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Long Island Nurses Recognized for Excellence

Top Clinical Award to NYU Langone Hospital – Long Island Advanced Practice Neonatal Nurse and Professional Development Specialist
Top Academic Award to Stony Brook Nursing School Professor

HAUPPAUGE, NY (September 15, 2023) – Nurse leaders from Long Island’s hospitals and nursing education programs gathered Thursday, September 14, 2023 at the Watermill Caterers, Smithtown, NY, to bestow recognition upon their nurse peers at the Nurse of Excellence Award Ceremony hosted by the [Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council](#) (NSHC). One nurse from each of the Hospital Council’s member hospitals was nominated for the award, which recognizes outstanding leadership and clinical practice. Deans of area nursing schools also submitted nominations recognizing nursing excellence in education and clinical practice.



2023 Nurse of Excellence Winners. Leticia Rios, PhD (c), RN, certified nursing professional development specialist, NYU Langone Hospital - Long Island (left) and Maria Milazzo PhD, PNP-C, clinical associate professor, Stony Brook School of Nursing.



Lynbrook resident Leticia Rios PHD(c), RN, certified nursing professional development specialist at [NYU Langone Hospital - Long Island](#), took the top honor for clinical nursing excellence and **Smithtown** resident, Maria Milazzo PhD, PNP-C, clinical associate professor at [Stony Brook School of Nursing](#), took the top honor for nursing education excellence. This year there were 23 nominees. Those nominees were selected from a field of about 500 nurses at hospitals and teaching institutions from across Long Island.

Rios is an outstanding practitioner, leader, and advocate in the field of maternal health equity. She serves as the hospital’s NICU Nursing Professional Development Specialist,

is a certified neonatal nurse, and an internationally board-certified lactation consultant. A founding member and co-chair of Black Mothers Matter Committee, she passionately advocates for maternal health equity locally, regionally, and globally. Rios is a core member of the New York State Birth Equity Improvement Project, among other similar initiatives.



Milazzo is known for her exceptional mentoring skills and commitment to train the next generation of nurses in not only clinical practice but scholarly research and community service. Milazzo herself embodies these ideals. She has led master-level nurse practitioner students in a community-based cardiac screening program at a local high school and mentored nurse practitioner students who were part of a medical team providing care in the Dominican Republic. At the undergraduate level, she works with students to ensure development of their leadership and research skills. A pediatric nurse practitioner for 30 years, Milazzo has made national and international contributions regarding her work with children with disabilities and at clinical centers for Pediatric Multiple Sclerosis across the U.S., Canada, and Europe.

The Hospital Council's annual salute to nurses is fashioned after the New York State Legislature's Nurse of Distinction Program that ended in 1995. NSHC is one of the few hospital associations in the state to continue this program voluntarily. The NSHC represents Long Island's not-for-profit and public hospitals.

For more information about this program and a full listing of nominees, visit www.nshc.org.

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About the Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State

The [Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State](#) advocates on behalf of hospitals in the Hudson Valley and Long Island regions. It engages key lawmakers and regulatory decision-makers in Albany and Washington to ensure reasonable and rational health care policy prevails.

About the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council (NSHC)



The [Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council](#) represents the not-for-profit and public hospitals on Long Island. It works in conjunction with the [Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State](#) to advance legislative and regulatory priorities. NSHC serves as the local and collective voice of hospitals on Long Island.

About the Northern Metropolitan Hospital Association (NorMet)



The [Northern Metropolitan Hospital Association](#) represents the not-for-profit and public hospitals in the Hudson Valley region. It works in conjunction with the [Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State](#) to advance legislative and regulatory priorities. NorMet serves as the local and collective voice of hospitals in the Hudson Valley.