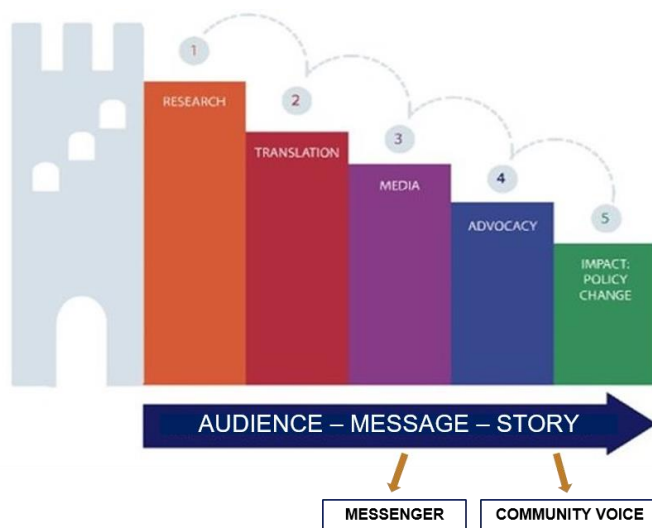


# What makes news? A Guide for Seekers of Media Coverage about Disability Research

National Association of Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers  
Andy Burness  
March 31, 2021

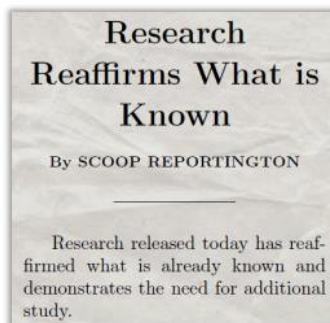
## Public Interest Communications: A Theory of Change



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## What is not newsworthy?

- Old information
- Predictable information
- Process stories
- Fundraising plans
- Incremental advances
- New collaborations
- Annual reports
- Anniversaries and “days”



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## How not to speak to reporters

<u>Set 1</u>	<u>Set 2</u>	<u>Set 3</u>
1. Relative	1. Effective	1. Planning
2. Integrated	2. Management	2. Concept
3. Total	3. Area-wide	3. Involvement
4. Periodic	4. Efficient	4. Stakeholder
5. Comprehensive	5. Available	5. Position
6. Public	6. Resources	6. Controls
7. Voluntary	7. Automated	7. Projection
8. Interim	8. Intermittent	8. Capacity
9. Limited	9. Organizational	9. Interface
10. Synergistic	10. Divergent	10. Programming

## A non-newsworthy press release

### Global Health Group Celebrates 10-year Anniversary with Historic Executive Board Meeting

**London, UK**—Leaders of the Global Health Action Network will meet to discuss planning and implementation of their next ten years of work. Beginning its second decade in working to ensure better health for low- and middle-income countries, the Network is holding the 14th meeting of its Executive Board.

Executive Director John Brown is joined by former Executive Directors Ingrid Streck and Raj Singh to discuss the effort to raise funds to ensure better disease prevention worldwide.

## Do I have news?

1. Is it something different today than yesterday?
2. Is it counterintuitive, surprising or unexpected?
3. Is it the first, biggest, or most comprehensive?
4. Does it raise new issues, problems, or solutions?
5. Is it linked to what's already in the news?
6. Is it intriguing to my neighbor?

# 1. Is something different today than yesterday?

## nature

NEWS · 18 FEBRUARY 2021 · UPDATE 19 FEBRUARY 2021

### Touch down! NASA's Mars landing sparks new era of exploration

Having stuck its nail-biting landing, the Perseverance rover will now collect rocks to return to Earth and record Mars sounds for the first time.



NASA's Perseverance rover touched down safely in Jezero Crater on Mars on 18 February, kicking off a new era of exploration on the red planet in which rocks will be collected and returned to Earth for the first time.

Encased in a protective heat shield, Perseverance whizzed through the thin Martian atmosphere and then deployed a parachute to slow itself down. In a final landing maneuver, a 'sky crane' holding the rover fired its rockets to gently lower the six-wheeled, car-sized Perseverance to the surface.

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# 2. Is it counterintuitive, surprising or unexpected?

**HealthAffairs**

Physicians' Perceptions Of People With Disability And Their Health Care



Many doctors have negative perceptions of patients with disabilities — and that impacts quality of care, study finds

**WebMD**

Many Docs Biased Against Patients With Disabilities

**STAT**

Large majority of doctors hold misconceptions about people with disabilities, survey finds

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### 3. Is it the first, biggest, or most comprehensive?

FDA NEWS RELEASE

#### FDA Takes Key Action in Fight Against COVID-19 By Issuing Emergency Use Authorization for First COVID-19 Vaccine

**The Washington Post**

Health

FDA authorizes the first coronavirus vaccine, a rare moment of hope in the deadly pandemic



Voice of America

**The New York Times**

*F.D.A. Advisory Panel Gives Green Light to Pfizer Vaccine*

COVID-19 Pandemic

**US Panel Recommends Approval of First COVID-19 Vaccine**

### 4. Does it raise new issues, problems, or solutions?

**The Guardian**

Black babies more likely to survive when cared for by black doctors - US study



Oregon Hospitals Didn't Have Shortages. So Why Were Disabled People Denied Care?

**The Washington Post**

People with disabilities desperately need the vaccine. But states disagree on when they'll get it.

## 5. Is it linked to what's already in the news?



Millions of Americans with intellectual disabilities, at 'particularly high risk' for COVID-19, are still waiting for vaccinations

San Francisco Chronicle

California's age-based vaccine system angers people with disabilities

Forbes

5 Ways Biden's "American Rescue Plan" Could Help People With Disabilities

## 6. Is it intriguing to my neighbor?

**New Study Reports Dogs Successfully Diagnosed Malaria by Sniffing Socks Worn by African Children**

*At TropMed 2018, scientists share research on ultra-sensitive canine noses detecting distinctive odor emitted by malaria parasites; potential for dogs to assist malaria elimination campaigns*

**NEW ORLEANS (October 29, 2018)**—As the global battle against malaria stalls, scientists may be adding a novel tool to the fight: sniffer dogs. In recent tests trained sniffer dogs successfully diagnosed malaria infections simply by sniffing samples from socks worn briefly by children from a malaria endemic area of West Africa, according to a new study presented today at the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (ASTMH) Annual Meeting.



How A Dog Could Stop The Global Spread Of Malaria



Dogs can sniff out malaria parasites on your clothes

The New York Times

*Dogs Can Detect Malaria. How Useful Is That?*

## Feature Story: Human interest Story

### The New York Times

#### The Actors With Disabilities Redefining Representation



SOME OF THE actors have been waiting decades for that to change. [Ridloff](#) remembers watching the performer [Linda Bove](#) on “[Sesame Street](#),” who was one of the few deaf people children growing up in the 1980s could find on television. And when [Novicki](#) saw the Ron Howard fantasy film “[Willow](#)” (1988), which stars the 3-foot-6 actor Warwick Davis, “it made a huge impact,” he says. “For me, as a little kid, to be able to see myself as a hero” was significant enough to nudge him away from sports and toward theater. Now, he hopes to star as the pioneering actor with dwarfism [Billy Barty](#) in a script he’s written that made the Disability List, an offshoot of the annual Black List, an industry roundup of hot screenplays. He believes progress is accelerating. So does [Gold](#), who, at the time we spoke, was getting ready to rehearse a now-unscheduled Off Broadway production of “[Three Sisters](#),” in which he had cast two actors with disabilities.

## Questions to think about

- Is there **anything new you anticipate** learning from your research?
- Do you have research on **impact, a new solution or a new problem** that has not yet been covered in the news?
- Which **themes, trends, or topics are in the media** right now that you can link to?
- What do you have that is **counterintuitive**?
- Are you aware of any **compelling stories from the field or human interest stories**?
- What will you do **after you land media coverage**?

# Op-eds: Your chance to frame a story and/or an issue.

**Successful op-eds are about your unique voice, expertise, and experience.**

An op-ed is:

- 650 - 850 word argument
- A call for change
- “Controversial”
- Personal
- Evidence-based
- Relevant to issues of the day

An op-ed is NOT:

- Self-promotional
- Preachy
- Teach-y
- An explanation
- A platitude



## Andy's Guidelines for Writing an Op-Ed

1. Make sure you have STANDING/GRAVITAS: What gives you the authority to write this piece, and not me?
2. Follow the news and jump at opportunities. (Better yet - anticipate them!)
3. Make a single point and avoid tangents (even worthy ones).
4. Be clear and be upfront in your argument.
5. Don't be afraid to be personal.
6. Use an active voice.
7. Use short sentences and paragraphs.

## An op-ed template

- Strong opening
- Main point (introducing the call to action)
- Supporting point/Why now (if not in the opening)
- Evidence
- A "So what?" (Why should I care?)
- Acknowledgement of opposition argument with brief rebuttal
- Strong closing (often this references opening and is hopeful/forward looking)

# The Boston Globe

OPINION

## After COVID-19, a better way to support the elderly and people with disabilities

There is a successful alternative to institutional care that allows people of all ages with disabilities to live at home with support: self-directed care.

By Kevin Mahoney Updated May 26, 2020, 3:00 a.m.



COVID-19 has thrown America's elderly into extreme peril and their families into a state of panic, while making it more difficult for all people with disabilities to get the care they need.

In Massachusetts, about 60 percent of all COVID-19 deaths have been tied to nursing homes or other long-term care facilities. Meanwhile, families, unable to visit their loved ones, agonize over their health and safety and the care they are receiving

Many long-term care facility residents would be far safer in their own homes, but they need assistance with everyday living. Even people already receiving services at home from home care workers are finding that, during the coronavirus pandemic, those workers are less available and that following stay-at-home orders can be complicated.

There is a successful alternative to institutional care that allows people of all ages with disabilities to live at home with support: self-direction of home and community-based services, available under Medicaid and the Veterans Administration's Veterans Directed Care program.

The self-direction model has enabled tens of thousands of Americans with disabilities — including nearly 42,000 Massachusetts residents currently — to enjoy a higher quality of life in their homes rather than in an institution. Given the serious risks of congregate living during a viral pandemic, Congress should step up support for self-direction.

# The Boston Globe

OPINION

## Those with disabilities have a right to survive the coronavirus pandemic

The existence of draconian laws that call for medical rationing during a public health emergency make it clear that I will certainly be left to die if our hospitals reach capacity.

By Ariella Z. Barker Updated March 30, 2020, 5:17 p.m.



Predictions that up to [70 percent of the population](#) will contract COVID-19 this year create a horrifying reality for me and the millions of other people with disabilities in this country. We live with the constant reminder that, on any given day, a silent killer could come knocking on our doors. And for those of us who are unable to self-isolate effectively during the coronavirus pandemic due to our dependence on caregivers, it seems as though it's only a matter of time before our killer gains entry.

Yet no one in leadership is talking about us — [790,000 people](#) in Massachusetts alone and [61 million adults](#) in the United States. We are simply looking for the hope necessary for our survival. Each day of this pandemic has become more terrifying than the last.

At 3, I was diagnosed with a progressive neuromuscular disorder called [spinal muscular atrophy](#), and I lost the ability to walk at 11. With the use of a power wheelchair, I was able to live independently, become an attorney, and accomplish my dreams. That is, until everything collapsed with the onset of [Ehlers-Danlos syndrome](#). I went from trying cases to suffering through eight years of isolation, chronic illness, and unimaginable pain. To my further devastation, the SMA progressed, and I was forced to rely on caretakers for daily living, such as getting dressed and in and out of bed.



Join us for the Next Session in this Series:

## **Telling Stories to Inform Disability Policy**

Featuring: Jae Kennedy, Jean Hall, Noelle Kurth, and Davi Kallman

May 26, 2021  
3:00pm-4:15pm ET

Registration Online at: [www.narrtc.org](http://www.narrtc.org)