

ENGAGE!

Grassroots writers for

Health Care for the 100%



Ways to Engage

Comment online. Please thank authors, correct falsehoods, and talk about how health care for everyone would be simpler, cost less and save lives, and why you're a supporter. End with a call to action and the website www.couniversalhealth.org (Disengage if needed.)

Write Letters to the Editor (LTEs), typically 150-350 words long and written by someone in the publication's circulation area.

Edit & Submit LTEs. You'll be given a pre-written LTE (which you can edit if desired) and submit it.

Write an OpEd, article, or guest column (Op-Eds/columns are usually 650-700 words, articles vary depending on publication) These longer pieces are often written by someone with a unique perspective, experience, or knowledge (a business person's perspective, a pastor's perspective, a doctor's perspective,....)

Blog (Content matters more than length, but 600-1,600 words or < 7 minutes time is a good ballpark for blogs) Here are some good places to begin: Common Dreams, Daily Kos, Colorado Pols. Discover more. Where should the movement have a blog presence? Let us know. Then: Become the presence.

Volunteer OPs

Follow a geographic area for news/opinions (Lead an area Engage team)

Monitor local publications & comment online

Monitor print and/or online publications for material related to universal health care.

Assign volunteers to respond.

Help manage/track our success

- Monitor print and/or online publications and add to list of published pieces
- Help recruit volunteers
- Monitor publications/Write drafts

Regional teams

- Watch publications (Sign up for Google Alerts)
- Respond to news stories with comments/letters/op eds/blogs (why are you working for health care for everyone. Correct misinformation, get back on message.
- How local can you go? Publications as local as possible (neighborhood newsletters)

Remember to focus on the contrast and the positive. **Leaving comments on positive news stories and opinion pieces and giving them your attention will help them multiply!** Please let me know when you post anything so I can invite others to like, share, comment, and repost.

Do you love to write? To blog? Want a simple, quality health care system like Medicare for all Coloradans that costs less than we spend now?

Colorado needs to hear from you!

Talking Points to achieve Health Care for Everyone

www.couniversalhealth.org

Our bottom line: We need a way to pay for health care that is simpler, covers everyone in a way each can afford, and costs less overall. Have a story and use it whenever appropriate. Have versions of 30 seconds to 3 minutes. Messaging philosophy: Talk about values. Talk about how the power holders are abusing the listener's values and it needs to stop.

In most situations, we will use only 1-2 talking points. If you add data to back up the talking points—often a good idea—use numbers sparingly and make sure they are easy to understand. Not in any specific order:

- We want health care for **everyone**. Martin Luther King, Jr. did not strive for civil rights for only *some* African Americans. Suffragettes did not secure voting rights for *most* women. U.S. soldiers did not give their lives fighting for freedom for *some* Americans.
- The insurance industry, Big Pharma, and large hospital chains lobby to take the hard-earned money of U.S. families—money we pay hoping to have health care when we need it.
- Our current health care system is “getting away with murder.” It values profits more than the health of Americans. Often, we must choose: Get the health care we need and rack up massive debt or forego needed health care.
- Making sure everyone has good health care is not only kinder: It's smarter. Prevention and timely care saves lives and money.
- As the income gap widens between the top 1% and the rest of us, fewer of us can afford health care. This goes against our values that hard work is the key to success.
- Medical expenses cause the majority of U.S. bankruptcies.
- Health care is rationed in Colorado according to ability to pay deductibles, co-insurance, and geographical and age rates. Costs in rural and mountain areas are devastating.
- 523 Colorado families buried a loved one last year and communities lost valuable members unnecessarily—because of lack of affordable access to health care—in the richest country in the world. And it will happen all over again this year and next year and the year after that, until we insist on health care for **everyone**.
- A Colorado health care system, a version of Medicare for everyone under 65, would save money—enough to cover everyone and improve conditions for health care professionals. It would keep Colorado money in Colorado.
- Any ACA or health reform must be simpler, cover everyone affordably, and cost less overall.
- Health care for everyone is a:
 - Moral issue—insert your own moral statement or that of the audience
 - Practical issue—fewer administrators, more satisfied providers, and improved population health.
 - Social justice issue—health equity regardless of income, age, ethnicity, disability, gender, etc.
 - Freedom of choice issue—Coloradans could stop narrow networks and choose their providers.
 - Sustainability issue—The U.S. pays almost twice as much for health care than any other developed country, with poorer results. We want better value for our money!
 - Fairness issue—International corporations should stop taking our health care dollars to line their pockets.
 - Business issue—Insurance costs hurt employers and business owners. Stop the fleecing!
 - Health care professional issue—Providers could focus on the job they love—caring for patients.

Guaranteed quality health care for all for life would mean:

- Relaxed, happy families
- Healthy, thriving communities
- Strong, vibrant, innovative business
- Fairness/Justice/Equality
- Morally Sound
- Simpler, easier, more cost efficient
- Reduced burden (Less illness, waste, bureaucracy, bankruptcy. More stable, resilient Americans.)
- Employment/Employer flexibility



Speaking to legislators/elected officials about working on a health care bill with us

When you identify yourself you can include that you are a volunteer (unpaid) with the Colorado Foundation for Universal Health Care. If you are a constituent, let him or her know. You may be asked for your address. Always be appreciative and gracious—we want them to look forward to talking with us.

1. Emphasize that we need a health care financing system that provides for quality, affordable health care for every Coloradan.
2. Suggest that contingency planning as far in advance as possible makes for wise decision-making rather than crisis-reactive measures.
3. Remind them that any individual or political party that creates health care security for every Coloradan will be popular and appreciated.

The Asks:

Even now, almost ½ million Coloradans have no health insurance; another ½ million are underinsured (that's 1 in 5 of us); and an unknown number are stuck in unsuitable jobs just to have health insurance. The future is uncertain for businesses, families, health care professionals, and for the state budget.

1. Do you have plans to address that need?

If not:

Would you be interested in working with some others to see what can be developed?

Would you like to participate later, e.g. after the session is over?

Would you like to be kept informed with the possibility that you will consider being a co-sponsor on a bill in 2018?

If yes:

That's encouraging, thank you. What are those plans?

If the plans don't include health care for everyone or if the plans are a version of "wait"

ask the above questions as if they had answered "no."

2. **When you are talking with constituents as well as with other legislators and government officials, would you actively endorse the need for a health care system that covers every Coloradan?**
3. **Would you actively advocate for immediate development of future contingency options to address the needs of Coloradans?**

If you see something, say something.

Sign up!

Make sure you're in our database

Email: Sara Wright to add you to Engage! Include what you're most interested in doing. (Ways to Engage! coming)

Check in!

Please send your first drafts to Sara Wright to fact check and edit for tone/messaging.

Stay in touch!

SWrightuniversalhealth@gmail.com

843-368-8621

Please let me know:

- What you sent
- When you sent it
- Response
- Watch for your piece and let me know when it's in print or online
- Send me a link if it's an online piece/comment

Engage! team code of ethics

- Write the truth/facts
- Stand for what could be with guaranteed health care for all for life
- Share why you care, not only for yourself, but for others too (Let's take health care from the Me to the We.)
- Engage! supporters, not enemies (Correct misinformation, yes, but then get back on message re: what's good about health care for everyone.) Take the high road. Stay positive. Stay professional. Treat others as you would be treated. Be that voice of truth that encourages others to speak up.
- End each letter/comment/blog with a call to action, ex: Learn more, contact your elected officials, volunteer, and contribute:
www.CoUniversalHealth.org

You can
and will be
the tipping point.



Did you know...

75% of Coloradans don't think private insurance companies should make decisions about their health care

AND

It takes 6 years for the average worker to make what the CEO of UnitedHealth care makes in one day.

- A respected poll from fall 2015 showed that an overwhelming 63% favor a universal health care system.
- An overwhelming majority want simpler health care.
- Our own polling showed that the majority want a system like Medicare for all Coloradans.
- And that the more people get to know universal health care, the better they like it.

**They will get to health care for
everyone
through you.**

How to be a citizen journalist

Cover an event as a citizen journalist for health care for everyone!

Go to an event. Bring your reporter's notebook, pen and camera!

Choose an event that's newsworthy

If an event has a group of regular Coloradans, particularly in action, it should be of interest, in particular to a community or hyper-local publication. (Avoid meeting shots of people sitting down or even the speaker unless it's close-up).

Ask yourself: Is this event newsworthy? Why? How might I tie this into other newsworthy events? (Examples: Hillary saying she supports universal health care, Bernie considering coming to Colorado, DNC new platform wording, upcoming votes, health insurance rate increases/mergers.)

Be the Photographer

Take a lot of photos. Then, some are bound to be good!

Edit your photos, if possible, using PhotoShop or iphoto or a good free photo editing software. Crop it to cut out any distracting stuff, like an invisible person's arm, dangling wires, etc. Focus on composition and on the subject. Auto color/tone/contrast can be a friend: (Just undo if it looks worse than before you started.)

Take Candid photos, when possible, as close-up as you can. (You may need to go beyond your normal personal space comfort zone.) Ask people to ignore you, if you can. If they stop and pose, go ahead and snap one or two, but then move on: Posed photos are boring!

Avoid meeting shots of people sitting down or even the speaker unless it's close-up.

Get everyone's name whose photo you just took, left to right. Check the spelling!

Edit your photos, if possible, using PhotoShop or iphoto or a good free photo editing software. (ex: GIMP) Crop your photo to cut out any distracting stuff, like an invisible person's arm, dangling wires, etc. Focus on composition and on the subject. Auto color/tone/contrast can be a friend: (Just undo if it looks worse than before you started.) **Save the photos at 300dpi if possible, (think 300-500kb). If you know the size needed, size them too.**

How to be a citizen journalist

How to submit

Call the publication's newsroom and ask how to best submit. You can usually find the newsroom phone number online under: Contact us.

Please also send photos with captions to Parice@msn.com; NancySpillane25@gmail.com; and SWrightUniversalHealth@gmail.com

Blogs! Such as Daily Kos, etc.

<http://www.denverpost.com/news-tips/>

<http://www.denverpost.com/news/yourhub/>

<http://www.durangoherald.com/section/newstip/>

www.gazette.com/newstip

<http://www.solidcitizen.com>

<http://www.mytowncolorado.com>

<http://www.mytowncolorado.com/profiles/blog/list>

<http://forms.chieftain.com/news-tips/>



National

<http://www.cnn.com/specials/opinions/cnnireport>

Resources

Tips for being a citizen journalist:

<http://www.spj.org/rrr.asp?ref=56&>

<http://www.therapidian.org/tips>

<http://www.denverpost.com/2016/07/30/your-responsibilities-as-a-citizen-journalist/>

AP Basics: <http://journalistsresource.org/tip-sheets/style/ap-style-basics>

Free photo editing options: <http://www.digitaltrends.com/computing/best-free-photo-editing-software/>

Questions? Have another resource? Want to run your draft by someone?
Email me! SWrightUniversalHealth@gmail.com

The best Letters to the Editor are **PITHY***:

P Passionate

Letters that get published are written by people who care passionately. If you are lukewarm on a subject, consider writing about something else.

I Intelligent

Show your knowledge. Point out a pertinent fact that the reporter/op-ed writer missed. Or use logic to connect the dots to make a new point. Be witty.

T Timely

Nobody cares about yesterday's news. Write within 24 hours of reading the article. If you must of more time, write in response to an article in the Sunday paper.

H Honest

Don't make stuff up. Don't repeat rumors. Highlight some facts and downplay others to make your case, but don't misrepresent the facts.

Y Yaw

Start right, veer left. Acknowledge an understanding of the other side before stating your counter case. Your message will be more persuasive to those "on the fence."

*Pithy: Tersely cogent; concise.

Thanks to Joan Jacobson and Organizing for America for sharing this information.

How to Research a Letter to the Editor In 60 Seconds Or Less

To write an intelligent, fact-based letter without spending your entire day at the library, remember:

1. **A thoroughly researched letter will never get published.** It will be too late and too long. A 150-word LTE is an extremely short statement of opinion based on fact, but it is NOT an op/ed, term paper or graduate thesis.
2. **If you have an opinion, you already know something.** What do you already know? Instead of "research," you should be "fact-checking" what you already know. And if what you know is from personal experience (the best kind of knowledge!!!), you don't need to fact check at all!
3. **Internet sources are more reliable than you think.** Yes, there's a lot of crap on the internet, but you are smart enough to tell good sources from bad.
 - a. **Primary sources** are best and quick to find. For example, I typed this into the Google search bar: *What percentage of Planned Parenthood's budget is for abortions?* The first "hit" was to Planned Parenthood's very own budget summary. That is a primary source.
 - b. Any **.gov** website will provide well-documented info.
 - c. **Reputable news organizations** (think CNN rather than Fox News) are good.
 - d. **You will recognize other reliable websites.** And you will recognize propaganda websites, too.
 - e. Even **Wikipedia** is a good source. The media make a big deal when somebody plays mischief on Wikipedia, but the Wikipedians are quick to jump in and restore integrity. Just avoid relying on statements followed by "citation needed" or anything that strikes you as weird.

Thanks to Joan Jacobson and Organizing for America for sharing this information.

Letters to the Editor Addresses

ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS e-mail each publication **separately!** If an editor sees that you have submitted your letter to multiple publications, it will be summarily rejected. You can send the same letter to multiple publications simultaneously, so long as you send each publication a separate email.

Sentinels (Lakewood, Arvada, Golden, Northglenn, Westminster, Wheat Ridge)

<http://www.great8newspapers.com/Site.Letters.html>

Denver Post

openforum@denverpost.com

Colorado Springs Gazette

opinion@gazette.com

Time Magazine

letters@time.com

Wall Street Journal

wsj.ltrs@wsj.com

USA Today

letters@usatoday.com

Thanks to Joan Jacobson and Organizing for America for sharing this information.

Notes from Joan Jacobson's class on writing letters to the editor 021315

Advice #1: Make sure to have fun!!

Letters to the Editor=LTE from here on.

When you write letters to the editor, you're helping drive the news, because you tell editors what people care about.

Don't poo-poo the power of paper: Denver Post's circulation was 300,000 recently. LTE are most read part of the newspaper. If half read it, that's 150,000 reading your letter.

It has a huge impact. LTE has a greater impact than a FB post, because editors have read it and so people know it's been vetted. Also: The letters are available online.

We know you're crunched for time: Don't just sit down to write it. Rather start working on it in the back of your mind while you're riding the bus, doing dishes, etc. Think about an article you read. What do you want to say about it? Wait until you have one sentence. Then, sit down and write your letter. A good letter to the editor should not take more than 30 minutes. With practice, 20 minutes, 10 minutes.

What issues are you passionate about?

Find articles about subjects you're passionate about and read about them in publications that publish LTEs.

Timeliness is everything. Each letter needs to be in response to an article. Don't let it wait more than 24 hours after the article was published.

Find articles about health care as a hook. They want you to write about what was in their paper. The smaller the newspaper, the less picky. Sometimes smaller papers will give you more time, number of words, and flexibility about what you write about. The best is to send letters to the papers you read.

If you want to master the issue, you'll never get your letter published, because it will be too late, too long, and too boring.

Length: 150 words.

If you want to write long, it better be really good. The shorter, the more likely to get published.

Always send your letter in the body of the email so they can paste it.

Don't need to know the editor's name, don't need to write "Dear Editor." Just launch in.

What are editors looking for? Do these things and you double your chances of being published:

- 1) Include Name, Address, and phone number
- 2) Address your letter to only one publication per email.
- 3) Embed the letter, not attached.
- 4) 150 words or less, especially for larger publications. (Check out Denver Post's one-sentence LTE on Sunday.)
- 5) Write about something that appeared in the newspaper unless
 - a) You were personally at a news event that didn't get covered in the paper
 - b) Comment on hot news (deadline for health insurance). Something they want to cover even if they haven't covered it yet.
- 6) Does your letter say anything new? Respond from personal experience/insight.
- 7) Do you know what you're talking about? Include your relevant experience.
- 8) Wit is good. Snark sometimes gets attention. Make it obvious you read the article: Quote it, mention writer's name, cite the headline.

There is no preferred format.

The people who disagree with me pretend they didn't see it. Those who like it leap across the room to tell you they liked it.

"I saw your letter," is the worst attack (teacher) Joan has ever had from someone. Never had to use her ready response to an attack: "That's my opinion, I stand by it. If you have additional facts to add, please share. Or I look forward to reading your letter in response to my letter."

Any persuasive speaking: You never, ever change anyone's mind. When someone's mind is made up, it's impossible to change it. **Your audience is people who have not yet made up their mind. Write to them.**

Personal stories are powerful, and you don't have to do any research.

Conversational

Yaw: You start your letter like it's going in certain direction, then you switch it. They like: Wit, sarcasm, snark—as long as it's not nasty. Snark help things to get published.

Once you've had a letter published, they are more likely to publish future letters by you. Denver Post: Six-week lag. Once you're published you can get published repeatedly, but like every six weeks/two months.