

# The Op-Ed Writing and Submission Process

**Healthcare is a top concern. You're trusted.  
Op-Eds change minds.**

Your voice is powerful. As a trusted source, you can shape public understanding, influence policy, and advocate for your patients beyond the clinic.

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## Purpose

Op-eds are a powerful way for physicians and health advocates to shape public conversation, influence policymakers, and bring credible, real-world expertise into the media. This toolkit is designed to demystify the op-ed process and provide clear, practical guidance to help advocates effectively share their voices, elevate patient-centered perspectives, and advance policies that protect public health.

### **Also Consider Letters to the Editor**

Letters to the Editor are easier to write (<150 words), more likely to be published, and offer greater freedom in tone and style.

# How to Write for the Public: Prepare, Write, Pitch

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## Prepare

- Observe, ask, read, listen. Stay alert to what matters now.
- Choose a topic you know and care about. Make it timely.
- Craft a clear thesis and identify a unique angle.
- Use a personal or patient story (with permission).
- Think beyond national outlets—consider local or politically diverse platforms.

## Write

- Open with a hook – a strong first line or paragraph.
- State your thesis early. Briefly establish your credibility. Explain why it matters, then support with evidence or lived experience. Show the real you.
- Write with clarity and punch – avoid jargon.
- Acknowledge counterarguments.
- Establish urgency. Conclude with a clear call to action.
- **Ideal length is 600– 800 words.**

## Pitch

- Find each media outlet’s publishing guidelines through a google search.
- Use a compelling pitch email. Explain why this matters now and why you are the right person to say it. Keep it brief.
- Paste the op-ed in the body of the email – no attachments.
- Follow the 3-day exclusivity rule before trying another outlet.
- If rejected, or you don’t hear back, try again elsewhere. Keep going!

### **Need More Support?**

#### **The DFA Op-Ed review team can help with:**

- 1.Reviewing your ideas or drafts
- 2.Pairing you with experienced authors or editors and recommending where to submit
- 3.Promoting your piece on social media once it’s published

# OP-Ed Checklist

Prior to submitting your draft for review by the DFA Op-ed review team, please make sure it meets the following criteria:

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## **Clear thesis or main argument:**

Does the piece have a focused, debatable point?

## **Engaging lead:**

Does the opening sentence hook the reader?

## **Evidence-based:**

Did you include hyperlinks? Are your claims supported by facts, data, or credible sources?

## **Unique perspective:**

Is your voice or point of view fresh, insightful, or underrepresented?

## **Accessible language:**

Is the writing clear and free of technical jargon so a general audience can easily understand?

## **Strong close:**

Does the closing sentence leave a lasting impression? Does it reinforce your main point or include a clear call to action?

## **Word count:**

Does it meet the outlet's limit - typically 600-800 words?

## **Proofread for grammar and typos!**

**Reach out to the DFA Op-Ed review team by contacting:  
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