



UAB-hosted Case Competition Highlights Innovative Approaches To Urgent Care

■ P. JOANNE RAY

Urgent care took center stage in The University of Alabama – Birmingham (UAB) 7th Annual Health Administration Case Competition. With only three intense weeks to prepare, graduate students from 32 CAHME-accredited health administration programs applied their incredible knowledge to a capstone experience that tested their analytical skills, teamwork and presentation skills on a real-life, real-time case regarding the opening of urgent care centers. As I am sure my fellow judges (including Alan Ayers, Cindi Lang, Laurel Stoimenoff, and Steve Sellars) will agree, we were privileged observers and urgent care was the winner!

This is the first time that urgent care has been the subject of this type of national competition. It attests to the key role that urgent care as a specialty will continue to play in the health care arena as the focus shifts away from the hospital and toward recognition of alternative care delivery channels and issues such as the shortage of primary care physicians, overcrowding of emergency departments, and access challenges. Urgent care centers were keenly represented in the contest as playing a key role in ensuring that convenient access to quality, cost-effective healthcare services is available.

That said, the ongoing growth of the urgent care industry will undoubtedly lead to a greater need for administrative expertise. Steve Sellars noted, "I encourage urgent care operators to consider the many talented students completing their MHA coursework. I'm certain they will represent urgent care organizations just as well as they represented their universities at the UAB Health Administration Case Competition." And, Alan

Ayers added, "Program directors from the graduate programs represented showed a great interest in placing students in non-hospital operating models. The sponsoring group, new to urgent care, is now clearly aware of the benefits that UCAOA will offer to them, from physician recruitment to benchmarking to resources for starting up new centers."

The first, second, and third place teams received cash awards. All participating teams should be considered winners just by virtue of their participation in this integrative case competition. Those who excelled to the top of the competition included:

1st Place: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

2nd Place: University of Minnesota

3rd Place: Rush University

Finalists: Texas A&M, University of Illinois – Chicago, and Baruch/Mt. Sinai College

Honorable Mention: Baylor University, Ohio State University, University of Florida, University of Iowa, University of Pittsburgh, and Virginia Commonwealth University

UCAOA was a significant presence in the competition. More than 25 of the students joined UCAOA to gain access to key resources as they prepared their recommendations. Our esteemed judges brought real feedback and realistic benchmarks to the evaluation of each team's presentation. Further discussion among the participants, leaders, and sponsoring groups will be held in the coming weeks and months to explore unresolved issues from the case, which may provide opportunities to discover even more input and applicable outcomes.

Congratulations to the talented students, kudos to their astute faculty mentors, and thank you to UAB and the UCAOA judges who represented us well. Ultimately, I fully expect that a few bright leaders from this competition will find their way into our industry, bringing with them innovative approaches to the future of urgent care! ■



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