



Dear Key Contact,

The Letters to the Editor section of the newspaper is one of its most widely read sections. Elected officials frequently read it to keep a finger on the pulse of their state or district.

Writing a letter to the editor of your local newspaper is a good way to create awareness of health care issues in your community.

Here are some helpful tips to aide you in crafting an effective letter to the editor.

- **Log on to [Speak Out](#) for some useful tips.** Use the media guide to look up and send email to local media outlets, editors, and reporters.
- **Tie the letter to a recent editorial, article, or current issue in the news.** Editors are interested in printing letters that relate to the local community and that are in the news.
- **Make one clear argument.** The letter should focus on a specific issue, this helps clarify the message you are trying to send to the reader.
- **Cite the article in the first sentence.** If you are responding to a specific article, be sure to mention the title and date of the article within your first sentence.
- **Personalize it.** Just like sending a letter to Congress or meeting with your elected official, using an example from your own life in your letter can enhance the power of your message.
- **Be brief.** Generally, four to six paragraphs is ideal.
- **Follow up.** If you haven't heard back within a week, make a follow-up call to check on the status of your letter. Editors receive hundreds of letters and may not immediately respond to you.
- **Include your name, address, and daytime phone number.** Most papers require contact information so they can verify that you are who you say you are.
- **Announce your success.** Send a copy of your letter's publication to your elected official(s). Send on one to the AAFP as well.