

## Tips for personalizing and submitting an Op-Ed

The op-ed section of a newspaper allows relevant experts or individuals to share their opinions about timely issues. Different groups have different perspectives on how to solve the problem of the uninsured, and those perspectives can be represented in the op-eds they draft.

Make sure your article is double-spaced with wide margins. List your name, address, phone, fax and e-mail contact information at the top of the piece. Find out from your local paper the best way to send an op-ed. Instructions for submitting an op-ed are usually at the bottom of the page where they appear or on the paper's Web site. Some papers like them mailed, others prefer faxes, while others favor e-mails.

### The following pointers will help you get your op-ed piece published:

- **Keep it brief.** Newspapers have limited space, and editors don't have the time to cut your piece down to size. In general, 750 to 800 words will do.
- **Make a single point.** You only have 750 to 800 words. Make one point clearly and persuasively.
- **Avoid jargon.** Simple language ensures that all readers, even non-experts, can understand your point. For example, don't use acronyms or technical language.
- **Use examples.** Illustrations, anecdotes and personal stories are persuasive tools. They help explain and bring complicated issues to life.
- **Make a specific recommendation.** This is an opinion piece. State your opinion on how to improve matters.
- **Draw the reader in.** Your first paragraph should draw the reader in by using a dramatic vignette or a well-stated argument.
- **End with a bang.** Your final paragraph is as important as your opening paragraph. Be sure to summarize your argument in one strong final paragraph.
- **Follow up.** Most op-ed editors will respond to you within a week. If you haven't heard in that time frame or if your piece is particularly time sensitive, you can make one follow-up phone call to be sure it was received and ask about its status.