



Canadian Interprofessional Health Collaborative
Consortium pancanadien pour l'interprofessionnalisme en santé

*learning to work together, working to learn together
apprendre à collaborer, collaborer pour apprendre*

Opinion editorial

HEAD WITH ACTIVE VERB, NO MORE THAN 55 CHARACTERS

By [name]

[Title]

[date]

[xxx] words

An op-ed is a unique opportunity to get 800 or so words (no more than 850) into newspapers verbatim, explaining a position on a controversial topic. The controversy must be identified near the top, and the response must answer specific criticisms that have appeared in the media.

Never use an op-ed unless you're addressing an issue that's a hot topic today, and one in which your position needs to be clarified. When op-eds are written on topics that aren't current and controversial, they are not only unlikely to be used – they also make editorial page editors less likely to look favourably on other op-eds from you.

1. Clearly explain the problem being addressed.
2. Outline the challenges. If appropriate, outline the possible options to overcome each challenge (including maintaining the status quo).
3. Identify which option your organization supports, and outline how it addresses the problems you have identified.
4. Explain the benefits of this solution – how will this affect me, or my neighbour, or the key groups involved.
5. Identify results that have been achieved or that you expect to achieve, using comparisons to show progress where possible.

If you can't sustain 800 words because there's not enough to say, go to the letter-to-the-editor format. That's 250 or thereabouts.