing began early in life. As a child, she often helped her mother care for her grandmother and discovered how meaningful it felt to comfort and help others. “Even then, I loved the feeling of being able to make someone feel better,” she recalls. “As I learned more about nursing, I knew it was what I wanted to do.”

Among the ICARE values, Integrity stands out as the one that best defines her approach. “Integrity ties everything together,” she reflects. “It means being honest, compassionate, accountable, respectful, and striving for excellence, all at once.”

She brings the “ICARE with Kindness” initiative to life through simple but powerful actions: taking the time to connect with patients, engaging in small conversations that build trust, and offering understanding during difficult times. “Sometimes it’s those small, kind gestures that mean the most,” she notes.

Margarita’s approach to patient care is rooted in dignity, respect, and strong advocacy. Her peers remark that “Several family members have expressed deep gratitude for the compassion and care Kenny provided to their loved ones. Her empathy and clear communication offer tremendous reassurance during difficult moments. This same attitude extends to junior doctors and trainees. Kenny consistently models professionalism, kindness, and leadership. She is a shining example of how an ICU nurse can make a profound difference, not only through clinical excellence but also through human connection.”

Looking toward the future, she acknowledges that technology will continue to play a growing role in healthcare. Yet she firmly believes that no innovation can replace the human touch. “Technology can help us provide better care,” she explains, “but compassion, empathy, and understanding are things only people can give and they are vital to a patient’s recovery.”

EXCELLENCE IN CLINICAL NURSING AWARD



Marjorie Clarke, ADN, RN
NYC H+H/Kings County
Staff Nurse, Behavioral Health

"Kindness is powerful," she says. "It can shift how a patient feels, how a team works, and how care is delivered."

With 33 years of dedicated service to NYC Health + Hospitals and Behavioral Health, **Marjorie Clarke, ADN, RN**, has built a career defined by empathy, patience, and deep human connection. Her ability to truly listen and advocate for her patients has earned her the trust of those she cares for and the respect of her colleagues. "Empathy and listening are just as important as clinical skills," she says. "Those qualities allow me to meet people where they are and help them find the support they need." As a mentor to newer nurses, she takes pride in sharing her knowledge and experience, helping them navigate both the technical and emotional demands of nursing.

Marjorie's inspiration to pursue nursing came from her mother, who worked as a nurse's aide in a nursing home. Watching her mother treat patients with dignity and compassion made a lasting impression. "I saw how much of a difference she made in people's lives," she recalls. "Nursing, for me, became more than a career, it was a calling to serve others and offer comfort when they need it most."

Her approach to patient care is grounded in kindness, active listening, and the creation of a safe space. She hopes her patients and their families leave knowing they are not alone and that healing is possible. "I want them to feel supported and empowered to take control of their well-being," she explains. "It's about helping them see their own strength."

Marjorie's coworkers say that she is "the glue to BH PCC. She works hard to keep this clinic afloat. She shows she cares for the patients and well as her coworkers. When things are out of order she's the one who gets everyone back on track."

Of the ICARE values, Compassion most closely aligns with her personal philosophy. "Compassion is the foundation for trust and healing," she notes. "It's in the way we listen, speak, and simply show up for our patients." Through small but meaningful action: listening without judgment, offering reassurance, or supporting a colleague. Marjorie integrates the "ICARE with Kindness" initiative into her daily practice. "Kindness is powerful," she says. "It can shift how a patient feels, how a team works, and how care is delivered."

As she looks to the future, she sees nursing evolving with technology and a growing focus on mental health and community-based care. She believes telemedicine and digital tools will expand access but emphasizes that compassion must remain central. "Technology can enhance what we do," she says, "but it will never replace the human connection that defines nursing."

EXCELLENCE IN CLINICAL NURSING AWARD



**Karen Patricia Anderson,
BSN, RN**
NYC H+H/Lincoln
Staff Nurse, Med/Surg

"I want my patients and their families to walk away feeling seen, heard, and valued"

For **Karen Patricia Anderson, BSN, RN**, compassion and respect are more than just values; they are guiding principles shaped by family wisdom and a deep sense of purpose. "My mother taught my brother and me that 'life is like a necklace; it has many links, but without one, it won't fit around your neck.' Wherever you go, treat everyone with dignity, respect, and care," she shares. "I bring this mindset to work daily, applying it to the ICARE values with pride and dignity."

Karen's passion for nursing was inspired by her great-grandmother, a kind, patient, and respected matron in Spaulding, Jamaica. "She touched everyone's lives in her community," she says. "I wanted to follow in her footsteps and continue her legacy of care and compassion."

Some of Karen's most meaningful moments as a nurse are simple but powerful. "Hearing a patient say, 'Thank you for all you've done for me,' reminds me why I chose this path," she reflects. "Those words make every challenge worthwhile." When it comes to patient care, she focuses on empathy, respect, and kindness. "I want my patients and their families to walk away feeling seen, heard, and valued," she says. "Everyone deserves to be treated with patience and understanding."

Among the ICARE values, Compassion resonates most deeply with her. "As a nurse, you have to be able to put yourself in someone else's shoes and remind yourself that you should treat others the way you want to be treated," she says. She integrates the 'ICARE with Kindness' initiative through everyday actions : listening attentively, showing empathy, and treating everyone with respect. "No one knows you better than yourself," she says. "Listening helps us understand people's needs and build stronger connections."

Above all Karen believes that empathy is the foundation of both nursing and humanity. "Show empathy and always listen to each other," she reflects. "You can learn from everyone in life." Karen's colleagues and peers also agree with her assessment. One coworker said of Karen, "Ms. Anderson always shows her patient and others patient respect, care, and goes above and beyond for all patients on her unit. She is polite and always goes around the unit to greet each and every patient."

Looking to the future, she envisions herself taking on leadership roles within the nursing profession. "I want to make an impact by leading with respect and a listening ear," she explains. "With diligence, care, and empathy, I know I can empower others to do good and uplift those around them."

EXCELLENCE IN CLINICAL NURSING AWARD



Chantone Saint Surin, BSN, RN

NYC H+H/PAC, McKinney
Staff Nurse, Post-Acute Care

"Respect is the foundation of everything I do,"

With 12 years of nursing experience, including four with NYC Health + Hospitals, **Chantone Saint Surin BSN, RN** approaches every patient with kindness, empathy, and genuine care. "Being a nurse isn't just about medical knowledge," he explains. "It's about how you make people feel during their most vulnerable moments. I want every person I care for to feel seen, heard, and valued."

Chantone's journey into nursing was inspired by a deep desire to help others and to make a real difference in people's lives. From an early age, he felt a calling to provide comfort and support to those in need. Witnessing the compassion of nurses during family experiences strengthened his resolve to join the profession and carry forward that same sense of hope and healing.

Among his most rewarding moments are the times when he witnesses his patients' progress and seeing them recover, regain confidence, and begin to thrive. "One of the best feelings is earning someone's trust and seeing how that trust transforms their experience."

Chantone's approach to patient care is holistic, focusing not only on physical needs but also on emotional and spiritual well-being. "Healing isn't just about the body. It's about the mind and spirit too," he says. "I take time to listen, to create a safe space where patients and their families feel supported and respected."

When asked which of NYC Health + Hospitals' ICARE values best reflects his philosophy, Chantone immediately points to Respect. "Respect is the foundation of everything I do," he says. "It means treating every person with dignity, listening without judgment, and honoring their unique story." He brings this to life each day by ensuring his patients feel truly heard, understood, and empowered to take an active role in their care.

Chantone's coworkers and peers remark that "Mr. Saint Surin embodies the ICARE standards in every aspect of his practice. He greets residents with kindness to ensure integrity and respect are upheld, whether it's through a warm greeting or attentively addressing any concerns residents and their families may have. Clinically this employee works tirelessly to ensure the safety and care of his residents."

Looking ahead, Chantone sees technology, especially telehealth, as a major force shaping the future of nursing. He is committed to embracing new tools while maintaining the compassion and human connection that define quality care. He is also passionate about mental health advocacy, recognizing the vital role nurses play in supporting patients' psychological well-being.

EXCELLENCE IN CLINICAL NURSING AWARD



"Kindness transforms care..."

Alina Grineva, BSN, RN, MSN, CCM

NYC H+H/MetroPlus Health
Senior Director, Integrated
Care Management

With nearly two decades of nursing experience, including over four years with NYC Health + Hospitals, **Alina Grineva, BSN, RN, MSN, CCM**, has built a career grounded in integrity, accountability, and a deep commitment to public and community health. Her practice reflects a rare balance of clinical precision and compassionate leadership. Known for her attention to detail and ability to see the bigger picture, she brings both strategic insight and empathy to her work. "Healthcare is unpredictable," she says, "but staying calm, adaptable, and organized especially during high-stress moments. This helps create a safe environment and sustain team morale."

For Alina, the decision to pursue nursing was inspired by the profession's versatility and humanity. "Nursing is such a dynamic career," she reflects. "It combines science with compassion and gives us the opportunity to advocate for patients, ensuring their needs are met and their dignity preserved." This blend of critical thinking and emotional intelligence continues to define her practice today.

Alina's approach to patient care is simple but powerful: "Treat members as you would want someone to treat you, your family, or your friends." This philosophy ensures that compassion and respect are at the center of every interaction, whether she's working directly with patients or supporting her team.

Integrity and Accountability are the values that guide her most. She believes integrity is the cornerstone of trust and doing the right thing even when no one is watching adds to the accountability that strengthens both care quality and teamwork. "Being dependable, honest, and transparent allows us to advocate effectively and continually improve," she says.

Through initiatives like "ICARE with Kindness," she integrates empathy and understanding into every facet of her work. Whether navigating complex member cases or leading her team through challenges, she ensures that every interaction reflects warmth and respect. "Kindness transforms care," she says. "It reminds people they're seen and valued, no matter the circumstance."

Looking ahead, she sees the nursing field moving toward greater integration of artificial intelligence and technology. While she welcomes innovation, she emphasizes that the human touch must remain essential. "AI can support our work," she notes, "but compassion, critical thinking, and empathy are what define nursing. We can't lose that."

EXCELLENCE IN CLINICAL NURSING AWARD



Leah V. Waga, BSN, RN
NYC H+H/Metropolitan
Staff Nurse, Ambulatory Care

"I love the role of being a provider and caregiver for the vulnerable and the ill, especially the elderly population."

Leah V. Waga, BSN, RN, has eleven years of experience in nursing, and seven of those with NYC Health + Hospitals. Leah embodies empathy, teamwork, and respect in every aspect of her work. She believes that being a great nurse is rooted not only in clinical knowledge but also in human connection. "I try my best to be empathetic toward our patients and their families," she explains. "Listening to their concerns and communicating them effectively to providers helps ensure their voices are heard."

Leah's inspiration to pursue nursing came from her father, whose encouragement helped her recognize that nursing was more than a career; it was a vocation.

"I realized that nursing is not just a source of livelihood," she says. "In a deeper sense, it is a calling to serve. That understanding continues to guide me every day."

Leah's approach to patient care is both compassionate and respectful. "I believe it's important that patients feel seen and heard as individuals with unique needs," she explains. "When patients feel valued and understood, they're more likely to be self-motivated to participate actively in their care. My goal is to foster trust and empowerment through every interaction."

Of the five ICARE values, Respect resonates most strongly with her personal philosophy. "Respect accords every patient with dignity and inherent worth, regardless of their background, race, or circumstances," she says. "When patients feel genuinely respected, it builds trust and creates a safe space for healing." Leah's nominators also agree by stating that "...at every step, she actively involves patients in their care decisions, respecting their choices and dignity, illustrating Accountability by taking responsibility for their wellbeing and outcomes. She communicates clearly and respectfully with patients and their families, fostering trust and collaboration, which reflects Respect for their individuality and cultural backgrounds."

She also embraces the ICARE with Kindness initiative wholeheartedly, weaving it into her daily practice through words and actions. "Using respectful language and kind gestures when communicating with patients, colleagues, and co-workers can make a huge difference," she explains. "Kindness doesn't take extra time but it can transform someone's entire experience."

Looking toward the future, she recognizes that nursing is an ever-evolving profession shaped by technology and research. "The field of nursing continues to advance rapidly," she notes. "As new technologies and evidence-based practices emerge, flexibility and lifelong learning are essential. I plan to stay adaptable and open to these changes so I can continue providing the highest standard of care."

EXCELLENCE IN CLINICAL NURSING AWARD



"I've always loved helping others, and nursing allows me to make a meaningful impact on patients' overall well-being."

**Lourdie Jean-Pierre Chicoye,
MSN, RN**

NYC H+H/North Central Bronx
Staff Nurse, Behavioral Health

With 16 years of nursing experience and 11 of them with NYC Health + Hospital, **Lourdie Jean-Pierre Chicoye, MSN, RN**, shows adaptability, empathy, and excellence to every aspect of patient care. Her ability to remain calm under pressure, think critically, and respond to unexpected challenges allows her to consistently provide high-quality care in even the most complex situations. "I empathize with my patients to make a real difference in their healing process," she explains. "I treat each patient as unique and work closely with the care team to ensure they feel supported, respected, and understood."

Her inspiration to pursue nursing came from home as her mother, a retired CNA, and her older sister, a nurse, both served as role models. "They inspired me to become a nurse," she says. "I've always loved helping others, and nursing allows me to make a meaningful impact on patients' overall well-being."

Lourdie's approach to patient care is grounded in trust, respect, teamwork, cultural awareness, and compassion. "I want my patients to feel confident in their care and to know that we're all working together for their well-being," she says. "Clear communication and collaboration make all the difference."

Of the five ICARE values, Excellence resonates most deeply with her. "Excellence means striving to go beyond expectations and continuously improving," she explains. "I apply evidence-based practice not only to enhance patient care but also to improve workflows and share knowledge with my colleagues." A nominee also adds that Lourdie shows excellence in her daily practice by using "evidence-based practices to manage psych patients. She educates patient using visual aids and simple language."

Lourdie also actively integrates the ICARE with Kindness initiative into her daily work. "If a psychiatric patient is scared about a procedure, I take the time to sit with them, listen, and offer reassurance," she shares. "If a patient has cultural or dietary needs, I collaborate with the kitchen and care team to accommodate them. Even small acts of kindness such as listening, understanding, going the extra mile, can have a profound impact on how a patient feels."

Looking ahead, Lourdie believes continued investment in staff development is key. "More in-service training for psychiatric staff would benefit patients, staff, and the hospital," she emphasizes. "Education and teamwork are at the heart of quality care, and when we grow as nurses, our patients thrive." She also sees the nursing profession continuing to evolve alongside technology and patient expectations. "Healthcare is always changing, and technology plays a huge role in improving access and quality," she notes. "To keep up, I focus on ongoing education, staying current with trends, and using evidence-based practices to deliver the best possible care."

EXCELLENCE IN CLINICAL NURSING AWARD



Maria Luisa Ceniza, BSN, RN
NYC H+H/Queens
Staff Nurse, NICU

"My approach to patient care is always providing positivity and knowledge-based care to improve outcomes."

With 46 years of experience in nursing, **Maria Luisa Ceniza, BSN, RN** has spent the past 11 years at NYC Health + Hospitals, where she has dedicated herself to caring for the most vulnerable patients in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at Queens Hospital.

Maria's journey in nursing began in childhood, inspired by her aunt, a NICU nurse, and this early influence has shaped her deep commitment to the profession. It is driven by a deep sense of purpose and the desire to provide the highest level of compassionate care to her patients.

"Caring for the tiniest babies and the most vulnerable patients is the most rewarding feeling. Seeing them survive and grow is what brings me the greatest joy."

Maria, in her day-to-day work, focuses on delivering exceptional care with a strong sense of empathy, particularly when it comes to supporting parents during challenging times. "My goal is always to provide exceptional care to my treasured little babies and heartfelt support to their families. These families are going through so much, and I want them to feel heard and cared for during their journey."

When asked about her core values, she reflects that Compassion and Respect are central to her practice. "Especially in the NICU, it's crucial to build trust and show respect to both the babies and their families. Compassion isn't just about physical care; it's about understanding the emotional journey they are on and providing support in every way possible."

In everything she does, Maria embodies the values of the ICARE initiative, ensuring that kindness, compassion, and respect are integrated into her practice every day. "ICARE with kindness should be part of every nursing practice. It's about understanding what parents are going through and supporting them all the way."

Looking to the future of nursing, Maria sees advancements in technology as a key area for growth, especially in neonatal care. "I expect that technology will continue to improve, helping our little babies adapt better and thrive in the NICU. As new developments come into play, I will continue to adapt and integrate them into my practice while always staying true to the compassionate care that is the heart of nursing."

EXCELLENCE IN CLINICAL NURSING AWARD



"Always show compassion to others."

With 22 years of nursing experience, including five with NYC Health + Hospitals, **Donald Doles, BSN, RN** embodies the compassion, integrity, and dedication that define the nursing profession. Guided by empathy, patience, and a deep sense of responsibility, he approaches every patient interaction with the goal of making each person feel valued, heard, and supported. His calm demeanor under pressure and meticulous attention to detail ensure safe, high-quality care, while his kindness brings comfort to those facing vulnerable moments.

Donald Doles, BSN, RN

NYC H+H/PAC, Seaview
Staff Nurse, Post-Acute Care

From the beginning of his career, Donald was drawn to nursing out of a genuine desire to help others and make a difference.

"Seeing how nurses comfort, support, and heal patients showed me how meaningful this career is," he reflects. "It's about being there when people need you most." That commitment to compassion continues to shape his daily practice, whether she's teaching patients how to care for themselves or simply taking the time to listen.

His approach to patient care is rooted in empathy and humanity. He treats every patient as she would a family member; listening, understanding, and ensuring they feel safe. His goal is for patients and families to leave with the sense that they were genuinely cared for, supported, and respected throughout their healing journey.

Integrity is the ICARE value that most closely aligns with Donald's personal philosophy. He believes it's the foundation of trust between nurses and patients. "Integrity means doing the right thing, even when no one is watching," he says. "My patients trust me with their health and their stories, and I take that responsibility to heart." His honesty, dependability, and strong advocacy for her patients reflect that value every day.

Donald also integrates the "ICARE with Kindness" initiative into his practice through small yet meaningful actions such as listening attentively, speaking gently, and taking the time to reassure her patients. "Even a smile or explaining something clearly can make a big difference," he says.

Looking toward the future, Donald sees the nursing profession continuing to evolve with technology, advanced treatments, and a stronger emphasis on patient education. He views these changes as opportunities for growth. "As healthcare advances, nurses will play an even greater role in guiding and educating patients," Donald explains. "I plan to keep learning and improving so I can adapt and provide the best care possible."

EXCELLENCE IN CLINICAL NURSING AWARD



**Veronika Orlova, MSN, RN,
N-BC, MEDSURG-BC, AMB-BC**
NYC H+H/South Brooklyn Health
Associate Director, Nursing

"Nursing represents the perfect balance between science and compassion..."

With over 12 years of nursing experience, **Veronika Orlova, MSN, RN, NE-BC, MEDSURG-BC, AMB-BC**, exemplifies the qualities that make her an outstanding healthcare provider. Her commitment to teamwork, clinical expertise, and the ability to create a collaborative environment are central to her success. "What makes me a great nurse is my strong commitment to teamwork, my solid clinical skills, and my ability to create a positive, collaborative environment," she says. "I believe quality patient care depends on seamless communication and mutual support among healthcare professionals."

Veronika's journey into nursing was driven by both personal experiences and a deep desire to make a meaningful impact.

"Growing up, I witnessed the impact that compassionate, skilled nurses can have, not just on patients but on entire families. I knew I wanted to be part of that profession," she shares. "Nursing represents the perfect balance between science and compassion; using clinical knowledge and critical thinking to improve health outcomes while also providing emotional support to patients when they need it most."

Of the five ICARE values, Veronika feels most aligned with Compassion. "Compassion is the foundation of nursing," she explains. "It's not just about treating illness, but about seeing the person behind the patient, understanding their fears and needs, and responding with empathy and kindness." For her, compassion guides every interaction, whether with patients, families, or colleagues. "Even in high-pressure situations, compassion reminds me to slow down, listen, and connect on a human level."

Veronika integrates the "ICARE with Kindness" initiative into her daily practice by making a conscious effort to go beyond clinical tasks and create moments of genuine connection. "Kindness means listening to anxious patients, explaining procedures clearly, and offering reassurance. It's also about supporting my colleagues during busy shifts, whether it's offering encouragement or lending a helping hand," she says. "By combining kindness with the ICARE values, I aim to create a positive atmosphere where both patients and staff feel respected, appreciated, and cared for."

Looking to the future, Veronika believes that nursing will continue to evolve with innovation, technology, and a greater focus on patient-centered care. "Advances in technology, such as telehealth, electronic health records, and artificial intelligence, are reshaping how nurses deliver and coordinate care," she notes. "The future will also place a greater emphasis on preventive care, health education, and community-based services to improve overall population health. The core of nursing, though, will always be the commitment to collaboration and patient advocacy."

EXCELLENCE IN CLINICAL NURSING AWARD



**Jennifer Sawinski, MSN, RN,
AMB-BC, CLC**
NYC H+H/Woodhull
Staff Nurse, Pediatric Primary
Care

“By staying engaged in research and continuously learning, we can elevate patient outcomes and strengthen our profession.”

With twelve years of nursing experience, including eleven with NYC Health + Hospitals, **Jennifer Sawinski, MSN, RN, AMB-BC, CLC**, is known for her warmth, dedication, and ability to build lasting relationships with her patients and their families. Working in an outpatient pediatric setting, she has the unique privilege of seeing her patients grow over time, celebrate their milestones, meet their families, and become part of their journey toward health and happiness. Jennifer’s cheerful, outgoing, and compassionate nature allows her to connect deeply with those she serves, transforming every clinical interaction into a meaningful experience built on trust and care.

Jennifer’s journey into nursing was inspired by her husband, who encouraged her to take the leap into a profession she had long been drawn to. “I have always wanted to help people, but it was my husband who pushed me to finally pursue nursing,” she recalls. “Because of him, I took the chance and I’ve never looked back.” That support set her on a path that has brought immense fulfillment and purpose.

Of the five I-CARE values, she feels most aligned with Excellence, seeing it as the foundation that integrates the others. “Leading with excellence means bringing integrity, compassion, accountability, and respect into every interaction,” she explains. “It’s the benchmark for everything I do.”

The “ICARE with Kindness” initiative has been a natural extension of her practice. “These principles have always guided the way I care for my patients,” she says. “Now that it has a name, it’s rewarding to see that what I’ve always done is part of a shared standard across NYC Health + Hospitals.”

A nominator adds that “ [Jennifer] demonstrates cultural humility and her unwavering commitment to the highest ideals of the nursing profession along with her intuitive ability to nurture, foster and inspire the next generation of pediatric nurses, with an applied approach that is founded upon sound nursing evidence-based practice.”

Looking ahead, Jennifer envisions nursing continuing to evolve toward a greater role in holistic and evidence-based care. She believes nurses will increasingly influence research, innovation, and patient education, advancing best practices across all settings. “Nursing is always changing,” she notes. “By staying engaged in research and continuously learning, we can elevate patient outcomes and strengthen our profession.”

EXCELLENCE IN NURSING LEADERSHIP AWARD



**Andrew Wuthrich, MBA,
MSN, RN, ONC, NE-BC,
CPAN**

*NYC H+H/Metropolitan
Director, Nursing*

"Nurses are no longer just participants in the system. We are architects of change."

With more than 13 years of nursing experience, **Andrew Wuthrich MBA, RN, MSN, RN, ONC, NE-BC, CPAN**, exemplifies leadership grounded in empathy, accountability, and purpose. "What makes me a great nurse is my ability to lead with both heart and purpose," he says. "Empathy, emotional intelligence, and moral courage guide everything I do." Known for his integrity, compassion, and attention to accountability, he brings a forward-thinking approach to every patient interaction and team collaboration, modeling the professionalism and resilience he expects from others.

Andrew's early journey into nursing began while serving as an Emergency Medical Technician, working alongside Air Force nurses whose skill, confidence, and compassion inspired him.

"I witnessed how nurses could bring calm, clarity, and compassion to moments of great uncertainty," he recalls. "That experience inspired me to pursue nursing as a way to combine intellect, leadership, and service to others."

Andrew's hard work as an integral reason why Metropolitan Hospital has received both a Gold Beacon Award for Excellence for their ICU and the Pathway to Excellence with Distinction for the hospital. "He was the champion for the Well-Being Standard for Pathway to Excellence, and rounded with wellness carts, promoted Helping Healers Heal, and encourage all nursing staff to attend wellness activities in the wellness center.", said the staff member who nominated Andrew for this award.

Among NYC Health + Hospitals' ICARE values, Accountability most closely reflects Andrew's philosophy. "True accountability begins with owning your role, understanding that every decision, action, and outcome reflects your leadership and integrity," he explains. By modeling ownership and transparency, he cultivates trust and drives team excellence.

Ultimately, what drives Andrew is mentorship and collective success. "Every nurse I mentor, every improvement I help design, and every patient we serve reflects the spirit of nursing: service, compassion, and transformation." He expresses deep gratitude to her executive leadership team and fellow nurse leaders, crediting their collaboration and vision for advancing nursing excellence across Metropolitan.

Looking ahead, Andrew sees nursing evolving toward innovation and leadership. "Nurses are no longer just participants in the system. We are architects of change." he says. He envisions a future where nurse leaders and advanced practice professionals bridge the gap between research and bedside care, ensuring access, equity, and excellence for all. "Together," he concludes, "we champion a culture of collaboration, compassion, and innovation that makes Metropolitan not just a workplace, but a place of purpose, pride, and extraordinary care."

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION AND METORSHIP AWARD



Edwine Darby Joseph, MSN-ED, RN, GRN, GERO-BC, BLS-I
 NYC H+H/PAC, Gouverneur
 Nurse Educator

I always envisioned myself helping others. Nursing has given me that opportunity."

With 18 years of nursing experience, including seven years with NYC Health + Hospitals, **Edwine Darby Joseph, MSN-ED, RN, GRN, GERO-BC, BLS-I**, leads with compassion, curiosity, and a lifelong love of learning. nursing education is more than her role for Edwine; it is her identity. "Being a Nurse Educator is who I am," she affirms. "Every day, I look for ways to strengthen the nursing profession through teaching, mentoring, and guiding nurses to be compassionate, caring, and committed to evidence-based practice. I see nursing education as the backbone of the profession's future. As Florence Nightingale said, 'Let us never consider ourselves finished nurses; we must be learning all our lives.'"

Edwine's inspiration for nursing began early by watching her mother, a community nurse, serve patients in Haiti. "As a little girl, I often joined her on Saturdays for community outreach and vaccination campaigns," she recalls. "I remember the joy she brought to her patients and the deep respect she received from our community. From those experiences, I always envisioned myself helping others. Nursing has given me that opportunity."

Edwine has also advanced Nursing Excellence through measurable impact. A nominator commends Edwine's commitment to advancing professional development by "[creating] an environment where emerging nursing professionals feel valued and empowered. Edwine actively fosters a culture of excellence by offering comprehensive training, mentoring, and continuous feedback. This approach ensures that nurses not only grasp essential nursing concepts but also enhance their critical thinking and clinical skills."

Now, Edwine's approach to patient care is simple but powerful: compassion and presence. "Even when my encounters are brief, I strive to make them meaningful," she explains. "Listening is one of the most essential skills in delivering excellent patient care. I hope my patients and their families remember that my kindness and smile made a difference."

Unsurprisingly, among all of NYC Health + Hospitals' ICARE values, compassion resonates most deeply with Edwine. "It's at the heart of nursing," she emphasizes. "I strive to practice it every day whether I am in the classroom, on the units, when teaching, mentoring, or simply interacting with others. Compassion connects us all." Edwine's commitment to the "ICARE with Kindness" initiative is both personal and practical. "When it was introduced, I took the pledge immediately," she shares. "Kindness is something I practice daily and teach intentionally. I keep an open-door policy for staff ;sometimes just listening, sitting with them in the wellness room, or walking to get coffee. These small gestures help them care for their emotional well-being so they can return to caring for others." It's no surprise that staff at Gouverneur see her classroom not only as a place for education but also as a space of safety and support.

Looking toward the future of the profession, Edwine is deeply optimistic. "I see nurses engaging more in evidence-based practice, shared decision-making, career advancement, and professional certification,"

EXCELLENCE IN HOME, COMMUNITY, OR AMBULATORY AWARD



Jin-Li Pai, BSN, RN
NYC H+H/Elmhurst
Accountable Care Manager

“Nursing combines compassion, education, and community impact. It is a calling, not just a career.”

With 20 years of nursing experience and six years of dedicated service to NYC Health + Hospitals, **Jin-Li Pai, BSN, RN**, exemplifies what it means to deliver compassionate, patient-centered care. Her approach combines strong clinical expertise with empathy, respect, and an unwavering sense of integrity.

Jin-Li’s inspiration to pursue nursing began at just 18 years old, when she enrolled in a nursing program without knowing much about the field. It was her college professor who guided and inspired her to understand how profoundly a good nurse can impact patients’ lives. “I’ve always loved helping others,” she says. “Nursing combines compassion, education, and community impact. It is a calling, not just a career.”

For Jin-Li, the best moments in nursing are when patients achieve their health goals. “Seeing patients make progress and knowing I made a positive difference in their lives brings me true fulfillment,” she reflects. Her approach to patient care centers on treating every patient as a whole person including body, mind, and spirit. “I listen actively, communicate clearly, and treat every patient with respect and dignity,” she says. “I hope my patients trust me and feel that we’re a team working together toward better health.”

Among the ICARE values, Integrity resonates most deeply with Jin-Li. “I work in a diverse hospital serving patients from all backgrounds,” she says. “Integrity means treating each person with respect, being dependable, and maintaining a positive attitude that supports both patients and coworkers.”

Jin-Li brings the ‘ICARE with Kindness’ initiative to life through small but meaningful actions such as: following up with patients by phone to ensure they receive accurate information, helping with insurance or pharmacy issues, and scheduling extra time for those who need additional education or support. As a chronic disease nurse, Jin-Li takes pride in providing evidence-based care, supporting patients with diabetes and hypertension, and collaborating with interdisciplinary teams to help families gain independence in managing their health.

Looking ahead, Jin-Li sees technology playing an increasingly important role in nursing. “AI and telehealth are transforming healthcare,” she explains. “As nurses, we must embrace these changes, adapt, and keep learning to ensure we provide the best care possible.”

EXCELLENCE IN TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION AWARD



Phillipa Maddan, DNP, MSN, RN, RNC-OB, C-EFM, CLC
*NYC H+H/Queens
 Nurse Educator*

“The future of the nursing profession is set for significant evolution, driven by advancements in technology, an increasing emphasis on patient-centered care, health equity, and the growing complexity of healthcare needs.”

With 25 years of nursing experience, including a decade with NYC Health + Hospitals, **Phillipa Maddan, DNP, MSN, RN, RNC-OB, C-EFM, CLC**, embodies the perfect balance of compassion, professionalism, and innovation. Guided by empathy, patience, and a deep respect for others, she approaches every patient interaction with genuine care and understanding.

Phillipa’s calm presence and willingness to listen make her a trusted source of comfort, while her passion for continuous learning ensures that her practice remains current, effective, and deeply human.

Inspired by her mother’s belief in her caring nature, Phillipa found in nursing a meaningful way to help others heal, grow, and find hope.

Her approach to patient care centers on presence and respect. She strives to make every patient feel valued, informed, and truly heard, treating them with the same compassion she would show her own family. As healthcare continues to evolve, she embraces the integration of technology and artificial intelligence, using her expertise in informatics to ensure these advancements enhance, not replace, the human connection at the heart of nursing.

Among the ICARE values, she identifies most strongly with Excellence, seeing it as the foundation that weaves together integrity, compassion, accountability, and respect. She demonstrates this through her dedication to professional growth, ethical practice, and her constant pursuit of the highest standards in care. Her leadership in the System Excellence Award for Technology and Innovation reflects her commitment to leveraging digital tools that improve outcomes while maintaining the warmth and empathy that define nursing.

Phillipa has been involved in integrating digital health tools and AI systems that help track patient progress in real-time, leading to faster interventions and better outcomes. She has worked closely with her team to make sure everyone feels comfortable integrating technology into nursing care. She says, “It’s all about making sure technology supports the human side of nursing and drives better, safer care for everyone.”

The “ICARE with Kindness” initiative aligns naturally with her philosophy. Whether offering comfort to an anxious patient or encouragement to a colleague, she practices kindness as a daily habit that builds trust, fosters teamwork, and strengthens healing. To her, kindness isn’t an act; it’s a way of being.

Looking ahead, Phillipa sees nursing as both an art and a science; one that requires equal measures of innovation and compassion. She remains dedicated to advancing the field while ensuring that every patient feels seen, supported, and cared for with excellence and heart.

EXCELENCE IN VOLUNTEERISM AND SERVICE AWARD



**Madeline Hernandez, MSN,
RN, NPD-BC, CEN**
NYC H+H/Queens
Nurse Educator

...nurses are not just caregivers, but mentors, advocates, and sometimes a beacon of hope for those who need it most."

For **Madeline Hernandez, MSN, RN, NPD-BC, CEN**, nursing is not just a career, it is a calling rooted in compassion, growth, and the power of education. Madeline's journey into nursing began at one of the most pivotal moments of her life. At just sixteen, pregnant and in the tenth grade, she found herself vulnerable and uncertain until a caring school nurse changed everything. "She cared for me without judgment and guided me to the support I needed. That experience showed me the power of compassion and advocacy," she recalls. "It's why I believe nurses are not just caregivers, but mentors, advocates, and sometimes a beacon of hope for those who need it most."

Over the course of her 21-year career, some of Madeline's most transformative moments came from stepping outside her comfort zone whether serving as a charge nurse in the Emergency Department or leading through complex situations. "Those experiences challenged me and shaped me into a stronger nurse and leader," she reflects.

Among the ICARE values, Integrity resonates most deeply with her. "Integrity means doing the right thing even when no one is watching," she explains. "Trust in nursing is built on honesty, transparency, and consistency. I live this value by holding myself accountable, upholding evidence-based standards, and serving as a role model for the nurses I mentor." Madeline's approach to patient care is deeply rooted in NYC Health + Hospitals' ICARE values and evidence-based practice. "I want every patient and family to feel respected, supported, and truly heard and know that their care was guided by both compassion and science."

In her volunteerism and service, Madeline applies nursing excellence beyond the hospital walls, uplifting others and extending compassion to the broader community. "For me, excellence means giving back, creating opportunities for growth, and ensuring every act of service has a meaningful impact."

A nominator notes that "Through her volunteer work with Brentwood Legion Ambulance, pediatric oncology camps, disaster relief teams, and public health events, such as the NYC Marathon, [Madeline] has worked alongside EMS, nonprofits, and community responders in high-pressure environments. These experiences give her a deeper understanding of patient needs especially when meeting them on their own turf during times of crisis. She brings this insight back to her hospital role, helping teams deliver more compassionate, coordinated, and culturally responsive care. Her ability to connect systems and advocate for both patients and providers strengthens interagency relationships, improving the quality of care for the community we serve."

Looking toward the future of nursing, she envisions a field driven by innovation, technology, and interprofessional collaboration. "Nurses will continue to lead in areas like informatics and population health while advancing health equity," she says. "I plan to stay ahead through lifelong learning and mentoring the next generation of nurses."

STRUCTURAL EMPOWERMENT AWARD

NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS/Metropolitan



Metropolitan's greatest legacy isn't the building we occupy or the milestones we mark; it's the people. Our patients, staff, partners, and communities are at the heart of our story."

For 150 years, Metropolitan Hospital has been a pillar of compassionate care and innovation, serving the diverse communities of East Harlem and beyond. From its origins on Wards Island in 1875 to its current home on First Avenue, Metropolitan has remained steadfast in its mission to provide equitable, high-quality healthcare to every New Yorker. Today, the hospital's comprehensive services span adult and pediatric medicine, psychiatric care, intensive care, maternity, rehabilitation, and specialty surgical programs—including one of the few public hospital programs in the nation offering gender-affirming surgery through the PRIDE Health Center, recognized as a national Leader in LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality.

At the heart of Metropolitan's success is a nursing culture defined by collaboration, inclusion, and professional empowerment. Guided by visionary nursing leaders, Metropolitan has undergone a transformative cultural shift by fostering a practice environment where nurses are encouraged to lead, innovate, and practice at the top of their licenses. This commitment was recently validated through Metropolitan's achievement as the first organization ever to receive the Pathway to Excellence® Designation with Distinction from the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC).

Structural empowerment is embedded in every aspect of Metropolitan's professional practice model. The hospital has established 15 active Professional Governance Councils, each driving evidence-based initiatives, nurse-led research, and quality improvement projects. This framework ensures that every nurse's voice shapes policies, enhances care delivery, and influences system-wide decision-making. Through this empowerment, Metropolitan continues to advance its strategic priorities by improving patient outcomes, expanding specialty certifications, and strengthening interdepartmental collaboration.

STRUCTURAL EMPOWERMENT AWARD

Over the past year, Metropolitan's nursing teams have achieved an impressive array of recognitions that reflect their empowered practice and commitment to excellence:

- **Lantern Award: Emergency Department, awarded by the Emergency Nurses Association**
- **Gold Beacon Awards: 9B Adult ICU and Neonatal ICU, awarded by the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses**
- **Baby Friendly Redesignation : awarded by Baby Friendly USA**
- **Certified Safe Sleep Gold Champion awarded by Cribs for Kids**
- **Centers of Excellence in Surgical Safety awarded by the Association of Perioperative Registered Nurses (AORN)**
- **"Triple Gold" Recognition awarded by the American Heart Association for BP, Type 2 Diabetes, and Cholesterol Management**
- **Get With The Guidelines Stroke and Heart Failure Gold Awards –awarded by the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association**
- **Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade "A"**
- **Joint Commission Survey (2024) survey had no clinical findings**
-

As Metropolitan continues its journey toward Magnet designation, its focus remains clear: to cultivate an empowered nursing workforce that drives innovation, champions equity, and delivers compassionate, patient-centered care. The Structural Empowerment Award recognizes Metropolitan Hospital's unwavering commitment to investing in its people, the true foundation of its excellence and legacy.

NYC Health + Hospitals/Metropolitan Nursing Team

Ellen Andres, MSN, RN, CCRN	Nereyda Matos, BSN, RN, RNC-OB, C-EFM
Ivonne Bonfante, BSN, RN	Karen Mohammed, MSN, RN, ACNS-BC, PMH-BC
Michael Brown, BSN, RN, CEN, TNCC	Jaslyn Reyes, BSN, RN, AMB-BC
Likitia Balogun, MSN, RN	Sylvia Seecharan, MSN, RN, AMB-BC
Mary Carty, MA, BHA, BSN, RN	Kuo-Chuan Shen, MBA, MS, RN
Stephanny Thara Comahig, BSN, RN, MEDSURG-BC	Josephine Solano, BSN, RN, PMH-BC
Mary Deady-Rooney, DNP, MSN, NEA-BC	Wesley Stephens, MSN, RN, CCRN, NE-BC
Jane DeLa Cruz, MSN, RN, CGRN	Barnabas Sudre, MSN, RN, PMH-BC
Leiriza Fagaragan, BSN, RN	Lina Tan, MSN, RN
Lydia Ford, MA, RRT	Elena Taylor, MSN, RN
Myrlande Gedeon, MSN, RN	Suzette Verrinder, MSN, RN, RNC-MNN
Yasmin Henry, DNP, RN-BC	Christopher Wilson, MSN, RN, CNML, CENP, NEA-BC, FACHE
Samantha Jenkins, MBA/HCM, RN, CEN	Andrew Wuthrich, MBA, MSN, RN, ONC, NE-BC, CPAN
Marie Paula Marcellus, PhD, RN	Bless Zapanta, MS, BSN, RN, CNO

DAISY AWARD FOR NURSES ADVANCING HEALTH EQUITY



Edner Cuvilly, MSN, RN
 NYC H+H/North Central
 Bronx

Staff Nurse, Behavioral Health

"Nurses can be powerful advocates at every level."

With 18 years of nursing experience, including over two years of dedicated service at North Central Bronx Hospital, **Edner Cuvilly, MSN, RN**, exemplifies the essence of compassionate, skilled, and purpose-driven care. Edner believes that being a great nurse requires far more than passing exams or mastering clinical procedures; "It necessitates an innate calling," he explains, "accompanied by empathy, compassion, critical thinking, effective communication, and good time management." For Edner, teamwork is just as essential: "A collaborative approach creates an adaptive, trustworthy, and flexible work environment that benefits both staff and the vulnerable populations we serve."

Edner's journey into nursing was inspired by personal experiences that shaped his deeply held commitment to care. "My first encounter with nursing was when my father had a stroke," he recalls. "Watching the nursing team coordinate his care from the hospital to home inspired me to follow that path." A later tragedy, the loss of her cousin to suicide, further strengthened his resolve to serve those struggling with mental health challenges. "In my community, mental health is taboo," he shares. "I promised myself I would support those who suffer in silence and advocate for those too afraid to seek help."

Edner's advocacy extends beyond individual patients as he views nursing as a key driver in advancing health equity. "Nurses can be powerful advocates at every level," he says. "We help break down barriers caused by social and economic inequities. In psychiatry, especially, trust and understanding are everything."

Mitigating health disparities is central to his mission. Edner believes that nurses must not only deliver care but also educate and empower patients to make healthier lifestyle choices. "Promoting good nutrition, exercise, and mental well-being is as important as treating illness," he affirms.

Among the ICARE values, he finds the greatest resonance with Compassion and Integrity, the cornerstones of his holistic and advocacy-driven philosophy.

His commitment to the "I-CARE with Kindness" initiative shines through in his daily interactions. Edner recounts a moment when a patient arrived early, agitated and impatient about being seen immediately. "By simply acknowledging his frustration and responding with empathy, we defused the situation completely." "That small act of kindness," he notes, "made all the difference."

Looking to the future, Edner reflects on the growing role of technology in nursing. "Artificial intelligence will transform healthcare," he says. "But it must never replace empathy or human connection especially in psychiatry, where understanding emotion and context is essential." Edner envisions AI as a supportive tool to streamline administrative tasks and enhance patient outcomes while ensuring that "critical thinking and human sensitivity remain at the heart of care."

DAISY AWARD FOR NURSES ADVANCING HEALTH EQUITY



Paulette McGee, BSN, RN
 NYC H+H/Correctional Health
 Staff Nurse, Correctional
 Health

"Respect goes a long way irrespective of socio-economic status, race, or ethnicity."

For over 36 years, **Paulette McGee, BSN, RN**, has been a dedicated and compassionate nurse. Known for being an excellent listener and a team player, Paulette brings a wealth of experience and understanding to every patient interaction. "Listening to patients effectively ensures that their issues are heard and addressed in a timely manner," she explains. "Understanding the feelings of a patient allows me to provide compassionate care, and a good nurse contributes positively to the team and encourages support to promote patient-centered care."

Inspired by a deeply personal experience, Paulette chose to pursue nursing after witnessing her mother's heart attack as a teenager.

"I wanted to feel empowered and become as knowledgeable as possible to care for and advocate for my mother and loved ones," she says. This sense of empowerment has guided her throughout her career, where moments of connection with patients remain the most meaningful.

Incorporating the "ICARE with Kindness" initiative into her nursing practice, Paulette emphasizes the importance of empathy and respect, especially in her work as a correctional health nurse. "Some of my patients are experiencing their first incarceration. An emphasis on respect, empathy, and compassion plays a major role in connecting with them," she notes. "Emotional support and offering reassurance, especially to anxious patients or those experiencing psychotic episodes, are essential in demonstrating kindness."

A passionate advocate for health equity, Paulette played a significant role in the mayoral initiative at Rikers Island, working on the Clinical Alternative to Punitive Segregation (CAPS) program for severely mentally ill patients. "Advocacy for quality care was a crucial part of my role," she says.

Of the five I-CARE values, Respect resonates the most with her. "Respect goes a long way irrespective of socio-economic status, race, or ethnicity. It builds trust between the nurse and the patient, and when patients feel respected, they are more open and active in their care."

For Paulette, mitigating health disparities is not just a professional duty; it's personal. "Nurses play a vital role in providing equitable care. We must address health disparities and take a holistic approach to meet the needs of all patients, regardless of their background," she concludes. "As nurses, we must maintain a code of ethics and justice to serve vulnerable populations and help them achieve optimal health."

As the nursing profession continues to evolve, Paulette sees technology and health equity as key areas of growth. "I see an increased use of Telehealth and Electronic Health Records (EHR) in the future," she states. "I plan to sharpen my technical skills through continuing education. Advocacy for health equity, paying close attention to social determinants of health and health disparities, will also be critical." She is committed to promoting health equity and empowering marginalized groups through community outreach.

DAISY AWARD FOR NURSES ADVANCING HEALTH EQUITY



Gina Leong, BSN, RN
NYC H+H/Community Care
Staff Nurse, Home Care

“Health equity means making sure every person has a fair chance to live well and that’s what I fight for every day.”

With 38 years of nursing experience, including 13 years with NYC Health + Hospitals, **Gina Leong, BSN, RN**, has built a career defined by compassion, dedication, and a profound sense of purpose. Her approach to nursing is rooted in empathy and human connection which are values she has carried throughout more than three decades in home care. She believes that great nursing goes far beyond clinical skill; it’s about truly seeing and understanding each person, offering comfort, reassurance, and dignity in moments of vulnerability. Her warmth, positivity, and genuine love for people shine through in every patient interaction, allowing her to build trust and lasting relationships with those she serves.

Gina’s journey into nursing began in a deeply personal way. As a young nursing student, she cared for her father after he was diagnosed with terminal lung cancer, providing tube feedings, IV infusions, and full comfort care at home. That experience became the foundation of her calling as it opened her heart to the true essence of nursing: to care, to comfort, and to preserve dignity even in life’s most difficult moments. It also marked the beginning of her lifelong commitment to home care nursing, where she could continue to bring compassionate, patient-centered care into people’s homes and lives.

Gina’s commitment to health equity is also central to her practice. Working in home care has given her a firsthand view of how social and economic factors affect health outcomes. “When I walk into a patient’s home, I see more than their medical condition; I see their environment, their challenges, and their strength,” she explains. She advocates for her patients by connecting them with resources, providing education, and helping them overcome barriers to care. “Health equity means making sure every person has a fair chance to live well and that’s what I fight for every day.”

Mitigating health disparities is a personal and professional mission for Gina. She believes that every individual deserves fair, compassionate care regardless of their circumstances. For her, this work is not only about improving health outcomes, it is also about restoring dignity, trust, and humanity within healthcare.

Of the ICARE values, Compassion resonates most deeply with her. Compassion guides every decision, every touch, and every conversation. It is the driving force behind her commitment to advocate for her patients, listen to their needs, and offer care that uplifts both body and spirit. Through small, intentional acts of kindness, Gina integrates the “ICARE with Kindness” initiative into every part of her nursing practice.

Looking ahead, Gina envisions a future for nursing that embraces technology, telehealth, and digital tools while maintaining the compassion that defines the profession. She is committed to lifelong learning and adapting to new methods of care delivery while keeping empathy and communication at the forefront. To her, the heart of nursing will always be the human connection which is something that no technology can replace.

DAISY AWARD FOR NURSES ADVANCING HEALTH EQUITY



Dmitry Zakrevski, BSN, RN
 NYC H+H/Gotham Health,
 East New York
 Staff Nurse, Ambulatory
 Care

"Nurses are excellent problem solvers, compassionate care givers, and committed to patient advocacy."

With 16 years of dedicated service as both a nurse and a proud member of NYC Health + Hospitals, **Dmitry Zakrevski, BSN, RN**, brings compassion, humility, and a quiet strength to everything she does. "Every day, I'm just trying to do my very best for my patients, their families, and my coworkers." Dmitry's commitment to giving his all, no matter the circumstances, defines his approach to nursing and inspires those around him.

Dmitry's journey into nursing was inspired by his family, who encouraged her to pursue a career where he could make a difference. Originally from Russia, Dmitry began his professional life as an engineer in microelectronic device production before immigrating to the United States in 2001.

"Becoming a nurse gave me a second life," he says. "It allowed me to use my skills to help people directly and to give something meaningful back."

Dmitry's own life story deeply shapes his understanding of health equity. "I'm an immigrant from Russia," he says, "and I know what it feels like to start over, to face barriers, and to need support." That experience has strengthened his empathy and commitment to ensuring that no one is ever discriminated against or left behind. Throughout his career, Dmitry has worked alongside nurses from all over the world, building diverse, supportive teams that reflect the very communities they serve. He also makes sure that his patients know about available community resources and social support networks, helping them navigate systems that can often feel overwhelming.

For Dmitry, mitigating health disparities isn't just a professional duty, it is personal. "Nobody should be discriminated against," he says firmly. "We all deserve dignity, fairness, and care, no matter who we are or where we come from."

Dmitry believes that respect lies at the heart of the ICARE values. "All five values are equally important," he notes, "but when a patient feels respected, they always want to come back to the provider who treated them that way." This belief in mutual respect extends beyond patients AND it defines the way Dmitry works with his colleagues and approaches every challenge as part of a supportive, collaborative team.

Dmitry's integration of the "ICARE with Kindness" initiative is evident in the compassion and thoughtfulness Dmitry brings to his daily practice. He recalls one patient who travelled a long distance to come to his clinic because "the staff and the doctor here are kind and treat me with respect." Dmitry remarks, "That's what kindness in action looks like. It is small steps that make a big difference."

Looking forward, Dmitry knows nursing will always be in demand in healthcare and he looks forward to continuing the work he has been doing so far.

DAISY AWARD FOR NURSES ADVANCING HEALTH EQUITY



Liyun Jin, ADN, RN
 NYC H+H/PAC, Gouverneur
 Staff Nurse, Long Term Care

“Every patient deserves to be treated with dignity, respect, and equity.”

With 13 years as a nurse and 22 years of dedicated service with NYC Health + Hospitals, **Liyun Jin, ADN, RN** has built her career on a foundation of respect, empathy, and lifelong learning. Her approach to nursing is grounded in compassion and professionalism, guided by the belief that “every patient deserves to be treated with dignity, respect, and equity.” Liyun describes herself as a nurse who treats every patient and family member with patience and understanding. “I always try to provide care with excellent skills, effective communication, and critical thinking,” she explains. These traits not only define her practice but also strengthen the trust she builds with patients and their families every day.

Liyun’s journey into nursing began with a deeply personal motivation. “When my son was young, he was sick all the time and hospitalized several times,” she recalls. “I worried so much because I didn’t have the knowledge to care for him properly. That’s when I decided to become a nurse so I could give him the best care possible.” What started as a mother’s determination to protect her child evolved into a lifelong calling to care for others with the same love and commitment.

Liyun’s dedication to Nursing extends to advancing health equity and addressing the social determinants of health. She takes time to provide patients with health information and resources, helping them make positive lifestyle changes that improve long-term well-being. For her, mitigating health disparities is essential to both nursing and public health. “When we reduce disparities, we improve overall health and reduce medical costs,” she explains. “It benefits everyone, and it’s our responsibility as nurses to lead that change.”

Of the ICARE values, Compassion resonates most deeply with Liyun. “Compassion means standing in the shoes of others and treating them as you want to be treated,” she reflects. This principle guides her interactions with every patient and coworker, helping her bring warmth and humanity into her daily practice.

She has also seamlessly integrated the “ICARE with Kindness” initiative into her work. One example she shares is her approach to caring for patients with depression. “If possible, I sit and talk to them for a few minutes every day,” she says. “It helps them feel that they are not alone and that makes a big difference.”

Looking ahead, Liyun sees nursing as an ever-evolving profession that must adapt to rapid advancements in science and technology. “Nursing is one of the most important professions in the world,” she says. “To meet the needs of modern society, I have to keep learning new skills and improving myself.” Liyun’s commitment to continuous growth ensures that she remains prepared to meet future healthcare challenges with confidence and competence.

2025 NURSING EXCELLENCE AWARDS NOMINEES

NYC Health + Hospitals/Bellevue

Larissa Akimova
Antonio Albert
Sheerina Ali
Magnolia Barbin
John Barker
Kennisha Blyden
Katherine Brooks Bautista
Eduardo Buhay
Valerie Cantave Vega
Susan Cao Chan
Cherryl Corcino
Ana Creglia
Alex Dasilva
Judy Depradine
Rinzin Dolma
Janette Fanio
Gracy George
Racquel Gibbons
Rafael Gonzalez
Jalin Gordon
Vicky Holman
Su-Hee Hong
Criza Jane
Justin Karakkat
Bibi Khan
Chotika Konoplich Marzan
Dawn Kuras
Kevin Leahy
Pamela Lee
Haronid Lorenzo
Kayla Louise
Shakeina Maheia
Raquel Marcial Mertola
Nikko Nakamura Mae Manaran
Sakae Nakano
Tenzin Nangsal
Loreta Ompok
Tashi Paldon
Silva Pasovic
Annelle Perez
Dan Ping
Phuntsok Ponsar
Helena Richard
Kareen Robertson
Ma Rosario Mora
Iryna Rudyk

Nourhan Saleh
Olga Santos
Purvikka Sasitharan
Kelly Seda
Audrey Steinbrecher
Ma Stephanie
Pamela Tenesaca
Keshue Thompson
Maria Vazquez
Edmund Wu
Firuzza Yunusova
Zakia Zeidyeh

NYC Health + Hospitals/ PAC, Carter

Cheryl-Ann Blondell
Mercy Solorzano

NYC Health + Hospitals/ PAC, Coler

Malika Broomes
Cufun Lai
Milana Leviyev

NYC Health + Hospitals/Community Health

Claudia Grenade
Gina Leong

NYC Health + Hospitals/Correctional Health Services

Constance Clark
Charmaine Diedrick-Daley
Anastasia Fernandez
Essie Henley
Clautilde Ligonde
Paulette McGee
Angela Seeley-Hay

NYC Health + Hospitals/Elmhurst

Girly Abraham Kuriuilla
Lizeth Balanta Galeano
Maria Bathen
Gina Cabacungan
Lisa Charles
Lhakpa Dolma
Maria Elena Ferreira-Ortiz
Zoraya Gil
Jolanta Koziol
Fawzena Lamour

2025 NURSING EXCELLENCE AWARDS NOMINEES

Maida Likovic

Petar Lovric

Nicole Mundle

Luz Munoz

Jazmin Ocasio

Jin-Li Pai

Jasmine Riva Cantila

Irene Stan

Junia Valerio

Joy Wilcox

Bok Yim Shim

Tina Ying

NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham, Belvis

Maria Carmela Reyes

NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham, Broadway

Laniqua Arnold

Nadia Choudhury

Muy Fong Ng

NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham, Cumberland

Audrey Huigens

Su Mya Mya Thinn

Helena Radix

Sylvia W. Seid

Nataliia Vaysband

NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham, East New York

Marilyn Tessa Bathersfield

Tonia Melanie Stewart

Dmitry Zakrevski

NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham, Gouverneur

Nancy Huang

Stanley Luo

Patricia Scatliffe-Richards

Kelly Rong

NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham, LeFrak

Ivymae Yanson

NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham, Morrisania

Gilbert Guerrero

NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham, Renaissance

Gloria Capazan

Jessica Guncay

Caroline Dejean Tufau

NYC Health + Hospitals/PAC, Gouverneur

Emelita Austria

Elvia De La Cruz

Edwine Joseph

NYC Health + Hospitals/Harlem

Shea Chenery

Marlu Famorca

Mariama Fofanah

Amrit Ghale

Sylvia Holmes-Mcqueen

Mary Jane Gali

Denise Jeniel Sotomayor-Collins

Shena Joseph

Abigail Nketsia

Bernadette Rotea

Lovelyamma Varghese

Helen Whiskey

Ramatoulaye Yacouba

NYC Health + Hospitals/Jacobi

Khristine Azarcon

Adis Bajramovic

Deborah Bonner

Sungah Cheon

Ouleye Diagne

Geretha Diamond

Julien Ebbri

Joann Figueroa

Ebony Garcia

Sunju George

Caitlin Harrison

Saju Joseph

Margarita Kenny

Misung Kim

Yunhee Kim

Yvette Lee Carrasquillo

Olivia Lewis

Imelda Madayag Reyes

Rosemarie Mason

Kissah Mwakalinga

Leann Ng

Miryoung Park

Gorda Peters-Joseph

Nikolas Petesic

Irene Salinas

Michelle Shaw

Mary Simon

2025 NURSING EXCELLENCE AWARDS NOMINEES

NYC Health + Hospitals/Kings County

Dashiell Achong
Christine Anore
Tykisha Brown
Marjorie Clarke
Wanda Daniels
Christina Draggon
Ruth Eligio
Liubov Filip
Kwesi Gem Yasay
Crystal Hall
Lisa Hooker-Rose
Marthing Jacquet
Shantie Jagnarine
Jennifer James
Okki Jo
Kendra Kartheiser
Candia Keita
Bessie Mangahas
Sarah Manji
Adam Marcus
Karen Mattook-Ramsingh
John Nicolosi
Regina Nkechi Emmanuel
Nicola Northe-Martin
Monsurat Odujoko
Felix Otunaiye
Venieka Persaud
Yvonne Powell
Alissa Rampaul Hanley
Kimberly Saintelus
Jalisa Saud
Melisa Smith
Bernadel Syllas
Marie Telusma
Shanoi Webber-Gordon
Roshane Williams
Nataly Wilson-Sims

NYC Health+Hospitals/Lincoln

Karen Anderson
Neal Anthony Singco
Joyce Baltazar
Tykisha Brown
Marlinda Cesar-Wiley
Wendy Chen
Lynda Chiedu
Wanda Daniels
Kristin Duyck
Hanzel Evangelista

Assitan Gakou
Karen Garcia
Jeanie Gonzales
Wanda Gonzalez
Kakoli Halder
Myung Hye Kong
Sandeep Kaur
Tricia Kelly
Gloria Koo
Anna Liza Pascual
Maila Marantal
Anna Marie Unschuld
Alex Montalbo
Kyongsun Oh
Stacy Pereira
Venieka Persaud
Henry Poma Vasquez
Yvonne Powell
Jennifer Ramos
Nadeshda Recinos
Denise Ross
Hadiza Salisu
Sophia Scale
Veronica Stanton
Genevieve Sullivan Greenway
Ann-Marie Venzen
Sabrina Wasp

NYC Health + Hospitals/PAC, McKinney

Chantone Saint-Surin
Yolanda O'Garro

NYC Health + Hospitals/Metroplus

Alina Grineva

NYC Health + Hospitals/Metropolitan

Sonu Abraham
Joanna Acenas
Almas Alidina
Linnda Archille
Maria Aschenbrenner
Corena Bender
Ivonne Bonfante
Michael Brown
Tamara Brown
Mary Deady-Rooney
Jane Desepeda-Silva
Vernita Ellison-Brown
Kerryann Farquharson
Niurka Fernandez

2025 NURSING EXCELLENCE AWARDS NOMINEES

Emerlita Galindo
 Mary George
 Simon Guan
 Yasmin Henry
 Joanne Jeel De la Cruz
 Rosalind Kawai Chan
 Mary Lopez
 Suzette M. Verrinder
 Charrie Matthews
 Adisatu Moses-Kabba
 Elizabeth Noel
 Justina Onwubu-Amadife
 Clara Opoku
 Cyrel Portes
 Nikka Roque
 Tina Royal
 Emad Saadeh
 Kathryn Shea
 Michelle Shields
 Suely Silva
 Marilyn Soliman
 Adjoua Sossouloko
 Tonya Stephens-Tai
 Tiffany To
 Regina Todd
 Micah Valencia
 Shawn Varghese
 Leah Waga
 Andrew Wuthrich
 Donny Zilmar Mangonon

NYC Health + Hospitals/North Central Bronx

Donna Ang
 Ayisha Ayinla
 Mariam Camara
 Edner Cuvilly
 Paule Duverger
 Michaela Fahnbulleh
 Lourdine Jean-Pierre Chicoye
 Nicole Jones
 Soosy Joseph
 Renay Martin
 Boticha Mouzon
 Tammisha Myers
 Indulekha Nair
 Daphnee Neptune
 Ewura-Adjoa Obeng
 Stella Ofoma
 Damariz Ortega Degivenchy
 Janet Raghunath
 Isabel Reyes
 Tanya Whitaker

NYC Health + Hospitals/Queens

Anna Abraham
 April Dihayco
 Nikesha Duplan
 Sherley Gebara
 Juliet Henry
 Madeline Hernandez
 Jincy John
 Akhil Kumar
 Reela Kurian
 Cassandra Lafalaise
 Maria Leah Cervantes
 Ruby Libin
 Sylvia Lilas
 Yasmine Llerena
 Maria Luisa Ceniza
 Phillipa Maddan
 Zenaida Magnaye-Banzon
 Ramona Mckenzie
 Jian Ming Shen
 Suja Mohan
 Richa Mukhija
 Mary Philip
 Leslie Randolph-Riley
 Asha Shibu
 Jagnanan Singh
 Oma Singh
 Marvelin Williams

NYC Health + Hospitals/PAC, Seaview

Donald Doles
 Svetlana Malyshkina

NYC Health + Hospitals/ South Brooklyn Health

Oluwaseun Ajibade
 Donna Bayer
 Pierrelina Catule
 Erene Chrisa Theodorakis
 Marcella Dimino
 Robertha Eco
 Mariana Estey
 Frankie Flores
 Leya Ganas
 Kamola Igamberdieva
 Menachem Isakov
 Ingilde Jesuca-Jodesty
 Garielcie Julmisse
 Alina Kasparov
 Larisa Korsunsky
 Hajrie Lamani
 Santhy Mathew

2025 NURSING EXCELLENCE AWARDS NOMINEES

Marie Menos-Depierro

Esmira Mesh

Alicia Ming

Leonid Mirakov

Olena Movchan

Irina Moyse

Madina Naimova

Karim Narouz

Susana Novak

Maia Ochigava

Beata Oommen

Veronika Orlova

Rachel O'Sullivan

Stanislav Panov

Samjhana Pathak

Fleurette Richard

Michele Rodriguez

William Sacerio

Faye Scott

James Seref Holle

Margarita Sheipak

Antonina Sukhanova

Svitlana Tyshkova

Anu Varghese

Yelena Voropay

Patricia Waters

Kathryn Whelehan

Michelle Wu

Afet Yavshayeva

Mariya Zafrani

Larisa Zeltser

NYC Health + Hospitals/Woodhull

Guerby Belizaire

Rochelle Brown

Mohammad El Yousef

Allison Huggins

Nicodia Hutchinson-Wintje

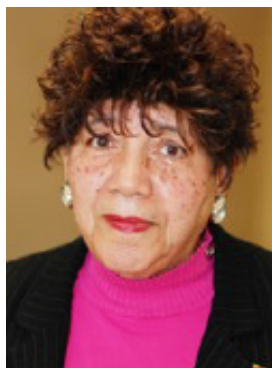
Kristine Jallim

Cecilia Jaramillo

Zulay Roman

Jennifer Sawinski

JOSEPHINE BOLUS: A LASTING LEGACY



**JOSEPHINE BOLUS,
MS, RN, CNP, APRN-
BC**

Josephine Bolus was a true standard-bearer for nurses and the nursing profession: As the first recipient of the Nursing Champion Award in 2013, Josephine was recognized for her tireless support of NYC Health + Hospitals nursing, including her efforts to address challenges facing the profession.

As the first nurse chosen to serve on the NYC Health + Hospitals Board of Directors, Mrs. Bolus was instrumental in advocating for patients and nurses; challenging nurses to be active both professionally and politically; and insisting upon using quality resources to deliver exceptional patient care.

The 2019 passing of Josephine Bolus was a tragedy felt not only by her family, friends and colleagues, but by the full NYC Health + Hospitals system as well as the entire nursing community.

Josephine Bolus left an indelible mark upon our system and the nursing profession. Mrs. Bolus began her nursing career in 1971, receiving an AAS degree in Nursing from New York City Community College.

She served the Kings County Hospital Center patient community as a Staff Nurse in the Pediatric Emergency Room. In 1975, Mrs. Bolus completed the Kings County Hospital/State University of Health Science Center Pediatric Nurse Practitioner Program and thereafter served as a certified Pediatric Nurse Practitioner until her retirement in 1997. In addition to her AAS, Mrs. Bolus also earned a Bachelors of Health Science from Brooklyn College and Master of Science in Administration from Central Michigan University.

As a strong proponent of the recognition of the vital role of nurses and their contribution to the delivery of health care, Mrs. Bolus pioneered the establishment of certification guidelines for the nurse practitioner in New York State. She also served as Preceptor for Pediatric Nurse Practitioner students at Columbia University and for Registered Nursing students at Kingsborough Community College.

Following her retirement, Mrs. Bolus remained an active advocate for the nursing profession, founding the Retired RN Network; serving as Second Vice Chairperson of the Community Advisory Board at the Dr. Susan Smith McKinney Nursing and Rehabilitation Center; a New York State Nurses Association member; NYS House of Delegates, American Nurses Association member; Brooklyn College Alumni Board member; President of Brooklyn's Canarsie Lions; NYPD 69th Precinct Community Council Member; usher and past president, of the Rosary Society of St. Jude's Church; and president of the Brooklyn Canarsie Memorial Day Parade.

Mrs. Bolus was appointed to the NYC Health + Hospitals Board of Directors on March 15, 2004 as the City Council designee for Brooklyn and served on numerous Board Committees, including Audit, Capital, Executive, Equal Employment Opportunity,

JOSEPHINE BOLUS: A LASTING LEGACY *CONTINUED*

Quality Assurance, Medical & Professional Affairs, Information Technology, as well as Community Relations, which she chaired. It is therefore extremely fitting that we rename the Nursing Champion Award in her honor, and place the plaque with the names of nurses who demonstrate a commitment to nursing excellence in our Board Room at NYC Health + Hospitals as a permanent reminder of our dedication to quality.

ABOUT NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS JOSEPHINE BOLUS NURSING CHAMPION AWARD

NYC Health + Hospitals' prestigious "Nursing Champion Award" was renamed in 2020 as the "Josephine Bolus Nursing Champion Award," in honor of the very first recipient of the Nursing Champion Award in 2013, former NYC Health + Hospitals Board Member Josephine Bolus.

The renamed Josephine Bolus Nursing Champion Award is an annual honor that is bestowed upon a person or organization demonstrating substantial and sustained support for nurses and the nursing profession. The honoree does not have to be a nurse, or be associated with NYC Health + Hospitals, but must display an understanding of the challenges facing nursing, be a facilitator in smoothing those challenges, and a supporter of both the profession and individual nurses.

In addition to recognition during the annual Nursing Excellence Awards ceremony, the honoree's name will be prominently displayed on a plaque in the NYC Health + Hospitals Board Room, which is updated every year.

Previous recipients of the Josephine Bolus Nursing Champion Award include:

2020: Dr. Catherine Alicia Georges, EdD, RN, FAAN, (LL -AAN), leader, educator, community activist and mentor; professor and chair of the Department of Nursing at Lehman College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York.

2021: Drs. Bonnie and Mark Barnes, co-founders of The DAISY Foundation.

2022: Barbara A. Lowe, MS, RN, retired nurse executive and public health educator; member of the board of directors for NYC Health + Hospitals.

2023: Ernest J. Grant, PhD, RN, FAAN, Vice Dean for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belongings at Duke University School of Nursing, Past President- American Nurses Association (ANA).

2024: Sharon Pappas, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, Chief Nurse Executive, Emory Healthcare and the Woodruff Health Science Centers

ABOUT ASPIRING 2 INSPIRE SPONSORS NEW JOSEPHINE BOLUS SHINING LIGHT AWARDS

In 2024, Aspiring 2 Inspire, the charitable organization founded by the family of the late Josephine Bolus, sponsored a new series of awards, the “**Josephine Bolus Shining Light Awards**,” to recognize and celebrate exceptional units throughout the NYC Health + Hospitals system.

The new Josephine Bolus Shining Light Award has been created to recognize units within NYC Health + Hospitals for delivering high-quality patient care and fostering a positive work environment.

The first recipients of the Josephine Bolus Shining Light Awards in 2024 were:

- NYC Health + Hospitals/Correctional Health Services
- NYC Health + Hospitals/Elmhurst
- NYC Health + Hospitals/Harlem
- NYC Health + Hospitals/Kings County
- NYC Health + Hospitals/Lincoln

This year, Josephine Bolus Shining Light Awards, will be presented as part of the 2025 Nursing Excellence Awards and will recognize additional five units that embody the values of compassion, dedication, and excellence in the nursing profession.

We are excited to announce the **2025 Josephine Bolus Shining Light** recipients:

- NYC Health + Hospitals/ Post Acute Care
- NYC Health + Hospitals/South Brooklyn Health
- NYC Health + Hospitals/ Jacobi
- NYC Health + Hospitals/ Queens
- NYC Health + Hospitals/ Gotham

“These awards honor nursing units that exemplify patient-centered care, teamwork, leadership, and resourcefulness — qualities that elevate patient satisfaction and professional excellence,” says **Michael H. Bolus, Executive Director and CEO of Aspiring 2 Inspire**, and son of the late Mrs. Bolus. “The teams recognized have shown unwavering dedication to their patients, their colleagues, and the nursing profession, serving as true inspirations through their compassion, empathy, and commitment to excellence.”

Excellence is never an accident. It is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, and intelligent execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives - choice, not chance, determines your destiny.

-Aristotle

Congratulations

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2025 NURSING EXCELLENCE AWARDS



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2025 NURSING EXCELLENCE AWARDS