**Cover Letter Guidelines**

First impressions count in the job search, and that’s why a dynamite cover letter can mean the difference between success and failure in your healthcare [job search](http://allhealthcare.monster.com/careers/articles/2055-4-factors-that-can-ruin-your-job-search). But what makes a winning healthcare [cover letter](http://allhealthcare.monster.com/careers/articles/2882-channel-your-cover-letter-feedback)?

**Get to the Point** State the purpose of your letter in the first paragraph. Small talk is generally a waste of space. Three paragraphs is a good length.

**Tailor Your Letter to the Reader** Focus on the needs of the specific healthcare organization, not on your own requirements as a [job seeker](http://allhealthcare.monster.com/careers/articles/3620-7-job-search-time-wasters-and-how-to-avoid-them). Visit your potential employer’s [website](http://allhealthcare.monster.com/careers/articles/3591-the-top-10-websites-for-healthcare-job-seekers-and-professionals) and read their mission statement to learn more about the organization. Then use your [cover letter](http://allhealthcare.monster.com/careers/articles/3668-cover-letters-dont-bother) to demonstrate how your skills and experience can benefit the organization.

**Maintain the Right Tone** A [cover letter](http://allhealthcare.monster.com/careers/articles/2880-cover-letters-build-the-case-for-50-plus-workers) should be businesslike, friendly and enthusiastic.Health professionals have the opportunity to reveal their passion through a cover letter, but the document shouldn’t become too syrupy, or it loses its objectivity and professionalism.

**Make It Memorable** New graduates can make their cover letters stand out by personalizing their stories. If you decided to model your career after an Emergency Medical Technician who helped a family member, tell that story rather than making the generic claim that you’ve always wanted to help people. If your story is unique, its no longer like everyone else.

**Highlight Your Biggest Successes** Your [cover letter](http://allhealthcare.monster.com/careers/articles/3668-cover-letters-dont-bother) shouldn’t just summarize your career or repeat the same information from your [resume](http://allhealthcare.monster.com/careers/articles/2310-get-your-resume-ready-for-the-recession). You want it to highlight the successes and achievements or “triples and home runs” of your career that are most related to the types of positions for which you are applying.

**Use Power Phrases** Use strong action words to convey your experiences and illustrate your qualifications with phrases like “I have decreased costs by…” or “I have increased productivity by…”Don’t be shy about selling yourself, since that’s the purpose of a [cover letter](http://allhealthcare.monster.com/careers/articles/2880-cover-letters-build-the-case-for-50-plus-workers).

**Show Your Team Spirit** If you have room for a few extra sentences in your cover letter, emphasize your teamwork and [communication skills](http://allhealthcare.monster.com/benefits/articles/2698-tips-for-effective-patient-provider-communication). Today teamwork and communication are vitally important in almost every healthcare position.

**Spice Up Your Writing** A poor example to begin a cover letter is “I am writing in response to your advertisement for a Phlebotomy Technician and have enclosed my resume for your review.” The better opener could be “Your ad on Monster for a Phlebotomy Technician captured my attention and motivated me to learn more about this employment opportunity. Then describe how your qualifications match the employer’s needs.

**Follow Up** An unforgivable error some [job seekers](http://allhealthcare.monster.com/careers/articles/2179-the-10-worst-job-search-tips-ever) make is failing to follow up after sending their cover letter and resume. If the name of a hiring manager or current employee is available, follow-up, as soon as possible after submitting your application materials.

**Avoid**  
• Addressing a letter recipient by anything other than his name. Avoid “Dear Hiring Manager” at all costs.  
• Writing a canned, generic letter that looks like it was copied from a book.  
• Starting the first paragraph and too many other sentences with “I.”  
• Making spelling errors and typos.  
• Handwriting a cover letter.  
• Using printer paper or paper that is different from your resume paper. Instead utilize resume paper.  
• Including irrelevant personal information or [job experience](http://allhealthcare.monster.com/careers/articles/2428).  
• Overstating your accomplishments or contradicting your resume.