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COMMUNICABLE DISEASE TEAM EARNS STATEWIDE AWARD

HICKORY, N.C. – The Catawba County Public Health Communicable Disease team was honored with a statewide Enteric Outbreak Response award recognizing their excellence in responding to a shigella outbreak that began in August 2016 and lasted several months.

The award was presented to Catawba County Public Health Communicable Disease staff at the 2017 North Carolina Communicable Disease Conference in April.

“I am very proud of our CD team being honored this year, although we feel that we were just doing our job,” said Sarah Rhodes, who leads the team. “What helped us to be successful in the handling of this outbreak was the tremendous level of teamwork among staff at Catawba County Public Health.”

Members of the Epidemiology Team (Epi Team), school nurses, Early Childhood Support Team nurses and environmental health staff all worked alongside CD staff to manage the outbreak.

The award committee noted that the Catawba County Public Health CD team “worked tirelessly to assure that cases were appropriately cleared to return to work and school, counseled parents and educated providers. They fielded many calls from the general public and did educational interviews on local television stations.”

Rhodes said the award highlights a strength within Catawba County Public Health – teamwork.

“We learned that the EPI Team is a key component in handling an outbreak. We also realized that having a Public Information Officer to help craft messages to providers, parents, media, etc. was very beneficial and allowed the CD staff to continue with the investigation and surveillance. Having the nurse consultants and epidemiologists from the NC Division of Public Health was an invaluable resource in the management of the outbreak. They were always willing to answer questions, conference in for meetings with the EPI Team, child care owners and more,” said Rhodes.

Catawba County Public Health promotes and protects the health of all Catawba County residents through preventive services, innovative partnerships, and community health improvement initiatives. For more information, please call (828) 695-5800 or visit www.catawbacountync.gov/phealth.

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PHOTO CAPTION: Catawba County Public Health’s Communicable Disease team was honored with the statewide Enteric Outbreak Response award recognizing their excellence in responding to a shigella outbreak that began in August 2016.

“Leading the Way to a Healthier Community”