



how to write a letter to the editor

A PRIMER ON LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the editor are simple to write and give you the opportunity to express your ideas to readers in your local community. Speaking up in a public forum like a newspaper can influence the tone of debate on an issue and yield extraordinary results.

Timing

- Papers are more likely to editorialize about an issue once they have reported on it. This type of outreach, along with Editorial Board scheduling, should only begin after you submit your press release and conduct initial local pitching.

Submitting the Letters to the Editor

Consider these candidates for submitting Letters to the Editor on your behalf:

- The CEO of your institution or company
- Local opinion leaders
- Your employees and staff
- Vendors

Asking Local Leaders for Their Support

While it is valuable for your CEO and staff to write and submit letter to the editor, it is extremely important that you also solicit the support of local opinion leaders and encourage them to submit their own letters to the editor of your local papers. When you ask local opinion leaders to submit letters to the editor on behalf of your institution or company, you should provide them with:

- A copy of any recent research – “Executive Summaries” only
- A copy of your most recent local press release
- A recap of your most recent activities or achievements
- Two or three key messages about your company and your achievements

Content and Format

- Be brief. Three paragraphs of one to three sentences each should be plenty. Long letters will be edited to meet space constraints.
- Do not appear to be over-emotional in your letter. It could cause the paper to decline to print your letter.
- Take the high road. Avoid sarcasm as well as negative comments.
- Make specific references to research or achievements.
- Send the letter by email if you can, to get your message out more quickly.
- Be sure to include your contact information because many newspapers will only print a letter to the editor after calling the author to verify his or her identity and address.

Double the Impact

- Ask local opinion leaders to consider sending a copy of their letter to community peers, local policy-makers, and your County Board President.

TEMPLATE LETTER TO THE EDITORS

Version For Hospital Administrators – Metropolitan Chicago Healthcare Council

Date

Letter to the Editor
(Newspaper)
(Street address)
(City, State Zip Code)

Dear Editor:

I am writing in response to your recent story about the important contributions hospitals make to the local economy: **“fill-in headline here”**. At **(hospital name)** we know that our community residents depend on us to provide high quality care 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Each and every day we steadfastly pursue our mission to protect the physical health and well-being of our patients.

Your story brings to light the vital role we also play in serving as a major economic engine for our community. **(Hospital name)** employs **(X employees)** and serves over **(X patients)** each week. As a major employer in **(community name)**, we are committed to maintaining a strong, capable workforce to serve our patients – offering good-paying jobs with measurable opportunity for career growth. We are also committed to maintaining and upgrading our facilities to meet patient demand and to providing programs that benefit our community. In the past year, **(hospital name)** has **(insert details about your workforce development programs, community programs, or capital investments)**.

(Hospital name) relies on **(community name)**, just as much as **(community name)** has come to rely on us. With your support, **(hospital name)** can continue to provide high quality care, meet patient demand, serve as a supportive employer and bolster the economy. Our ability to continue to protect our community’s physical and fiscal health depends upon a healthy alliance between our hospital, our local residents, our employees, and our public officials and community leaders.

Yours sincerely,
<Name>
<Title>

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