

Descriptive Text: Green chalkboard background with chalk drawings of science and math activities. Blue CDC logo in bottom right corner.

CDC Laboratory Scientist Rebekah Tiller, MPH, (LCDR, USPHS), shares her story.

Text on Screen: CDC NERD Academy Public Health Careers: Laboratory Scientist

Rebekah: So, in high school I took AP biology and unfortunately when I was coming around in high school, they didn't have a lot of public health-based curriculum. It was all biological science, you know, in botany and ornithology, looking at birds and plants. There was a lot of ecology that I took. And there was one class that I did take or a section of my AP biology course when I was in high school, which was disease ecology. And it was the first real introduction that I had to understanding how diseases can come from the environment.

I work in a very collaborative team of people. I work with epidemiologists. I work with veterinarians. I work with informatics people. I work with all kinds of individuals. And so, I have to communicate with different types of people, with different levels of understanding of what I'm trying to say. So being able to tailor what I'm trying to say to different people is also really important. Communication is and working in a team is really important.

At your age, in middle school and high school, I encourage you to seek out, you know, STEM type activities that can broaden your knowledge of how our public health system works. Give you a better understanding of medicine and cultural behavior. That's a big part of public health.

So, I would encourage you, if there's anything that you really are interested in, just go for it and it will open your eyes and give you more opportunities.

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