



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Kindness of Strangers

■ LOU ELLEN HORWITZ, MA

If you stop to think about it, what you do in urgent care is absolutely astonishing.

You sit in a building all day (and sometimes into the night) and wait for complete strangers to walk in, voluntarily, and offer their bodies to you for healing. On the face of it, it seems like a crazy idea to think that this would work, that anyone would show up.

And yet they do it—on the order of about a million times per year.*

The level of trust that this requires is similarly astonishing. Your patients walk in, never having met you or your staff before, and share their hurts, plagues, and accidents of life, then ask you to fix them. Most of the time, you can do just that.

Some people talk about how hard it must be to work in urgent care, where you don't ever get to know your patients, but the truth is that you just get to know them faster. Granted, everyone has repeat patients that you do get to know well, but many of the people who walk in the door present you with only one hour (or less) to make the connection needed to help them.

This takes serious skills—people skills, diagnostic skills, time-management skills, good teamwork, and ongoing training—culminating in a well-oiled treatment machine that practically runs itself so you can focus on the reason you are there in the first place (i.e., to provide medical treatment to people who need it).

It isn't quite that smooth in real life, but it's closer than would seem possible given all of the complex elements required to make it work.

So the next day you walk into your center, take a moment to appreciate what you are doing, and how unique you truly are.

Five Reasons Working in Urgent Care is Cool

The medicine. It's interesting, challenging, and different every day.



Lou Ellen Horwitz is executive director of the Urgent Care Association of America. She may be contacted at lhorwitz@ucaoa.org.

“You have the opportunity to shape the futures of an industry and a specialty.”

The people. Urgent care attracts some of the most forward-thinking and entrepreneurial individuals around.

The patients. They need you, and they need you *now*.

The satisfaction. Much of the time, whatever it is, you can fix it.

The money. Oh wait, that's not right....

The opportunities. Although urgent care has been around for a couple of decades, it is still in its early stages, and you have the opportunity to shape the futures of an industry and a specialty.

The future is really yours, so come on out and get it. ■

*Projected; proprietary data, 2008.

National Urgent Care Awareness Week is November 10-14

UCAOA is pleased to support the newest event in healthcare: National Urgent Care Awareness Week!

By now, you should have started to hear some news about this initiative and how your centers can participate.

Your participation in Awareness Week, at whatever level works for your centers, helps raise awareness of the services urgent care can provide.

Visit www.ucaoa.org and go to “Get Involved” to learn more about how you can join in this great event!

Special thanks to all the members of the Urgent Care Awareness Committee.