



The International Face of Urgent Care



You thought you were alone on an island trying to navigate through the trials of urgent care. You thought you were the only one faced with the clinical and financial challenges.

Hopefully, you have discovered the Urgent Care Association of America (UCAOA), attended one of the conferences, and shared in the delight of collaborating with colleagues who share your questions, your challenges, and your desire to make a difference one patient at a time.

Hopefully, you recognize the important work being done within the organization to ensure that urgent care has a voice, and is represented at the highest levels as a critical piece of the healthcare fabric in this country.

Through the tireless work of members, committee volunteers, and the executive leadership team, UCAOA has made significant inroads into such key areas as quality standards, clinical training, continuing education, accreditation, benchmarking, and national policy development.

UCAOA continues to evolve with the industry and is committed to providing leadership, education, and resources for the successful practice of urgent care and to be the catalyst for the recognition of urgent care as an essential part of the healthcare system.

As our national movement grows, so too do the efforts of our international colleagues, urgent care visionaries like Dr. Joe Djemal and Dr. Nahum Kovalski of TEREM, a network of extremely busy urgent care centers in Israel. Along with Drs. Brendon Stewart, Deena Zimmerman, and Amnon Lahad, just weeks ago the TEREM group wrapped up the first urgent care conference in Israel, attracting 250 attendees and covering such internationally relevant topics as ER overcrowding, electronic health records, and the role of urgent care in the community.

Congratulations to them on a wonderful success.

Flash forward to March 7-9, 2008, when the Accident and Medical Practitioners Association (AMPA) of New Zealand, and the Australasian Society of Emergency Medicine (ASEM) host the first International Conference for urgent care.

In addition to a strong clinical curriculum, this conference will highlight the work being done in New Zealand, Australia, Ireland, and the United States.

I am honored to participate in this forum on behalf of UCAOA, as the representative of urgent care in the United States. Information on the conference is available at: www.ampa.co.nz. I look forward to seeing some of you there.

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Urgent care was recognized as a separate “branch” (specialty) with its own training by the Medical Council of New Zealand in the year 2000. Under the leadership of its executive director, Brenda Evitt, and its medical board, AMPA is leading the way for capitalizing on the international strength of urgent care.

Additional international efforts are underway in Ireland and Australia.

Dr. Ray Power has successfully launched the first network of urgent cares throughout the “Emerald Isle” (Vhi SwiftCare Clinics), and Australia is beginning to look at urgent care as an important national health policy initiative to more efficiently serve the acute care needs of its citizens.

As president of UCAOA, I have made it a priority to support the efforts of these visionary leaders overseas. After all, they actually *are* on islands trying to navigate the trials of urgent care! ■

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