



COLLEGE of AMERICAN
PATHOLOGISTS

Persuasive Writing to Influence Policymakers and Advocates

Public Affairs Council

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Persuasion

- **What is it?**
- **Who does it? What forms can it take?**

- **Two practical examples: opinion writing and policy presentations.**

Persuasion

- **Audience-centric.**
- **Example: Opinion column → Public opinion (change minds, impact change).**
- **Example: Policy presentation → Decisionmakers (change their views, get them on your side).**

- **You must know your audience ... what do they care about?**

The Cs

- **3 Cs for writing:**
 - **Clear (clarity)**
 - **Concise – can you use your words strategically?**
 - **Compelling – catch your audience’s attention?**

Clear

- **What's wrong?**
- **What's quantifiable? (Too few? Too many? Lack of...)**
- **Be explicit about the problem you want to solve.**
 - **Topic: Public schools in Virginia.**
 - **Problem statement: Elementary schools in Virginia will be overcrowded in 2025.**

Clear

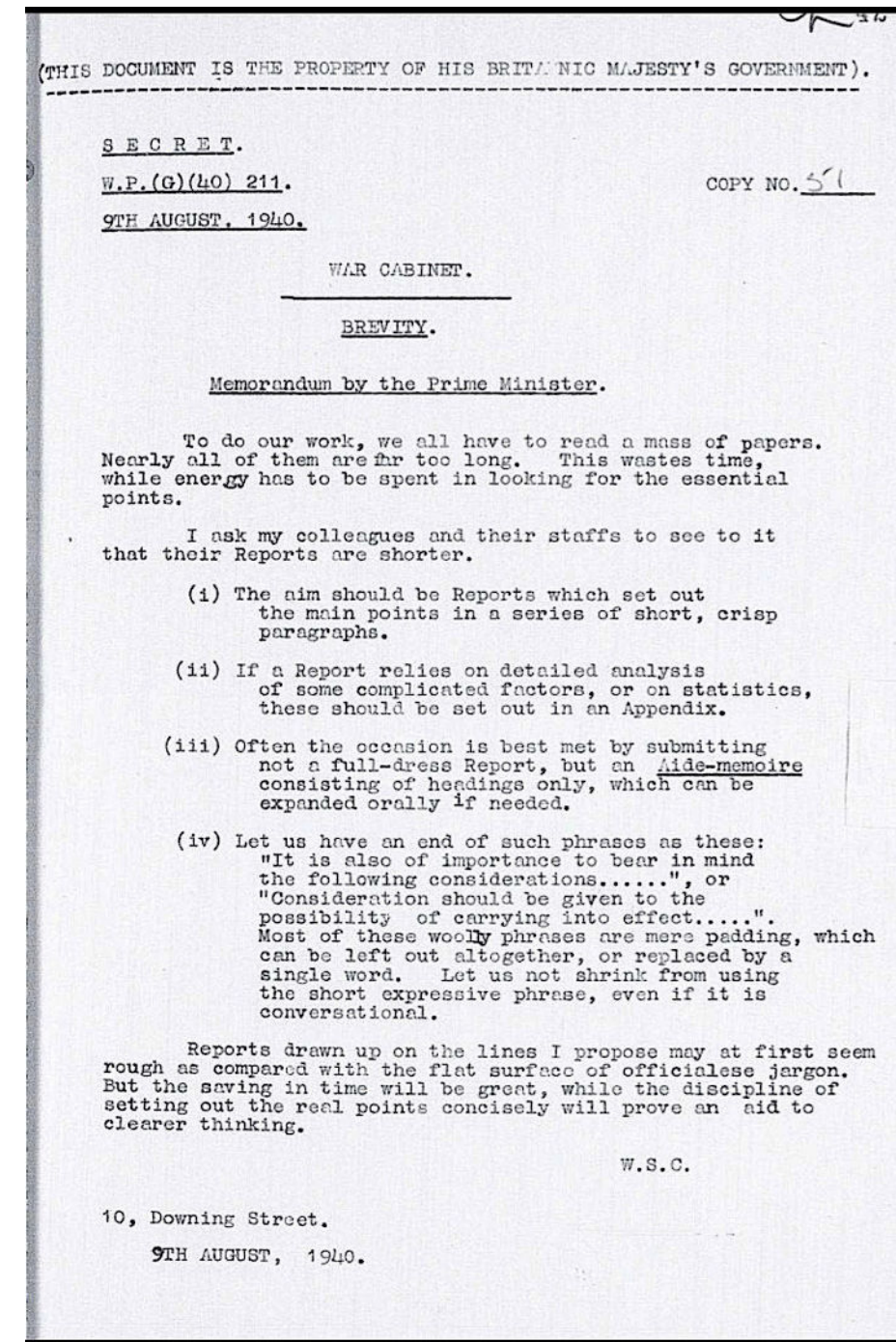
- **Is the problem clear in these ... problem statements?**

Yes (it's a problem) or No (it's not written as a problem)

- **Artificial intelligence in health care jeopardizes patient safety and quality of care.**
- **A large number of laboratory-developed tests are created in academic laboratories.**
- **US medical schools need to develop pathology 101 courses as part of core curriculums.**

Concision

- Keep it short.
- ***“Let us have an end of such phrases as these: ‘It is also of importance to bear in mind the following considerations ...’, or ‘Consideration should be given to the possibility of carrying into effect ...’”***
- **“But the saving in time will be great, while the discipline of setting out the real points concisely will prove an aid to clearer thinking.”**



Concision

- **Don't use fillers**
 - Actually, generally, practically, very, therefore, moreover. Simply cut these out whenever possible.
- **Strengthen verbs**
 - “Many laboratory professionals are no longer working.” → “Many laboratory professionals retired.”
 - “We need to diagnose these diseases!” → “Let's diagnose disease!”
- **Keep the important info upfront.**
 - It is important to note that, in the Eastern US since 1980, acid rain has been a serious problem. → Acid rain has been a problem in the Eastern US since 1980.

Compelling

- **Story and narrative.**
- **Stories have a beginning, a middle, and an end. Explore desire, dilemma, and choices characters face.**
- **Narrative is bigger.**

3 More Cs

- **Cohesive:** What do you say first? What goes last?
- **Credible:** Good use of data and evidence.
- **Concrete:** Is it too abstract to be actionable?

Letters to the Editor

Case Study: *The New York Times* and the CAP

But a New York Times investigation, based on interviews and confidential documents, shows that MultiPlan and the insurance companies have a large and mostly hidden financial incentive to cut those reimbursements as much as possible, even if it means saddling patients with large bills. The formula for MultiPlan and the insurance companies is simple: The smaller the reimbursement, the larger their fee.

Here's how it works: The most common way Americans get health coverage is through employers that "self-fund," meaning they pay for their workers' medical care with their own money. The employers contract with insurance companies to administer the plans and process claims. Most medical visits are with providers in a plan's network, with rates set in advance.

But when employees see a provider outside the network, as Ms. Lawson did, many insurance companies consult with MultiPlan, which typically recommends that the employer pay less than the provider billed. The difference between the bill and the sum actually paid amounts to a savings for the employer. But, The Times found, it means big money for MultiPlan and the insurer, since both companies often charge the employer a percentage of the savings as a processing fee.

Insurers Reap Hidden Fees by Slashing Payments. You May Get the Bill.

A little-known data firm helps health insurers make more when less of an out-of-network claim gets paid. Patients can be on the hook for the difference.



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Letter to the Editor Steps

- **Know your audience:**
 - The op-ed editor, the public, policy influencers ...
- **Clearly define the problem.**
 - What's wrong: Patients pay \$\$\$\$\$ when insurers don't cover legitimate medical care.
 - What's wrong: Insurer are incentivized to not pay for medical services.
- **Concision:**
 - Scheme
 - Perverse incentive
- **Advocate for concrete solutions:**
 - Get federal and state governments involved
 - Network adequacy

Maximizing Profits at the Patients' Expense

April 28, 2024

To the Editor:

This is just the latest example of the schemes deployed by insurers to maximize profits by cutting reimbursements to physicians and shifting medically necessary health care costs onto patients.

Whether it's through third-party entities like MultiPlan or using tactics such as narrowing provider networks and restrictive prior authorization policies, insurers have the perverse incentive to boost revenue over offering adequate payment for quality patient care under the guise of "controlling costs."

More and more patients are being forced to decide whether they should forgo treatment because their insurer won't pay the bill.

Federal and state regulators must re-examine arrangements with consulting and analytics firms like MultiPlan, including their conflicts of interest and impact on patient care.

The College of American Pathologists has also encouraged lawmakers to enact tougher network adequacy standards that mandate that health plans maintain enough physicians under contract in the patient's local area. Such requirements would give insurance companies the right incentives to cover patient services in the interest of keeping its beneficiaries healthy instead of producing healthier bonuses for its own administrators.

Donald Karcher
Washington

The writer is president of the College of American Pathologists.

Beginning: Problem; Compelling: "scheme"

Concise: Shifting costs onto patients

Compelling: "perverse incentive"

Concrete: "re-examine arrangements"

Concrete/End: Solution

Takeaways

- **Persuasion is audience-centric.**
- **3 Cs: Clear, concise, compelling (6 Cs: ... cohesion, credible, concrete)**
- **Write strategically**



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