



A New Era for Urgent Care



Spring is here. It's time to shake off the cobwebs of winter and take a fresh look toward the future. With clear eyes, and a little more daylight, our focus is more acute, and our visionary juices start flowing. The Urgent Care Association of America has always been a forward-thinking organization, trying to be a step ahead in a dynamic healthcare arena. Over the last seven years, UCAOA membership has grown sharply, proffering strength of purpose, voice, and financial resources.

As stewards of the industry, we have used our strength to give voice and credibility to our specialty within the healthcare delivery system. And as leaders of the discipline, we have launched specialty development initiatives that have given us legitimacy within the house of medicine. We have tried to represent the industry with respect and inclusion, across all the core competencies, and with an unwavering belief that good governance will protect the future of the discipline and the interests of our members.

With one eye toward the future and one eye mindful of the past, we now stand at the threshold of in a new era for urgent care, one in which we can confidently represent our discipline both as an industry within the healthcare system and as a recognized specialty of medicine, separately but cooperatively.

To that end, for more than three years, the UCAOA Board of Directors has considered the establishment of a physician college to represent the interests of practitioners and advance the specialty with a singular resolve. Behind the scenes, considerable effort has been made to ensure that an independent physician college effectively represents the needs of the discipline, free of special interests and respectful of the advancements made to date.

In the coming months, we will be introducing you to this new organization. Developed in collaboration with UCAOA to provide a focused physician voice on matters affecting the specialty, the new physician college aims to provide a clearer distinction between the discipline of urgent care medicine and the urgent care industry. While there will always be overlap and mutual interests, we feel—and many of you have told us you agree—that the two should be represented separately. We must, however, ensure that such representation is free of conflict and self-interest, as well as be accountable, transparent, and truly democratic.

The founding Board has drafted bylaws reflecting the impor-

tance of good governance, first emphasized by the founders of UCAOA, as the foundation of accountable representation by a non-profit organization. In particular, board term limits and transparency of financial information will be hallmarks. In addition, we feel it is very important that all voting board members receive no compensation for their board-related duties and provide full disclosure of all potential conflicts of interest.

We look forward to the participation of urgent care physicians from around the world in establishing the college as an important center for medical education and research, and, of course, we depend on strength in numbers to adequately support our mutual interests and vision for the future of urgent care medicine.

Thanks to the foundational efforts of UCAOA, the discipline is well-positioned for a bright future. Specialty development initiatives, such as our three existing fellowship programs, modeled on Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education standards, will be expanded and refined as we move forward. Clinical education and policy initiatives will be expanded. Quality and outcomes-based research will be supported.

In addition, the new physician college will partner with UCAOA to contribute expertise and support to *JUCM*, *The Journal of Urgent Care Medicine*, the only peer-reviewed journal in our discipline. Public health and patient education programs will be advanced. And, finally, it will continue to advocate for the specialty of urgent care medicine as a distinctly important part of the healthcare delivery system.

Together, we can make a difference. We look forward to introducing you to this new organization soon and hope you will join us in support of our mission to “foster quality, value, and advancement in the clinical practice of urgent care medicine through research, education, and advocacy for its physicians and patients.” ■

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