**RESOURCES TO SUBMIT A LETTER TO THE EDITOR DURING
NF AWARENESS MONTH**

Thanks for helping spread awareness about neurofibromatosis in your community during NF Awareness Month!

Submitting a Letter to the Editor to your local newspaper is an excellent way to raise awareness about NF. While it is often a straightforward process, every newspaper and website has their own specific guidelines.

**Why Letters to the Editor matter**

Writing a letter to the editor is a great opportunity to share your opinion, educate the public, introduce a local NF Hero, volunteer or fundraiser, explain why a building is lit up blue, or express the need for money to fund critical research. The opinion pages are often the most widely read sections of any newspaper. One letter cannot do it all, but should pick specific things to focus on.

**How is an op ed different? Should I send one, too?**

Op-eds are slightly longer than letters to the editor; generally they run no more than 750 words. Op-eds are timely and in connection to current events. Many of the same tips for Letters to the Editor apply, but more specifically:

* Focus on a single point, and make it right away at the beginning of your op-ed.
* Establish your credibility as a local constituent.
* Use plain language; avoid jargon and acronyms.
* Make it personal - be sure to relate your piece to the specifics of what is happening in your community
* End strong, with a call to action – learn more, get involved, or make a donation.

**Determining where to submit your letter**

After you’ve identified which paper you want to write to, visit their website and look for the Contact page or a link to “Submit your letter.” Remember to follow instructions and include all requested contact information.

**Technical Tips**

We have included two sample letters below, but encourage you to personalize them or write your own, keeping in mind the following tips:

* Research and then follow the policies and specifications of the publication to which you are submitting your letter. Except as noted, it is OK to send the same or similar letters to more than one publication.
* Generally, letters to the editor should be less than 250 words, but check the suggested word count on each specific paper’s website.
* E-mail your letter in the body of the email (never send unsolicited attachments). Always include your name, address, and daytime telephone number. Include exactly one e-mail address in the To: field. Don't send to editors via Cc: or Bcc:.

* Editors prefer to run letters about issues of local importance and interest. Be clear and concise about your relationship to the cause; mention if you live with NF, are relative of someone living with NF or an active volunteer committed to supporting fundraising efforts.
* Avoid jargon or acronyms (spell out any name the first time you use it, followed by the acronym in parentheses).
* **"Humanize" your article. Use** anecdotes and personal stories to help explain and bring complicated issues to life.
* If your letter runs, obtain a hard copy of the issue for your own records, as well as a copy for the Tumor Foundation’s archive. Please send it to:
	+ Digital copy by email: mailto:info@tumourfoundation.ca
	+ Hard copy by mail:

Tumour Foundation of BC

19172 West Fourth Avenue PO

Vancouver, BC V6K 4R8

**Sample 1**

To the Editor:

Imagine being told that your child has a disorder for which there are few medical treatments and no cure. That’s what happened to me (number) years ago when my son/daughter was first diagnosed with neurofibromatosis (NF).

NF is a genetic disorder that causes tumours to grow on nerves throughout the body and can result in blindness, deafness, bone abnormalities, disfigurement, learning disabilities, disabling pain, and even cancer. With no cure and few treatment options, everything felt hopeless. Then I started to realize how courageous my son/ daughter is; he/she was fighting NF with strength, dignity and even a sense of humour!

Well, I stopped being hopeless and became a fighter, too. I joined forces with the Tumour Foundation of BC, the largest non-profit organization in the country committed to ending NF through research.

May is NF Awareness Month and I invite other members of the (name of city/ town) community to fight with our family by learning more about NF at [www.tumourfoundation.ca](http://www.tumourfoundation.ca)

Sincerely,

Full Name

Phone number

**Sample 2**

To the Editor:

Imagine being told that you have a disorder for which there are few medical treatments and no cure. That’s what happened to me (number) years ago when I was first diagnosed with neurofibromatosis (NF).

NF is a genetic disorder that causes tumours to grow on nerves throughout the body and can result in blindness, deafness, bone abnormalities, disfigurement, learning disabilities, disabling pain, and even cancer. With no cure and few treatment options, everything felt hopeless. Until I found the Tumor Foundation of BC, the largest a non-profit organization in the country committed to ending NF through research, and got involved in the NF community.

I met tons of other people just like me, people living their lives and fighting NF with strength, dignity and even a sense of humour. NF is a rare disease, and one of the most important things we can do is raise awareness and talk about what it means to live with the NF. This is why I’m recognizing NF Awareness Month in May, and why (identify a local landmark that is Shining a Light on NF, a proclamation in the area or an upcoming event). I invite other members of the (name of city/ town) community to fight with me by learning more about NF at [www.tumourfoundation.ca](http://www.tumourfoundation.ac)

Sincerely,

Full Name

Phone number