



Powerful complements – Nurse Leadership and Motherhood

In honor of Mother's Day, wishing all the mothers and mother figures a very Happy Mother's Day.

Hackensack Meridian Pascack Valley Medical Center Chief Nursing Officer Francesca Martinez, RN, MSN, MBA left the hospital for maternity leave in December to return two weeks later for the birth of her daughter Cameron, named in honor of her late brother. "I wasn't expecting the feeling of joy to be surrounded by all these people that I've worked with for so many years," Martinez recalls.

Beginning her career at Hackensack Meridian Mountainside Medical Center after graduating from the hospital's nursing school program, Martinez started in the intensive care unit (ICU) while obtaining her master's of science degree in nursing informatics. As the first in her family to work in healthcare, Martinez fell in love with helping others and transferred to Pascack Valley when the hospital opened 11 years ago. She advanced from bedside nursing to physician recruitment, business development, director of women's services and director of clinical services prior to her promotion from interim to permanent CNO in 2023. "I got the permanent position the night before I went on maternity leave," she adds.

When Martinez returned from leave and stepped into her new leadership role, her purpose was further influenced by her maternal experience. "Motherhood has changed the way I view my position in a positive way," she explains. "I feel much more responsibility to be fair, less stressed, understanding and more efficient because time is precious."

Of the more than 24 million working mothers, the most popular job is a registered nurse – a correlation that helped Martinez gain insights into motherhood. "Taking care of patients in the ICU and their loved ones, I saw the positive impact you can have by being kind and taking time with them. You work hard but you feel good taking care of people."

Martinez says mindfulness helps balance the demands of motherhood and her leadership role. "In this position, you need to give your attention to what's in front of you - whether that's a patient, a manager, physician, family member, or visitor," Martinez explains. "They deserve my full attention. If I've dealt with the day well, then I'm much more present for my daughter when I'm home."

Martinez appreciates the opportunity to care for others, as a nurse and a mother. "We are very lucky to do what we do, have the resources that we have and work hard to make a difference in people's lives," she says. "As a mother, I'm more appreciative of my mother because I have gained a whole new respect for mothers!"