

Alexandra van den Berg, PhD, MPH
Professor of Health Promotion & Behavioral Sciences

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To Whom It May Concern,

I am very pleased to write this letter of recommendation in support of Taylor Levy's application for the Dr. Delbert Oberteuffer Scholarship. As a graduate research assistant at UTHealth School of Public Health, Taylor has consistently shown a deep commitment to the field of public health, particularly in the areas of health education and nutrition. Throughout her academic and professional journey, she has demonstrated the qualities of a dedicated scholar, researcher, and future leader in the field. I am confident that she is highly deserving of this scholarship.

Taylor's passion for improving the health and well-being of underserved populations has been evident since her undergraduate studies at Texas State University, where she graduated with honors in Nutrition and Foods. Her academic performance was exemplary, graduating with a 3.9 GPA, and she quickly translated this knowledge into community-based research, where she gained experience addressing critical public health issues, particularly those related to nutrition. After earning her Registered Dietitian license in 2019, Taylor expanded her reach through community-based programs that supported disadvantaged populations, which fueled her decision to pursue a Master's in Public Health Education and Promotion. At Texas State University, she graduated with a perfect GPA, further showcasing her academic rigor and dedication to the field.

In addition to her coursework, Taylor has contributed significantly to public health research. She completed a thesis focused on the intersection of COVID-19 stress, food insecurity, and nutrition among university students, which resulted in two peer-reviewed publications, one of which earned the prestigious Mohammad Torabi Student Research Paper of the Year award. Taylor's leadership skills were also evident during her time as Vice President and later President of the Delta Chi Chapter of Eta Sigma Gamma, where she led national award-winning health education programs.

Currently, as a Ph.D. candidate in Health Promotion and Behavioral Sciences at UTHealth, Taylor is continuing to build on her expertise. Her research focuses on food assistance programs aimed at improving dietary behaviors within underserved communities. She has presented her findings at both state and national conferences, demonstrating her ability to communicate research effectively to a broader audience. Taylor's work in this area is directly aligned with her goal of

improving food access and promoting better nutrition for children and youth in low-income and ethnically diverse communities.

Taylor's future professional aspirations are equally impressive. She plans to become a public health professor with a focus on community-based research, particularly related to food insecurity and its impact on the health of children and youth. Her ultimate goal is to design and implement nutrition interventions that improve food access and foster healthier eating behaviors in low-income populations. As a mentor to the next generation of public health professionals, Taylor is passionate about guiding underrepresented students, helping them navigate the complexities of public health research and practice.

Taylor's work is poised to have a lasting impact on both the academic field and the communities she serves. Her combination of rigorous research, practical community engagement, and passion for teaching will undoubtedly contribute to improving health outcomes for children and youth, particularly those in underserved communities. I wholeheartedly support her application for the Dr. Delbert Oberteuffer Scholarship, as I believe she is well-equipped to continue making significant strides in public health. Lastly, I can confirm that Taylor has completed 6 credit hours in the doctoral program and currently holds a GPA of 3.66.

Thank you for considering her application. Should you need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Alex Berg". The signature is stylized with a large, looped 'A' and a cursive 'Berg'.

Alexandra van den Berg, PhD, MPH