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Building the **Right to Health** Movement



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**What is a LTE?**  
**How do I get**  
**one published?**

- 
- What is a LTE
  - Making your LTE EPIC
  - How to get published
  - Overcoming common challenges
  - Example LTEs from our very own Engagers!
  - Resources



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# Letters to the editor



## What is a LTE?

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- Letter to the Editor
- 100-300 word letter with a single main point
- Has a single author
- A clear and concise message about a problem

## Why write a LTE?

- Generates coverage
- Amplify our voice
- Decision makers care





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# Making your LTE EPIC

Frame your letter in  
the **EPIC** format:

**E**ngage audience



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## Letter to the Editor: Lawmakers need to commit to ending HIV/AIDS



POSTED: 02/15/16, 5:38 PM EST | UPDATED: ON 02/15/2016 | 1 COMMENT

Last Tuesday, President Barack Obama's final budget was released in the morning. Totalling \$4.1 billion, it includes many budget proposals that could spell out changes for the United States over the final year of his term. However, one area in which it is completely lacking is increased funding for global health priorities.



Frame your letter in  
the **EPIC** format:

Duluth News Tribune

**P**roblem statement

## Reader's view: Fight against AIDS requires more federal government money

By Julia Mandsager Komatsu from Duluth on Dec 1, 2015 at 12:11 a.m.



I'm a medical student in Duluth, and I'm writing because today, Dec. 1, is World AIDS Day. According to the Minnesota Department of Health, 7,960 Minnesotans were living with HIV/AIDS in 2014. In the same year, there were 307 new cases of HIV, up 2 percent from 2013. Globally, there were 26.9 million people living with HIV, including 2 million new cases, according to the World Health Organization.

While there have been major improvements in HIV treatment and management, this virus still is deadly. In 2014, there were 64 AIDS deaths in Minnesota and 1.2 million globally.

# Keep your LTE EPIC

Frame your letter in  
the EPIC format:

Inform on solution



Frame your letter in  
the **EPIC** format:

**C**all to action





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## Is your LTE EPIC?

- Engage audience
- Problem statement
- Inform on solution
- Call to action

**EPIC!**

- **What Publication?**
  - Think local
  - Relationship to target
- **What are their rules?**
  - Length
  - Article Requirements
  - Author Requirements
  - When do they publish?



### Letters to the Editor Worksheet

*This worksheet was created by Matt Erdos (Advocacy Lead, PIH Engage Boston University) and adapted by the National Team. Thanks, Matt!*

A *Letter to the Editor (LTE)* is a letter sent to a publication about issues of concern from its readers. Letters to the editor are typically 150 words (that's short!) and have a single main point and single author (you, not PIH). A letter to the editor should be positive and current to hook in readers, while focusing on a clear and concise message about a problem.

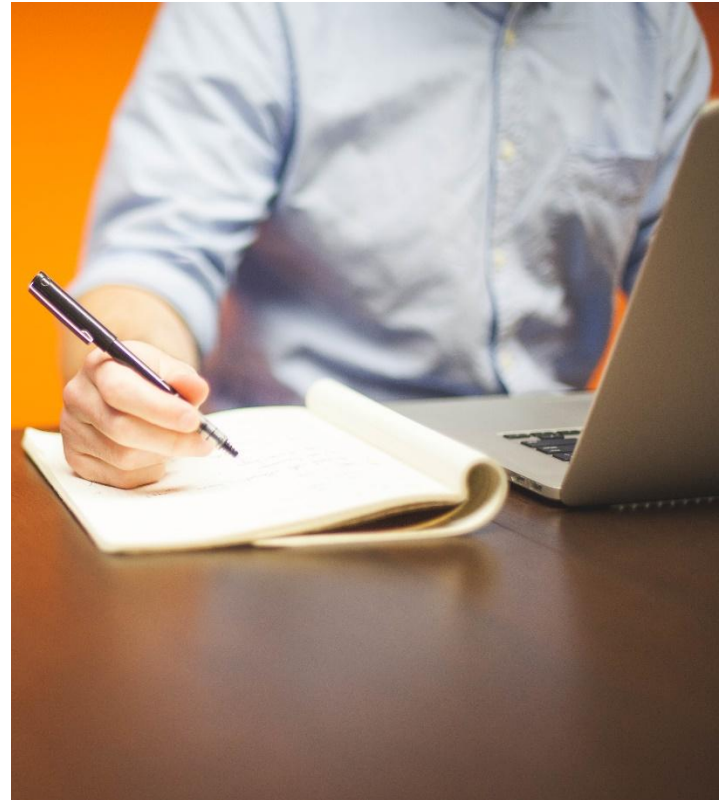
*Let's practice!*

**What is the publication in which you are looking to get published?** (Ex. The Daily Free Press, BU Today, Boston Globe, etc.)

**What are the publication's rules for submitting Letters to the Editor?** (Hint: Use Google!)

**What is the problem you would like to discuss?** (Ex. Cuts to Global AIDS funding under the Obama administration has scaled back progress towards ending HIV/AIDS)

- **What's the problem?**
  - One sentence summary
  - Be clear
  - Think big picture
- **What's the solution?**
  - Use the rationale for our advocacy asks
  - Write the ask(s) in 1-2 sentences



## •Call to Action

- Name the target
- Ask voters for something
- Ask target for something

## •What's the hook?

- Respond to an article
- Respond to current events
- Be the hook





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## Putting it all together

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- Begin with your hook
- Add your problem
- Add solutions
- Add the call to action
- Check for flow and rules
- Submit your letter





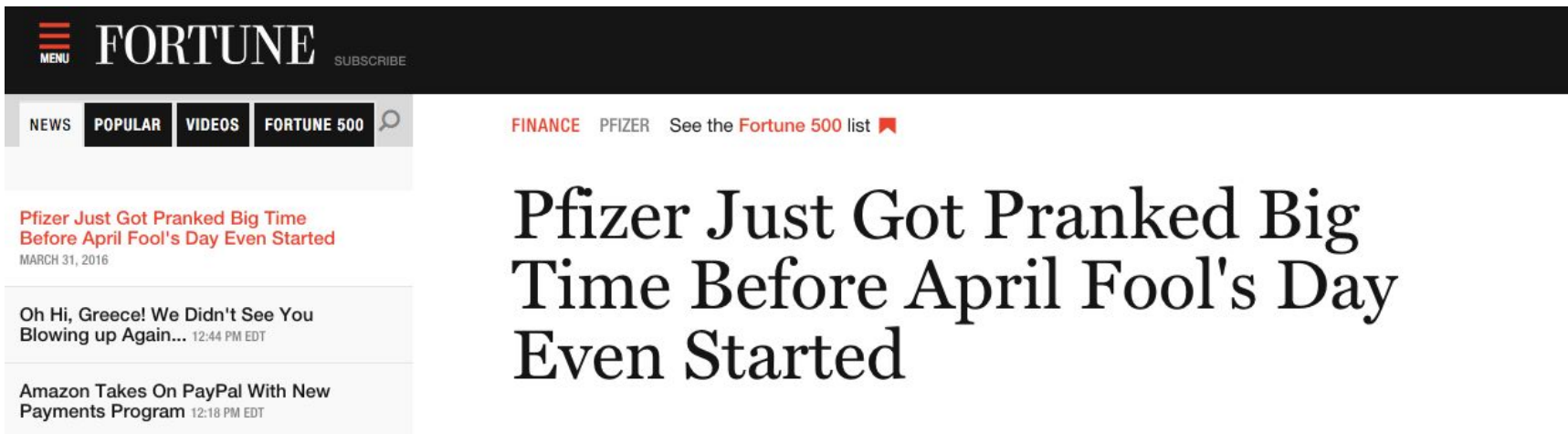
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# How to get published

- Relevancy
- Newsworthy
- Big national events
- Days of publication



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## Pfizer Just Got Pranked Big Time Before April Fool's Day Even Started

MARCH 31, 2016

Oh Hi, Greece! We Didn't See You Blowing up Again... 12:44 PM EDT

Amazon Takes On PayPal With New Payments Program 12:18 PM EDT



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# Audience

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Who do you want your piece to reach?



- If you don't get a confirmation
- If you don't get published
- If you do get published





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# **Overcoming Common Challenges**



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# Challenges

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- Intimidation
- Procrastination
- Remedy challenges through social support systems



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## **Example LTEs**

## **Contact tracing necessary to stop spread of the virus**

Gov. Abbott claims that COVID-19 positive tests are going up because **young adults are socializing and not wearing masks.**

But Gov. Abbott purposefully excluded two ways he caused increasing COVID-19 cases across the state. He reopened the state before we had reached safe thresholds in Texas and took no steps during the lockdown to stop transmission of the virus.

Stopping transmission requires three essential steps: testing, tracing and treatment. We have focused on increasing testing and making sure there are enough ventilators to treat patients. However, we are missing comprehensive contact tracing. In Massachusetts, where the **Contact Tracing Collaborative** was launched by a partnership of four groups including Partners in Health and the Massachusetts Department of Health, the rate of new infections dropped to **under 400 new cases per day since June 12.** In Texas, this number has peaked at **over 4,000 new cases.**

Gov. Abbott must launch a network of contact tracers to stop transmission of **SARS-CoV-2** immediately.





## Practice your pitch

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- Independently think about your pitch for a story, think about your hook, core message, ask, audience, and the outlet your pitching to (10 min)
- Share your pitch with the group (15 min)
- Discuss & vote on the strongest pitch (10 min)



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# Key Takeaways for LTEs

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- Make sure you have a clear hook and message!
  - What are you responding to?
  - What ideas or solutions do you want to advance?
- Your writing should be...
  - Positive, personal, and values-based
  - Assertive and confident as well as credible
- You want to...
  - Think about your audience (target)
  - Make policy and social justice issues personable (relate)
  - Combine data with themes and anecdotes (validate)
  - Hit an emotional point (connect)



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# Advocacy Resources

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- Resources available
  - LTE toolkit
  - LTE worksheet
  - Previous TI presentations

All resources can be found at  
**[pih.org/engage](https://pih.org/engage)**