

Taylor Messer serves as a Clinical Nurse Educator in Professional Nursing Development at the Cherokee Indian Hospital Authority and has quickly become an invaluable leader, educator, and innovator within the organization. In just one year within the department, Taylor has transformed the hospital's simulation lab from a largely nonfunctioning space into a fully operational simulation-based education program that now supports all nursing departments and directly enhances patient safety, staff competency, and clinical confidence.

Known for his integrity, professionalism, and compassionate leadership, Taylor consistently leads by example and approaches every challenge with accountability and empathy. Whether mentoring new nurses, supporting overwhelmed staff during simulations, or providing constructive feedback during patient care rounds, he creates a learning environment rooted in respect, encouragement, and high standards of care. His dedication to culturally competent care is reflected in the education he provides to Western Carolina University nursing students during their inpatient rotations, helping future healthcare professionals better understand and serve the Cherokee community.

Taylor is widely recognized for his responsiveness, innovation, and ability to identify educational needs before they become larger challenges. He has developed high-fidelity simulation scenarios focused on critical patient care situations including Diabetic Ketoacidosis, alcohol withdrawal, and early recognition of patient deterioration. One of his most notable accomplishments was designing a 24-hour Diabetic Ketoacidosis simulation that gained recognition from simulation developers at Gaumard Scientific for its realism and educational impact.

Drawing from extensive experience as both an Emergency Department and ICU nurse, Taylor continuously goes beyond the call of duty to strengthen nursing practice across the hospital. He developed Cherokee Indian Hospital's first Nurse Residency Program, independently created curriculum for the Emergency Room Technician program in accordance with North Carolina Board of Nursing standards, and serves as an instructor for numerous advanced certifications and courses including AHA programs, ENPC, and TNCC. He also provides hands-on education in areas such as BiPAP management, lung sound assessment, and patient monitoring, often working directly alongside staff during patient care activities.

Respected across departments as a trusted resource and collaborative partner, Taylor exemplifies teamwork and organizational ownership. His interdisciplinary approach to education strengthens communication, improves patient outcomes, and reinforces a culture of excellence throughout Cherokee Indian Hospital. Through his leadership, innovation, and unwavering commitment to staff development and patient care, Taylor Messer embodies the mission, vision, and values of Cherokee Indian Hospital Authority and is exceptionally deserving of recognition as Employee of the Year.