



Until the COVID-19 Vaccine Is Widely Distributed, Keep Testing—and Reporting

When the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention updated their running count of data related to COVID-19 on December 7, a couple of subtle messages highly relevant to the urgent care provider stood out. Yes, the headlines went to the dramatic spike in cases, hospitalizations, and ICU admissions. However, the data also reveal something that emerged in Incidence of SARS-CoV-2 in Preoperative Patients Tested in an Urgent Care Setting, the original research articles featured on page XX of this issue.

In that article, the researchers discovered just how many patients learn that they're sick with COVID-19 only because they were required to be tested before undergoing a procedure.

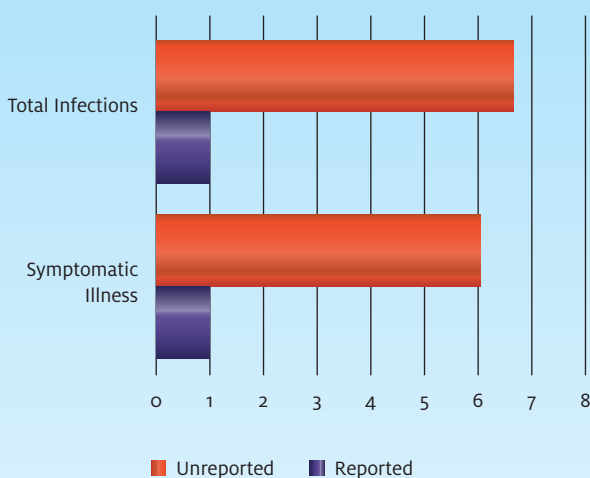
Similarly, as you'll see in the graphs below, amassing COVID-19 data is likely being hindered by the fact that many patients

are asymptomatic (and, so, may be less inclined to get tested), and because too many known cases go unreported. According to the CDC, between February and September 2020, only 1 out of every 7.1 symptomatic cases of COVID-19 were reported. Overall, only one out of 7.7 cases are reported. And an estimated 8 million patients were asymptomatic (out of a total estimated case count of 53 million for that period).

The take-home, even as we await mass immunization, is that proactive testing and efficient reporting to public health agencies are essential and "doable" steps that urgent care operators can support. Given that our industry was largely ignored at the outset of the pandemic, this could be a timely opportunity to continue demonstrating our capabilities and our worth. ■

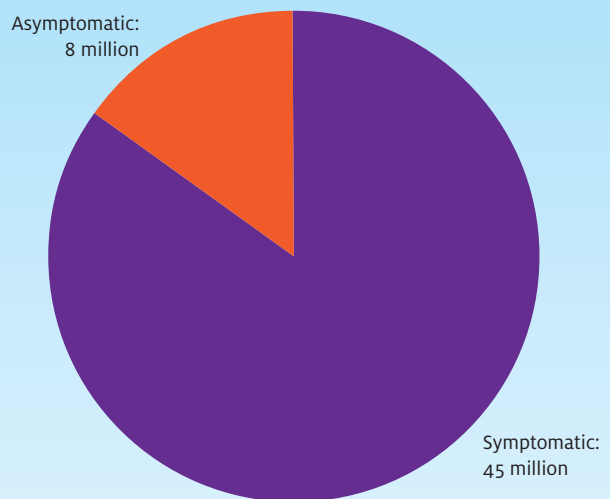
COVID-19: WHAT WE DON'T KNOW CAN (AND WILL) HURT US

Ratio of Estimated COVID-19 Cases Reported:Unreported



Data source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Estimated Disease Burden of COVID-19. Updated December 7, 2020. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/burden.html>. Accessed December 13, 2020.

Total Infections, Estimated: 53 Million



Data source: Estimated Disease Burden of COVID-19. Updated Dec. 7, 2020. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/burden.html>. Accessed December 12, 2020. Accessed December 13, 2020.