

Nomination Steven Rebellato - Hedgerow Software Ltd. Award for Leadership in Environmental Health

Please accept my nomination for Dr. Steven Rebellato (Steve) for the Hedgerow Software Ltd. Award for Leadership in Environmental Health. Steve is a confident and charismatic leader, he is knowledgeable, he is experienced, and is a dedicated public health professional. He is consistently demonstrating outstanding leadership qualities.

Steve has a strong public health and health services background; he is a Certified Public Health Inspector (2002) and holds a Ph.D. in Public Health and Health Systems (Health Studies and Gerontology) from the University of Waterloo. Steve is currently the Vice President, Public Health (Environmental Health Department) for the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, in Ontario. In this role, Steve has a consistent track record of displaying his commitment to both public health and the agency.

Steve also works at the University of Waterloo and McMaster Universities in the school of public health. He volunteers York Hills Child and Family Centres for Children, Youth and Family Mental Health and Well-Being as a board member. Steve's dedication to public health is also shown through his representation on various committees. Steve has represented Public Health Inspectors and public health managers/directors through his work with the Association of Supervisors of Public Health Inspectors in Ontario (2016-2020) and the Association of Local Public Health Agencies in Ontario (2017-present).

Steve is quick witted and has a great sense of humor. He is approachable and has an open-door policy. He is respectful in his interactions with others and values diversity in the workplace. Steve is at ease when coaching and teaching others. He empowers and pushes staff towards excellence in their own decision making and risk assessments.

Like other leaders, the COVID-19 pandemic has put a spotlight on Steve and his leadership abilities. From day one Steve has led with the best interests and health and safety of his staff, the agency, and the profession in mind. He has acted with an urgent, honest, and iterative approach, recognizing that mistakes are inevitable and correcting course is the way to deal with them when they occur. Like other leaders he has had to make tough decisions, but he has made these in a way that has build trust with his teams. He has been realistically optimistic, while preparing his teams for the worst. Steve is an empathetic leader – having the ability to understand the needs of others and being aware of their feelings and thought. Since March of 2019, Steve has met with his management team constantly using strategies to elicit new information and learn as events unfold and new information comes to light. Thereby, providing his management team with the necessary tools to provide leadership to *their teams*.

The ultimate measure of a leader is not where they stand in moments of comfort and convenience, but where they stand in times of challenge and controversy. Steve's leadership has been the lighthouse in the stormy seas of the COVID-19 pandemic. For the reasons noted above and more, I feel he is deserving of the Award for Leadership in Environmental Health.

Sincerely,

Christina Wieder MPH, B.A.Sc., CPHI(C)
Ontario Branch