

It's Time to Tell Our Story

■ Steve Sellars

Over the last few months, I've had the privilege of spending time with Lou Ellen Horwitz, my predecessor and now past CEO of the Urgent Care Association (UCA), as part of my onboarding. She's been generous with her knowledge and perspective, helping me understand the many administrative details that keep UCA and our affiliates running smoothly. That investment of time has been invaluable, and I'm grateful for her continued support during this transition.

At the same time, our external work continues. Advocacy remains a top priority for UCA, and our partnership with McDermott+ is as important as ever. Together, we're working to ensure Urgent Care has a strong and respected voice with policymakers, payers, and other partners. The healthcare landscape is changing quickly, and we're working to ensure Urgent Care is recognized as part of the solution.

Opportunity For Urgent Care

One of the biggest pressures we see across the system today is cost. Consumers and employers are being asked to pay more—higher premiums, larger deductibles, and greater out-of-pocket expenses—yet often feel they're getting less in return. According to the 2025 Milliman Medical Index, the total cost of healthcare, including insurance premiums, out-of-pocket costs, and medications stands at \$35,000 a year for the typical family of 4, which is almost triple the cost from 10 years ago.¹ That dynamic creates frustration, but it also creates an opportunity for Urgent Care.

We've already proven our ability to improve access to care that is convenient, reliable, and cost-effective. We're open 7 days a week, with extended hours, providing walk-in access, and we've embraced technology that allows patients to check in before they even leave home. These are some of the reasons millions of patients

choose Urgent Care every year. But access and convenience are only part of the story.

Now, it's time to prove our value. And proving value means demonstrating that the care we deliver showcases clinical quality, great outcomes, and provides a positive systemwide impact. To do that, we'll be working closely with our clinical and strategic advisory groups to find ways to tell our story more powerfully. We've always known the value of Urgent Care. Now it's about proving it—and telling that story in a way that resonates beyond our own walls to strengthen our credibility with payers, employers, policymakers, and patients alike.

I'd love to hear from you as we take this next step. What stories are you seeing in your markets that demonstrate Urgent Care's impact? What data would be most useful to highlight? Please reach out to me directly—I'd welcome the chance to learn from you and continue this conversation together.

Chapter Conferences

Our Regional Chapter Conferences happening now are also a great opportunity to advance this conversation. These meetings bring members together for timely updates on state and federal advocacy priorities, continuing education, peer-to-peer member engagement, and networking. They're an important way to stay connected to the broader industry while also focusing on local and regional issues that directly impact operators. I encourage you to participate, share your perspective, and take advantage of the chance to both learn and contribute. I hope to see you there, and as always, UCA will continue to be here to support you along the way. ■

Reference

1. Bell D, Clarkson J, Jensen B, Liner D, Man A, Naugle A, Timcheck A. 2025 Milliman Medical Index. Milliman website. Published May 27 2025. Accessed September 5, 2025. <https://www.milliman.com/en/insight/2025-milliman-medical-index>



Steve Sellars is Chief Executive Officer of the Urgent Care Association.