



## Lessons Learned During the COVID-19 Crisis: How Nursing Recruitment, Deployment & Education Efforts Addressed A Global Pandemic

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### Abstract:

NYC Health + Hospitals was at the epicentre of the U.S. outbreak of COVID-19, and our nurses played a critical role in combating the global pandemic by efficiently and capably treating the surge of patients. Our existing staff of more than 9,600 nurses was augmented by nurses from all over the nation who answered our call for assistance. Throughout the first few weeks of the crisis, more than 5,000 temporary nurses joined our ranks, including nurses from more than 78 staffing agencies; 164 nurses and medics from the Army, Navy and Air Force who were deployed through the U.S. Department of Defense; recently-retired nurses who returned to the workplace; and more than 200 nurses from other city agencies such as school nurses from New York City's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and Department of Education who were redeployed to our facilities. We received assistance from nearly 500 nurse volunteers, recruited through the New York State Medical Reserve Corps; as well as students, instructors and other volunteers from local colleges and universities. In addition to providing direct patient care and serving as active bedside nurses for both COVID-19 and non-COVID cases, these newly-mobilized nurses and volunteers served in various vital roles throughout our network. This included deploying licensed registered nurses to handle tele-health outreach, including registration and call center functions; nursing faculty and instructors to assist with training and to support students when they are on-site at our facilities; and students to assist patients with the activities of daily living and hygiene, including assessing vital signs; answering call bells in non-isolation rooms; assisting with nutrition, hydration, elimination and ambulation; and providing comfort and basic interaction with patients. To facilitate nurse recruitment, deployment, credentialing and education, NYC Health + Hospitals implemented a new Virtual Deployment Team; created a "fast-track" credentialing program; developed a virtual orientation and educational program for all new staff; converted existing nursing orientation procedures and materials to online training; developed specialized COVID-19 educational materials, and reduced the typical onboarding process for new nursing staff from the traditional four-week time frame down to just two days. Chief Nursing Officers at each facility redeployed existing of nursing staff on an as-needed basis.

### Biography:



Natalia Cineas, DNP, RN, NEA-BC, is Senior Vice President/System Chief Nursing Executive for NYC Health + Hospitals, the largest public healthcare system in the nation, serving more than one million New Yorkers annually in more than 70 patient care locations. She previously held nursing leadership roles at New York City's Mount Sinai St. Luke's Hospital, and New York-Presbyterian Hospital, Columbia University Medical Center.

### Recent Publications:

1. Measuring workload of nurses on a neurosurgical care unit. Nelson J, Valentino L, Iacono L, Ropollo P, Cineas N, Stuart S. *J Neurosci Nurs*. 2015 Jun;47(3):E9-19. doi: 10.1097/JNN.000000000000136. PMID: 25944002
2. Critical Care And Emergency Department Response At The Epicenter Of The COVID-19 Pandemic. Uppal A, Silvestri DM, Siegler M, Natsui S, Boudourakis L, Salway RJ, Parikh M, Agoritsas K, Cho HJ, Gulati R, Nunez M, Hulbanni A, Flaherty C, Iavicoli L, Cineas N, Kanter M, Kessler S, Rhodes KV, Bouton M, Wei EK. *Health Aff (Millwood)*. 2020 Aug;39(8):1443-1449. doi: 10.1377/hlthaff.2020.00901. Epub 2020 Jun 11. PMID: 32525713
3. Staffing Up For The Surge: Expanding The New York City Public Hospital Workforce During The COVID-19 Pandemic. Keeley C, Jimenez J, Jackson H, Boudourakis L, Salway RJ, Cineas N, Villanueva Y, Bell D, Wallach AB, Boyle Schwartz D, Mendez-Justiniano I, Long TG. *Health Aff (Millwood)*. 2020 Aug;39(8):1426-1430. doi: 10.1377/hlthaff.2020.00904. Epub 2020 Jun 11. PMID: 32525704

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