

Dori Maltba

pursued a communicable disease nursing position at Catawba County Public Health thanks to a tiny germ and the outbreak it caused.

"I always had an interest in public health since learning about it in school, and when I did my rotation," she said. "But I got into pediatrics and really loved it."

She worked in a pediatric primary care practice for more than two decades, where her interest fell on vaccines and vaccine-preventable illnesses. Then came the shigella outbreak of 2016.

"It was a neat process to go through. That was one of the things that spurred me to make a career change," said Maltba.

Although she hasn't been in her new role long, Maltba is quickly learning all about communicable diseases, including the one that inspired her.

"So far, I have learned about communicable disease laws, why they're made, why you report diseases, what you report, and where the information goes after it's reported," said Maltba. "I now know a lot about many diseases, some of the obvious ones, some rare ones, and some that happen more often than you'd think in North Carolina, like TB (tuberculosis)."

In her role as a communicable disease nurse, Maltba is working every day to protect the health of Catawba County residents, through vaccine administration, and through investigation and control of disease.

"Although you're going to be known for your performance in outbreak situations, there are things that pop up day-to-day in the community. It may be one case or it may be two or three cases," she said.

"You have to investigate how it happened, why it happened, what kind of exposure the patient had, and you have to determine if it is going to affect other people in the community, then implement measures to help control it and keep it from spreading to other people, before looking to the future and how you can prevent it from happening to other people down the road. That's a very important part of community health."



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Dori Maltba is #makinglivingbetter every day in Catawba County.