



## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

# What can YOU do for YOU?



I know this may sound like a funny way to start a column. It's a bit confrontational perhaps, maybe even a little insulting. Why is this guy calling me out on the carpet here? What did I ever do to him?

I have been involved in organized medicine for almost 10 years, at varying levels of responsibility. If I have learned one thing along the way, it is this: If you want it done, you better do it yourself! No matter how important, no matter how virtuous, no matter how intuitive... you have to take personal responsibility for seeing it through.

This is especially important in an evolving discipline like urgent care; there are no deep pockets to support a sophisticated staff to generate sophisticated programs to further our interests. There are no big marketing budgets to raise awareness. There are no big corporate sponsors to fund our agendas (think retail clinics!). There are no lobbyists to present our case to policymakers in Washington. There is little to no academic interest in what we do—in fact, most in academia are threatened by our very existence.

Without academic interest, there is very little research dedicated to the discipline, clinical or otherwise. There is no public funding for training programs that ensure we have the highest caliber of clinicians available to staff our clinics.

We are on a veritable island in the “house of medicine,” and no one is going to rescue us because of the value we bring to our patients and to the healthcare delivery system.

That said, we do have the potential to be a formidable collective force. There are over 8,000 urgent care centers in the United States, representing over 100 million patient visits a year.

By contrast, there are almost half as many emergency departments, and a far smaller number of retail clinics.

The Urgent Care Association of America and *JUCM*, *The Journal of Urgent Care Medicine*, are working hard to represent the interests of urgent care and the value we bring to healthcare. However, relying on UCAOA and *JUCM* alone is not enough.

If you want urgent care to be recognized as a critical force in healthcare delivery, then you have to represent it at the grassroots level. You have to sell the whole concept of urgent care to anyone who will listen.

*“Supporting the urgent care community... is critical to giving urgent care a ‘voice.’”*

- Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper.
- Invite your local hospital executives to your clinic.
- Present to your local chamber of commerce.
- Participate in UCAOA's Urgent Care Awareness Week, scheduled this year for November 9–13. Details will be forthcoming on the UCAOA homepage ([www.ucaoa.org](http://www.ucaoa.org)).
- Submit a review article or case report to this journal via e-mail to [editor@jucm.com](mailto:editor@jucm.com).
- Teach residents and students.
- Find an academic partner and do some original research.
- Have your center accredited or certified to show your commitment to quality and safety.
- Come to the UCAOA convention and fall conference each year.
- Support vendors who have supported urgent care.
- Participate in UCAOA surveys

You may not see an immediate return on everything you do, but supporting the urgent care community and advancing the discipline is critical to giving urgent care a “voice.”

Without a “voice”, if an urgent care falls in the woods, will anyone hear? ■

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