

WRITE A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the editor are an effective, simple way to spread awareness about your issue. As implied by the name, a letter to the editor (LTE) is a short letter sent to the editor of a publication about an issue of concern. Most LTEs are written in response to a published story. You can write letters to the editor of a local or national newspaper, online magazine, or blog.

Like op-eds, LTEs can be centered on a personal story or be more factual and straightforward. It's important to think about the readership of the outlet you are sending your LTE to when determining what kind of writing style you should use. Also, keep in mind that your LTE can be in agreement with or opposition to the original piece you are responding to, or could add to the article by offering a different or missed point of view.

Here are some key points to remember as you write your own letter:

- ▶ **Hook your letter to a published story.** You can respond to any article that you feel relates to your cause as a hook to get the editor's attention.
- ▶ **Keep it short.** Your LTE should be short and concise, up to 250 words max. Most publications have limitations on how long LTEs can be, so we recommend you check the website of the publication you're submitting your letter to beforehand. This information can typically be found on the "opinions" page of the media outlet.
- ▶ **Include your contact information.** Often times publications will call to verify your identity and confirm that you submitted an LTE, so be sure to include your name, email and phone number when you submit your letter. *Do not submit LTEs on behalf of someone else.* If you are working with an advocate or volunteer to draft an LTE, have that person personally submit to the publication.
- ▶ **Use a catchy title.** Your title should offer a preview of what your letter is about in a way that attracts the attention of your audience.
- ▶ **Talk about the issue from your perspective.** Your LTE should seek to answer these two questions: Why is this issue important to you? Why is it important to people in your community?

For sample LTEs on different issues visit: <https://voicesforhealthykids.org/get-involved/>. Open the toolkit for the issue you're interested in, click on "resources" and scroll down to the "sample content" section.