

OP-ED TIPS & INSPIRATION

Opinion editorials (op-eds) are short essays presenting compelling points of view. In the fight to advance UHC, op-eds have been a powerful way to educate the public, build momentum and accelerate advocacy efforts.

When executed well, op-eds can engage new audiences; shed light on crucial and surprising dimensions of UHC; spur meaningful conversation; and convince others to **rise for our right**.

INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESS

POINT OF VIEW: Op-eds should present one big idea—your argument. Take a strong stance. Show the reader WHY you believe universal health coverage is right and smart, and HOW to demand courageous political action.

START STRONG: Your first paragraph should grab readers' attention. A great way to do this is to link your argument to something currently in the news, such as an announcement or milestone. Hooks can range from notable health-related news to something less obvious—and often, the more surprising your hook, the better.

- *Example: Discovery of water on Mars has spurred excitement about possible life on Mars → Meanwhile on Earth, people barely appreciate that human health is connected to our changing climate.*

WHY NOW? Every op-ed should answer, "Why is this important right now?" Op-eds from Coalition partners can highlight UHC Day as a global milestone for UHC advocacy—uniting 1000+ partners behind Health for All.

COMPELLING VOICE: Successful op-eds use the author's own voice to convince an audience with no prior knowledge of or interest in the subject. Be conversational, but establish your unique expertise; challenge yourself to explain complex ideas in simple, powerful and creative language; convey your passion for the issue.

COMMON THEMES

Op-eds may get to the heart of complex problems, but tend to follow simple formulas to keep readers engaged. The most successful storylines often include an element of surprise or an unexpected twist. Examples include:

- **SHOCKING PROBLEM, FEASIBLE PLAN.**
 - *Example: Too many people fall into poverty every year paying for health services out-of-pocket. By investing in universal health coverage, we can keep people healthy and end extreme poverty.*
- **CONVENTIONAL WISDOM IS WRONG.**
 - *Example: In an era of constrained budgets, many assume that "Health For All" is too expensive. But they're wrong. Investments in health produce 10x more economic benefits than costs.*

WRITING TIPS

Writing a good quality op-ed takes time. Make sure to build in the necessary hours for thinking and revisions. Have a friend or colleague review your piece and provide feedback. Other tips include:

- **KEEP IT SHORT:** Keep sentences and paragraphs brief and to-the-point. And keep your op-ed short! Effective pieces are between 600 and 800 words.
- **KEEP IT SIMPLE:** Avoid technical/expert jargon and get rid of acronyms. For example, "universal health coverage" is much more powerful and expressive than "UHC" for the average reader.
- **KEEP IT NEW:** Try not to use lazy language, such as "X is a reminder" or "X is an opportunity."
- **KEEP IT LOCAL:** Tailor your op-ed to your country or region to engage readers and local newspapers.

PUBLISH IT!

The final step is to publish your op-ed. Consider your target audience and what is best for your organization.

- **IN THE NEWS:** Choose your preferred media outlet, do some research and make sure your piece is a good fit. Then, pick up the phone or send an email to contact the person who runs the editorial section. Preview your argument in 1-2 compelling sentences and convince them why their readers should care.
- **ON A BLOG:** If your op-ed is not published in a newspaper, you can share your perspective as a blog post. Blog posts are shorter (400-600 words) and can be published on organizational websites.