

# Nicole Boudreau



## **On her current role:**

**“One of my main responsibilities** is to assess the gaps between the services offered in primary health care and the needs of the population with respect to addiction and mental health treatment...The gap analysis and recommendations have significant impacts at the social and economic levels and across the health care sector.”

## **On the RTs’ transitioning to management roles:**

**“Respiratory Therapists...possess** observational skills; the ability to analyze and synthesize information, prioritize tasks, work under stress, work as a member of a team. They are hard-working and they have a strong sense of responsibility. These skills are more important, even essential, in management positions.”

## **On obstacles RTs face when facing a non-traditional role:**

**"Believe in yourself,** realize your dreams, because you have the skills, knowledge, skills, strength and potential to succeed in such positions. You have to want it and believe in yourself.”

## **On the benefits of volunteering:**

**“The years I spent as a volunteer... allowed** me to meet and to get to know some extraordinary people from across Canada and around the world. These people contributed to my personal and professional development.”

## **On identifying as an RT:**

**I always tell people that I am a Respiratory Therapist,** and I am very proud to say that. It was my first passion and my first career choice. It is because of my experiences as a respiratory therapist that I have been able to develop the skills required for my current role.”

## **On someone who inspires her:**

**Lynn Donelle [an RT student she taught],** had a strong desire to become a respiratory therapist. She was a mother who had to balance her studies and her family responsibilities. Lynn showed great perseverance and strength of character to achieve her dream. She often motivated herself by saying “Je suis belle, je suis bonne, je suis capable” [“I am pretty, I am good, I am capable.”]. This quotation, her desire to achieve her dream and her perseverance greatly influenced and encouraged me to pursue my Master’s degree.”

RT Week 2019





**Nicole Boudreau - A Respiratory Therapist who stays grounded as she reaches for the stars**

*CSRT: Tell us about your current role as a Community Health and Chronic Disease Consultant with the Primary Health Care branch of the Department of Health for the Government of New Brunswick.*

**NICOLE BOUDREAU:** I am responsible for several projects and initiatives related to mental health and the treatment of addiction in the Primary Health Care branch. So, I work closely with other branches of the Department of Health, including the Addictions and Mental Health Services Branch.

One of my main responsibilities is to assess the gaps between the services offered in primary health care and the needs of the population with respect to addiction and mental health treatment. Once the gap analysis is complete, recommendations are presented to the Minister [of Health] outlining how primary health care could better serve the needs of New Brunswickers experiencing mental health and substance use issues.

The gap analysis and recommendations have significant impacts at the social and economic levels and across the health care sector. I have the opportunity, along with other professionals, to build and to shape a healthy future that meets the needs of the people living in my province.

*CSRT: What competencies do you feel that RTs possess that help them transition to a role such as yours?*

**NICOLE BOUDREAU:** Respiratory Therapists are health professionals who, among other things possess observational skills; the ability to analyze and synthesize information, prioritize tasks, work under stress, work as a member of a team. They are hard-working and they have a strong sense of responsibility.

These skills are more important, even essential, in management positions. These qualities allow me to analyze and synthesize information and prioritize the different tasks, while respecting necessary deadlines. Organizational skills and a sense of responsibility also help when it comes to meeting these deadlines. Since I must chair and / or participate in committees and I must work in groups, the ability to work in a team is another skill required for my job. Empathy, listening to others, authenticity and integrity are also important skills for someone working in a management position.

When I was a manager, I told my employees that "it's not who brings the idea, the initiative or the solution to a problem; the important thing is that a solution or suggestion to a problem is brought forward. You have ideas, solutions and opinions that can further guide the team. I can facilitate the exchange of information, but it is a team effort." I also make it a priority to recognize the person who suggests an idea, initiative or solution. We must give credit to the people who contribute to the well-being of our community because the contribution of each and every one is important.

As a leader, it is important to surround yourself with people who have strengths and qualities that balance your own. It is equally important that these people are supported to develop their own skills to enable them to be effective team members, to innovate and to energize the workplace.

*CSRT: Respiratory therapists sometimes encounter obstacles when they try to move into non-traditional roles. What advice do you have for RTs who face obstacles?*



**NICOLE BOUDREAU:** In my opinion, the very competencies that we have as respiratory therapists make us good candidates for these non-traditional roles. If a therapist decides to pursue a career in management, I recommend that anyone interested in moving into management take some management courses such as a certificate, a bachelor's degree or a master's degree in administration. Although a diploma is usually required for a management position, I would tell someone looking to go into management, "Believe in yourself, realize your dreams, because you have the skills, knowledge, skills, strength and potential to succeed in such positions. You have to want it and believe in yourself."

**CSRT:** *You have been a volunteer in variety of capacities at the national and provincial levels. What have you gained from volunteering?*

**NICOLE BOUDREAU:** The years I spent as a volunteer for the Council on Accreditation for Respiratory Therapy Education (CoARTE) as both an accreditation reviewer and as a member of the Council allowed me to meet and to get to know some extraordinary people from across Canada and around the world. These people contributed to my personal and professional development. Sharing knowledge and experiences from across different sectors enriched my own work. I also expanded my network and was able to learn from others with similar goals and values.

**CSRT:** *Sometimes RTs who have accepted administrative roles stop identifying themselves as respiratory therapists. Do you still refer to yourself as a respiratory therapist [in your new role]? Why or why not?*

**NICOLE BOUDREAU:** I always tell people that I am a Respiratory Therapist, and I am very proud to say that. It was my first passion and my first career choice. It is because of my experiences as a respiratory therapist that I have been able to develop the skills required for my current role. Being a respiratory therapist has also allowed me to meet the people who have helped me develop my strengths and abilities.

**CSRT:** *Who is a respiratory therapist that inspires you and what have they done that you find inspiring?*

**NICOLE BOUDREAU:** When I was an instructor at le Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick, one of my students, Lynn Donelle, had a strong desire to become a respiratory therapist. She was a mother who had to balance her studies and her family responsibilities. Lynn showed great perseverance and strength of character to achieve her dream. She often motivated herself by saying "Je suis belle, je suis bonne, je suis capable" ["I am pretty, I am good, I am capable."].

This quotation, her desire to achieve her dream and her perseverance greatly influenced and encouraged me to pursue my Master's degree. I thought of everything that Lynn had overcome to achieve her dream while I was pursuing mine of earning a Master's in Public Administration. Five years later, after balancing my studies, family and work as Lynn had, I earned my Master's and achieved my dream of working in the Department of Health.