



Letter to the Editor Toolkit

First person testimonials can be effective tools in raising awareness of important issues, such as the impact of viral hepatitis in your community. Letters to the editor (LTE) are short, concise articles that respond to and provide an opinion on a recent article, editorial, or event. Most online and print newspapers have their own opinion-editorial section dedicated to letters from readers regarding current events.

We encourage you to submit a letter to the editor in your local news outlet to raise awareness around the need for your state's Medicaid program to remove access barriers to hepatitis C treatment for Medicaid recipients. Below you'll find tips for writing your own LTE, how to submit your letter, and a customizable sample letter about why you support removing these barriers and why others should too.

Please reach out to info@nvhr.org if you need help customizing or submitting your letter.

10 Tips for Writing Letters to the Editor

1. Be Personal.

Your unique viewpoint, experience, or story is more compelling than repeating general talking points. Explain why the issue matters to you.

2. Be Concise.

Keep your letter short and adhere to the word limit stated in your local paper's LTE guidelines. Shorter letters have a better chance for publication due to space constraints.

3. Be Specific.

Focus your LTE on your primary argument or call to action. Most publications will edit for length, clarity and punctuation, but a distinct and clear message persuades better.

4. Be Factual.

Support your arguments, and where appropriate add statistics. Publications will vary on how they want to receive the sources for information you cite, but generally include it separately from your letter.

5. Be Local.

Unless you're writing to a large national publication (New York Times, Washington Post, etc.) letters about local issues or local leaders generally take priority over national topics.

6. Be Relevant.

Keep your commentary on timely issues and focus your LTE in response to recent articles and current topics.

7. Be Assertive.

Include a call to action in your LTE. Calls to action can include urging legislators or the public to support a specific bill, inviting the public to call their legislator, or urging a specific action.

8. Be Informed.

Read the current opinion page for your target publication to understand what types of pieces are accepted and published. Be true to your voice but keep your words civil, pointed, accurate, informative, funny and emotive.

9. Be Authentic.

Sign your letter and include your address and phone number. Numbers will not be published but they will be used to verify the author.

10. Be Persistent.

Newspapers receive hundreds of submissions, so you may be limited in how many LTEs you can author. Remember to follow up with the editor periodically after you submit the LTE.

Tips for Submitting Your Letter

Letters to the editor can help get your story to a broader audience, including influential community leaders. Here are some helpful tips to successfully get your story placed.

Search for weekly or daily newspapers in your area. TV and radio stations do not offer LTE opportunities, although they may have other public comment forums.

Read current LTEs and other guidance for submission. This will help you get a sense of the voices and opinions your preferred publication runs most frequently.

Follow all submission guidelines. Submit your LTE either via the publication's form or email. Follow up with the editor or listed contact to improve the likelihood of being published.

Sample Letter to the Editor

[INSERT STATE] Medicaid must increase access to life-saving hepatitis C (HCV) treatment for Medicaid beneficiaries in order to meet the World Health Organization's (WHO) ambitious goal of eliminating viral hepatitis by 2030.

State Medicaid programs across the country place stigma-driven and burdensome restrictions on access to hepatitis C treatments for Medicaid recipients due to state budget concerns. These treatments, which can be financed in new and innovative payment models, offer a near-100 percent cure rate of HCV within 8 to 12 weeks of initiating treatment. Yet barriers to this treatment persist across the country.

Hepatitis C is the deadliest bloodborne infectious disease in the U.S., affecting approximately 2.4 million Americans. Cases of hepatitis C [have increased](#) since 2010 due to the ongoing opioid crisis, while rates of people starting hepatitis C treatment have [disturbingly declined](#) between 2014 and 2020. Hepatitis C disproportionately impacts communities of color, people who use drugs, people who are incarcerated, and others who have historically faced inequities in access to healthcare.

[INSERT STATE] received a [INSERT LETTER GRADE] grade from [Hepatitis C: State of Medicaid Access](#), a project that analyzes state Medicaid policies that impact patient access to HCV treatment. I urge [INSERT STATE] Medicaid to remove these burdensome barriers to HCV treatment to support our most vulnerable populations.

[NAME]

[AREA OF RESIDENCE]