



## Overheard

■ LOU ELLEN HORWITZ, MA

I confess: I am a lurker (you know, one of those people who go to Internet “chat rooms” and read what everyone is saying but don’t say very much themselves).

The problem with lurkers is that we are the online equivalent of sponges—we soak up information but aren’t giving it back. If there are too many of us, at some point we’re going to run out of water unless someone else is filling the sink.

So, I’ve decided to reform and hope that you will join me. Here’s how:

### UCAOA Online Forums

First, do you even know that UCAOA has online forums? To get there, go to our main page ([www.ucaoa.org](http://www.ucaoa.org)), then click on the farthest right tab and you’re there. Here’s what you’ll see:

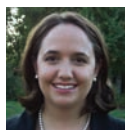
#### Urgent Care Forums

- Starting a New Urgent Care Center
- Running Your Urgent Care Center
- Hospital-owned Urgent Care Centers
- Advanced Billing and Coding in Urgent Care
- Provider Issues in Urgent Care

### Second, what exactly happens in these “rooms”?

If the concept of “chat rooms” sounds like something only a high-school kid would be doing, then you are doing yourself a disservice; our rooms are a professional gold mine.

What happens here, basically, is a nationwide, 24-hour question-and-answer session. And while lurking is definitely permitted, that’s not really why we are all there, is it? So the first thing you need to do is to register, which is 100% free and 99% easy (you have to make up a user name—and a password).



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### The Unspoken Rules

We will e-mail the official rules of our online forums when you register. More interesting, however, are the unspoken rules:

- Do ask questions—but also supply answers for others.

Remember the sponge analogy? It applies even more if you are an active vs. passive sponge, and active contributors do notice. The forum seems to help those most who help others.

■ Remember that this is an area “for the people, of the people, and by the people.” This is a participant-driven area; keep coming back and bring your friends.

- Don’t come on just to sell stuff.

The forums are for people in urgent care to share ideas and strategies and tips, so if you are there only to sell your product, you’ll find your messages disappearing. On the other hand, if you have an expertise in a certain area and are willing to share in a non-commercial way, we’d love to have you (and you may likely end up with a few customers anyway).

Three rules seems like enough. The main point I want to make is—COME. The forums are currently a great place full of activity and we want to be sure that you know about them and join in the exchange.

### Countdown to Conference

I would be remiss if I did not mention that the Annual Conference is now just weeks away.

This is our biggest event of the year, and historically the largest urgent care gathering anywhere. If you aren’t already registered, we’d love to have you join us. It will be a great educational opportunity, and just a great time in general. We have some amazing speakers and lots of exhibitors, plus hundreds of other urgent care leaders just like you. Don’t miss it!

For details on the courses, visit us on the website ([www.ucaoa.org](http://www.ucaoa.org)) or just give us a call (877-698-2262; that’s 877-MY-UCAOA). We’ve redone the site so you can have everything at your fingertips with just a click or two. ■

