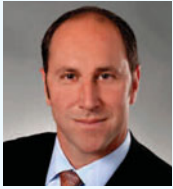




LETTER FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Where Do We Go From Here?



As I was writing this column about visioning for the new year in urgent care, I couldn't help but think of the Alan Parsons Project tune, "Where Do We Go From Here?" Opportunity abounds but risk remains, and there are gaps, so we must not pursue opportunity blindly. Consider the following:

Urgent Care Achievements

- Strong organized medicine representative (UCAOA and its branches)
- Proven, stable trade association (UCAOA)
 - Conferences
 - Education
 - Vendor community
 - Member community
 - Benchmarking
- Creation of appropriate support organizations
 - Urgent Care College of Physicians (UCCOP)
 - Physician-led society (of utmost importance to specialty development goals)
 - Clinical training and education
 - Urgent Care Foundation (UCF)
 - Mission to support education and research on behalf of the discipline and industry
 - Fellowships
 - Clinical and health services research that demonstrates the contributions and value of urgent care in the health care delivery system and within the "House of Medicine."
- JUCM, *The Journal of Urgent Care Medicine*
 - The only peer-reviewed journal in the discipline
 - Uninterrupted monthly publication for the last 7 years
 - A critical forum for both clinical and management aspects of urgent care
- Fellowships in Urgent Care Medicine
 - 8th year of the only clinical specialty training programs
 - Supported and accredited by UCAOA / UCCOP
 - Critical to any specialty development initiative

Urgent Care Gaps and Shortfalls

- UCAOA / UCCOP
 - Lack of quality volunteer army ready to invest the time and donate their expertise on behalf of the discipline and industry

- Member and vendor involvement a must
- Slow growth of individual memberships
 - We only have strength in numbers, and even passive participation is important.
- Muted national health care voice
 - PR/media campaign is needed
 - Political Action Committee/lobbying activities are out of reach financially without significant member/vendor support and organizational initiative

■ JUCM

- Need for quality contributions (articles / research) from the urgent care community, which are very much appreciated but hard to come by.
- Need for advertising support for future growth.

■ Research and Education

- No nationally published research to date, a much-needed megaphone for the urgent care story. Without it, we have no voice.
- Need for an accelerated and generous investment from the urgent care community to support the critical mission of the Urgent Care Foundation.
- Stagnant fellowship growth. Without more fellowships, we cannot generate recognition as a developing specialty.
- Foundation must raise money to support fellowships.

UCAOA and its many branches create the foundation for our discipline and the urgent care industry. We cannot succeed, and perhaps, not even survive without a strong foundation. If we don't rally as an urgent care community with open wallets and a volunteer spirit, we will all be sitting on a house of cards. Get started today by exploring member and vendor opportunities at www.ucaoa.org, www.uccop.org, www.urgentcarefoundation.org, and www.jucm.com. ■

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