



Measuring and Managing

■ LOU ELLEN HORWITZ, MA

You may remember that a few short months ago UCAOA sent out the 2010 Benchmarking Survey. It was a whopper of a survey, requiring respondents to dig very deeply into their processes to share information about staffing and visits and services and more. Finishing all of the sections was a big challenge.

Why did we make it so incredibly complex and detailed? Because that's the nature of the information you, suppliers, and all the stakeholders in our industry are looking for. It's impossible for us to answer "How many physicians do people typically staff on the weekend day shift?" without gathering data at that same level of specificity.

Given that, now that we have all the data collected, it's going to take us some time to compile it all into meaningful, statistically valid information to share back with you. When we do that, I want each and every person who looks at that report to take a moment of silence to thank your fellow urgent care professionals for the time they chose to dedicate to completing the survey.

It was significant, and the entire industry owes them all a debt of gratitude.

However, that doesn't mean that the rest of you who did not respond (or did not receive the survey) are off the hook. Come 2012, we'll be right back at it again, looking for updated, and probably expanded, information.

If you are not currently tracking your visits or staffing or financials—well, you should be. Not just so you can give it to us every two years, but so you are able to benchmark what you are doing versus what your peers are doing.

Without having your own data to measure against the national data, you are selling your practice short. How will you know if you need to consider any adjustment to your practices once you see that data if you don't know exactly what you are doing currently?



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I'm actually not a big believer in the adage, "You can't manage what you can't measure." I think there are lots of unmeasurable things that can be managed. However, there are far more things that really *need* true measurement to be fully understood, so we all better be paying attention to those. We'll help you with the unmeasurable areas too, but that's a column for a different day.

Things to Come

Looking ahead, we are deep in the design and development of the 2011 Urgent Care Convention that will be in UCAOA's backyard, downtown Chicago. We are putting together a compelling, diverse curriculum on measurable and unmeasurable areas of your work, and hope you will be as excited to see that as we are in putting it together.

Chicago's a great town too, and we will be right in the thick of things, so be sure those dates (May 10–13) are already on your calendar for next year.

As Thanksgiving approaches in the U.S., I just want to say how thankful we are for all of you. UCAOA continues to thrive even in a very challenging economy because of your interest in and support of all that we are doing.

There are some new things coming, too (perhaps even before the end of the year), that we are very excited to tell you about. But not quite yet. Almost.

Stay tuned, and happy Thanksgiving. ■