



UNC  
GREENSBORO

Department of  
Public Health Education

437 Mary Channing Coleman Building  
PO Box 26170, Greensboro, NC 27402-6170  
336.334.5532 Phone 336.256.1158 Fax  
[uncg.edu/phe](http://uncg.edu/phe)

November 27, 2023

Dear Selection Committee:

I am both delighted and excited to see Taylor Arnold applying for the Dr. Delbert Oberteuffer Scholarship. He is an exceptional candidate - hardworking, methodical, thoughtful, reflective, personable, and an outstanding student who has completed 54 credits (with a 4.0 GPA) towards the PhD in Community Health Education in the Department of Public Health Education at the University of North Carolina Greensboro (UNCG). He is an emerging scholar who is completing innovative health equity research. As Taylor's PhD program advisor, dissertation chair and graduate assistantship supervisor, I have been privileged to witness the profound dedication and impactful contributions he is making in the field of health education, with special attention to the health and wellbeing of Latine children and adolescents.

Taylor began his journey into health equity work during his Master's degree studies in medical anthropology at the University of Memphis, where he demonstrated an early interest in health education and promotion. This interest was further solidified through his work on a dairy safety initiative for immigrant Latine workers in Wisconsin. Here he showcased the effectiveness of culturally appropriate health and safety education for improving worker health. Throughout these formative graduate school years, Taylor exhibited a commitment to community-engaged research toward health equity. He played a crucial role in documenting Environmental Justice (EJ) struggles among segregated Black communities in Memphis, culminating in a grassroots EJ conference that brought together academics, practitioners, activists, and legislators. These experiences laid the groundwork for future work in the health education and promotion field.

Taylor embarked on a research career at Wake Forest University School of Medicine (WFUSM) in North Carolina and doctoral studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) focused on addressing critical issues affecting vulnerable populations. Over six years, he successfully managed the *Hired Child Farmworker Study*, a longitudinal mixed method, NICHD-funded study at WFUSM, examining the health and safety of hired Latine child farmworkers in North Carolina. His involvement of Latine youth as co-investigators and advisors ensured the research was grounded in their lived experiences. This is illustrative of his commitment to community-based participatory research (CBPR) principles. This impactful study led to several high-impact publications, policy briefs, and public-facing articles, contributing significantly to the academic literature and influencing media and policy realms. Taylor also made international contributions, completing a technical consultancy for the International Labor Organization (ILO) on Child Labor in Tobacco in Malawi, US, Brazil, and Indonesia.

Taylor's funded dissertation research involves examining the work, school, and health experiences of Latine child farmworkers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Here he continues his commitment to CBPR principles, engaging a youth-focused and collaborative approach to implementing innovative data collection and analysis methods e.g. "research poetics". The study



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findings will not only contribute to improving the health and educational outcomes for rural Latine youth but will also inform public health education practice through structural interventions and future emergency preparedness that consider the vulnerabilities as well as assets of this group. Overall, Taylor has demonstrated tangible effectiveness in advancing child and adolescent health through his current research partnerships, contributing to debates about legal exemptions for agricultural child labor and influencing legislative efforts for child farmworker workplace protections.

Finally, Taylor brings all his research experiences to his goal of impactful teaching with diverse student populations. He has willingly shared his research and policy efforts through guest lectures in health education courses. In the courses he has taught as a PhD student, he has encouraged his students to think critically about health education and promotion through experiential learning and case studies. As my graduate teaching assistant in undergraduate and graduate courses I teach, I can attest to his ability to provide timely and thoughtful feedback on graded work that promotes student capacity for improved learning outcomes. His commitment to mentoring students is evident through his mentorship of over a dozen students at various academic levels, guiding them in research activities, co-authoring manuscripts, and connecting them to resources and opportunities. Upon completion of his PhD program, Taylor aspires to obtain a faculty position, facilitating the further development of his policy-relevant line of research and student-focused teaching. He plans to seek extramural funding in partnership with community organizations, ensuring an engaged research agenda responding to the need for evidence-based approaches to improving child and adolescent health.

In conclusion, Taylor embodies the qualities sought by The Dr. Delbert Oberteuffer Scholarship. His holistic approach to health equity, dedication to community-engaged research, and commitment to teaching and mentoring make him an outstanding candidate for this esteemed scholarship. Please give him your highest consideration. Should you have any further questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Sharon D. Morrison, MSPH, MHSE, PhD  
Professor of Public Health Education  
Community Engaged Research Fellow, School of Health and Human Sciences  
Office: 336-334-3243  
Email: [sdmorri2@uncg.edu](mailto:sdmorri2@uncg.edu)