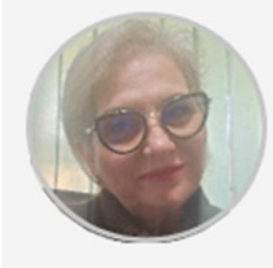


PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT



INTERVIEW GUIDE with Cristina Mihaela Schipor, Director Executiv Direcția de Sănătate Publică Județeană Constanța

Cristina Mihaela Schipor is an economist, master's student "PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT", executive director of the

Constanța County Public Health Directorate (PHD), since 2014, in her capacity organizes and coordinates the entire activity of the PHD;

Reporter: *You are the executive director of the Constanta Public Health Directorate. I would ask you, for our readers, to tell us about the duties of PHD, the importance of the institution and the role it has to play for the benefit of each of us...*

Cristina Mihaela Schipor: The Directorate of Public Health (PHD) plays an essential role in protecting and promoting public health, and its importance is crucial to the well-being of the community and of each individual. In my opinion, the main reasons why DSP is important and what role it should play:

a) Disease prevention and public health protection

Public health monitoring: PHD collects and analyzes data on communicable diseases to prevent their spread.

Vaccination campaigns: Ensures the implementation of vaccination programs to protect the population against serious diseases.

Control of epidemics: It intervenes quickly in the event of outbreaks of epidemics or pandemics, through measures of quarantine, isolation and information.

b) Health education

PHD has the responsibility to inform the population about healthy behaviors and the risks associated with unhealthy lifestyles (smoking, unbalanced diet, lack of physical activity).

It carries out awareness campaigns regarding the prevention of chronic diseases (diabetes, hypertension, cancer).

c) Ensuring sanitary safety

Water and food quality surveillance: Monitors and regulates drinking water quality and food safety, preventing food poisoning.

Hygiene control: Supervises the hygienic and sanitary conditions in institutions such as schools, hospitals or public food establishments.

d) Regulation and control

Health policy development: DSP participates in the implementation of national health strategies and their adaptation

1 at the local level.

Compliance with the rules: Controls compliance with health legislation by public and private institutions.

e) Support for the health system

Ensures cooperation between institutions for the management of health emergencies.

It contributes to the provision of medical services for disadvantaged or isolated groups.

Regarding the importance and role it has to play for the benefit of each of us

PHD not only addresses major public health issues, but prevents risks that could affect our daily lives.

Through his actions:

- We reduce the risk of contracting communicable diseases.
- We benefit from a clean and safe environment.
- We are informed and prepared to adopt a healthy lifestyle.
- We receive support in case of medical or sanitary emergencies.

In short, the PHD must be an active partner of the community, a guarantor of public health and a promoter of education and prevention. Collaboration between DSPs, institutions, and citizens is essential for overall well-being.

R: *How does PHD get involved in support activities for people who request information or guidance in areas related to the specifics of the institution's activity?*

CMS: PHD Constanța offers active support to citizens through:

- Organization of information campaigns about disease prevention;
- Counseling in cases of epidemiological emergencies or other public health problems;
- Health promotion in schools;
- Health education programs regarding hygiene, healthy eating and prevention of the consumption of harmful substances;
- Organization of interactive workshops, contests and information sessions in partnership with local schools;
- Distribution of educational materials and implementation of digital applications for health promotion;

In this sense, PHD has signed collaboration contracts with the School Inspectorate, the Faculty of Medicine from Constanța and the City Hall

R: *What are, in general terms, the projects that you propose to yourself in the short, medium and long term, from the position of director?*

CMS: As the director of PHD Constanța, I outlined projects and challenges in the short, medium and long term:

- In the short term: completion of the digitization project and optimization of internal flows.
 - In the medium term: Expand screening programs for chronic diseases and improve the population's access to preventive services.
 - In the long term: Completion of the construction project of the Pediatric Hospital Dr. Alexander Pesamosca. The project passed all the commissions and is currently at the Ministry of Development for the issuance of the Government Schedule with the approval of the technical and economic indicators. This project is financed by The National Investment Company
- Challenges include effectively coordinating resources, adapting to new technologies, and maintaining transparent communication with the population.

R: *What are the main problems facing the DSP director?*

- In what way has the approach to a new epidemic changed/if it has changed, following COVID-19 and if it will be the case, are you prepared to face a new epidemiological threat?

CMS: As PHD Director I face a number of challenges given the complexity and responsibilities of the position. The main challenges are:

- The lack of specialized staff, especially in the departments occupied by civil servants (doctors), the cause – the salary difference between contract staff and civil servants. We managed to hire 4 young doctors in the epidemiology department - thanks to their experience as resident doctors during the pandemic, professionalism and the atmosphere in the department
- Problems of inter-institutional coordination, due to bureaucracy and poor communication. We hope that this will become easier with the implementation of the digitization program
- The PHD must adapt and implement policies developed at the national level, but these policies can sometimes be inadequate or difficult to apply in the local context. DSP Constanța, having the particularity of the geographical area (port, tourist season, etc.)
- Combating disinformation, we must manage the impact of disinformation on public health, especially in the context of vaccination or other preventive measures

In conclusion, the position of director is extremely complex, requiring administrative and leadership skills to overcome the many challenges.

Regarding the management of epidemiological threats: After the experience of COVID-19, the PHD now has improved protocols for managing epidemics, has developed an extensive network of collaboration with hospitals and other institutions. We have strengthened our ability to deal with new crises, being better prepared to respond to future threats.

R: *Stage of implementation of the "Digital Transformation" project:*

CMS: The "Digital Transformation" project is a crucial initiative for the modernization of PHD Constanța through digitalization.

At this time:

The project is in the technical implementation phase, with the purchase of equipment and the development of digital platforms.

PHD staff are involved in training sessions for the use of new technologies.

In this sense, the Directorate of Public Health together with the European Center for Digital Innovation CiTy-INNOHub of the Ovidius University of Constanta (UOC) within the project "CiTyInnoHub (Constanta INNnovation Hub, a center for the digital transformation of SMEs and PSOs in SE Romania)" concluded IT training for all contractual staff. At this moment, all PHD personnel have digital competence

It is desired to develop an integrated system that facilitates the rapid exchange of information and citizens' access to digital services.

This project will transform the way we interact with the population, reducing red tape and creating a more efficient and transparent environment.

R: *If you feel it is necessary to answer another question that was not addressed to you, now is the time.*

CMS: I believe that we need to emphasize the need for collaboration between all health institutions and the community. Public health is a collective responsibility, and the active involvement of each citizen in maintaining their own health is essential.

"Health is not everything, but without health everything is nothing" - Arthur Schopenhauer

He recorded: Sorana Lixandru, MD