

## 2018 PROFILES IN LEADERSHIP



# Virginie Daguise, MSPH, PhD

Director, Bureau of Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention  
South Carolina Department of Health and  
Environmental Control

*The Profiles in Leadership campaign is an interview series with several Chronic Disease Directors intended to provide a glimpse into the leadership theories, influences, and approaches of industry leaders that help them corral, encourage, and support their teams. This interview series and other supplemental readings are located at [chronicdisease.org](http://chronicdisease.org).*

Virginie Daguise, MSPH, Ph.D. is the current Director for the Bureau of Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention for the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control. She has 14 years of public health experience and leads the daily operations of a 102-person Chronic Disease Unit.

Dr. Daguise participated in this interview to provide a glimpse into her approach to leading and encouraging her team. Below are her responses to a few questions regarding leadership style and application.

### **W**hat is the biggest workplace challenge you have faced as a division leader?

Being able to recognize all the great work the staff is getting done.

### **How were you able to overcome this challenge and find the win-win?**

We seize opportunities to provide recognition and visibility for our teams in many ways. You will often see our team members featured on our agency's internal communications platform, "The Dashboard." I have also ensured staff from our area can take advantage of opportunities for leadership development provided by our agency, such as our LEAP program - a 12-month intensive training initiative designed to invest in promising talent. We also offer opportunities to attend various meetings and conferences.



### **One critical responsibility of a leader is to remove impediments for your team to help them accomplish their goals. If you could change one thing about the work your team does to ensure their success, what would you change and why?**

It would have to do with the amount of time they spend on administrative duties. I am hopeful a new position we have recently created will help us handle some of these items so the team can spend more time on programs and partnerships.

### **What leader, past or present, have you most patterned your leadership style after and why?**

I have not patterned my leadership style after any one individual. When I see a skill or leadership style I admire in someone, I take note and figure out how I can gain the same skill and use it appropriately. I also appreciate the book suggestions from the NACDD leaders I have the pleasure to meet with regularly.

# Virginie Daguise,

MSPH, PhD

Director, Bureau of Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention South  
Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control

## When you think about all aspects of leading and interacting with your team and you identify those moments that bring you joy, what is most rewarding?

Keeping with the theme of acknowledging outstanding work, I enjoy seeing the recognition others give to team members or projects. This year, one team received an ASTHO Award for innovative work. A division director received the agency's highest honor, the Director's Award, and was recognized by our public health director with a Public Health award. Several teams also were recognized by the State Archives Library, CDC, and others for the outstanding documents they created.

These acknowledgments help with morale and visibility for hard-working individuals and help to share their outstanding work with other health departments so more individuals can benefit from our hard work.

## How do you foster/facilitate work-life balance, and how do you lead by example?

I am doing a much better job this year by prioritizing my work and personal life. Attending a soccer match for one of my boys or my daughter's play, on occasion, will override reading a notice of funding award after hours. I try not to send out emails off hours, but the staff knows I don't expect a response unless it is critical, and in that case, I will make sure they know by contacting them with a call or text. Communicating the expectation is vital. I am always available via cell phone if anyone needs me.

For information on how to participate in the Profiles in Leadership campaign, contact Tamika Smith at [tsmith@chronicdisease.org](mailto:tsmith@chronicdisease.org).

