



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

# Onward and Upward

■ WILLIAM MEADOWS, MD

It's been two years since the Board officially approved the bylaws of the Urgent Care Association of America (UCAOA). In reflecting on that, my first thoughts are how much we owe to all of you members who have supported this still-new organization in our infancy. Over 200 of you traveled to Orlando for our first conference in the spring of 2005, and attendance at the 2006 conference in Lake Tahoe was twice that.

We are a member-driven, democratic organization and exist to help make your practice more successful and to bring together members involved in all aspects of urgent care.

As the first issue of our journal comes to publication, I'm struck by what we've accomplished in a relatively short period of time.

As noted above, our annual conferences are increasingly well attended. Each gave members who attended a chance to attend excellent lectures. The opportunity to meet colleagues and network between meetings was every bit as valuable as the conference itself. It was gratifying to see that most members were willing to share experiences with others. This demonstrates the true value of an association like ours.

Encouraged by the attendance and feedback we received in regard to the first two annual conferences, we held our first two-day "mini-conference" this month, geared specifically to new clinic owners and operators.

Our next annual spring conference, May 9-12 in Daytona Beach, FL, will be even larger and more useful than the first two, and will feature both a business track and clinical track.

We've also made great strides internally at UCAOA. Guided by our executive director, Lou Ellen Horwitz, we have a continually improving website that keeps all of us connected in between conferences. It is being updated and will be our link to obtaining information about the changes in urgent care while also providing a forum through which we can share ideas.



**William Meadows** is president of the Urgent Care Association of America, and is sole owner and medical director of Physicians Care, operating six urgent care centers in and around Chattanooga, TN.

Perhaps most important to the acceptance of urgent care medicine as a discipline in its own right, we've also progressed on the accreditation and training fronts.

### Accreditation

We began discussions about accreditation for clinics during our first board meeting in the fall of 2004. Our criteria was ready by the early summer of 2005 and at the 2006 conference, Awards of Distinction were given to 19 newly accredited clinic sites, with others coming on board soon. Our goal is to make UCAOA's accreditation the gold standard for quality assurance for the delivery of urgent care.

### Urgent Care Fellowship

The summer of 2006 saw the acceptance of three physicians into the first fellowship in urgent care at the University Hospitals Case Medical Center in Cleveland, OH. Spearheaded by Dr. Lee Resnick, who is also editor-in-chief of *JUCM*, this program is partially sponsored by a \$30,000 grant from UCAOA and is a result of collaboration among the Department of Family Medicine, UCAOA, and the University Hospitals Medical Practices. This one-year fellowship is currently open to graduates of accredited Family Medicine and Med/Peds residencies.

Training and future certification in the urgent care specialty are linked in a methodical process that we have turned over to our Academic Committee for review and discussion. The fellowship and our commitment to publish *The Journal of Urgent Care Medicine* represent a big step toward the future training of urgent care physicians.

As we look forward to 2007, we will continue to raise the bar for our organization, and discuss our aspirations in detail whenever we have the opportunity at UCAOA conferences. And as I finish my term as president, I again thank all of you for your support of UCAOA. I have never worked with a better group of people, all of whom care deeply about the direction of our specialty.

I can honestly say there has never been a dull moment and I look forward to seeing you at our spring conference. ■