



# UCAOA – Accomplishing more TOGETHER!

■ P. JOANNE RAY

Organized medicine and the strength of our “Association” is critically important today. It’s not difficult to imagine why. After all, we are living through some of the most dramatic changes to America’s health care system in more than a century: Accountable Care Organizations, electronic health records, physician quality reporting, health insurance exchanges. And, let’s face it – we didn’t open urgent care centers and embark on our careers just so someone could tell us how to practice medicine or run our “practices.”

Those who started UCAOA 10 years ago did so because they knew the value and the power of organized medicine. They knew that, if we were to grow, thrive, and succeed as individuals and as an industry, we would need to do so *TOGETHER*.

UCAOA consistently brings you urgent care-specific education and updates by:

- Setting the course from the outset with Clinic Startup;
- Enhancing and expanding the clinical and practice management skill sets of new and seasoned staff members;
- Informing owners, operators, and practitioners about how healthcare reform may affect urgent care;
- Providing eLearning and live webinars through the Online Education portal; and,
- Organizing views, statements and presentations to influence state and national leaders.

Recently, we witnessed the partnership between state and national leadership in addressing broad-sweeping regulatory recommendations from the Public Health and Health Policy Committee and the New York Department of Health. There are many chapters yet to be written in that endeavor. But thanks to the tireless efforts and industry experience and expertise of UCAOA board and staff and a very dedicated group of North

East Regional Urgent Care Association volunteers, we were successful in squashing some of the inappropriate recommendations and barriers to practice such as the threat to require urgent care centers to take Medicaid or to limit the number of times patients could come to us. Now, we are focusing on helping to guide the way with the remaining regulations and how they are implemented. If you practice or own a center in New York, and you have not yet read up on the regulations being implemented, please visit the UConnect New York State Working Group at <http://uconnect.ucaoa.org/group/New%20York> for more details. And, send an email to [jray@ucaoa.org](mailto:jray@ucaoa.org) if you wish to become more involved in the solutions.

The changes proposed will not only affect those urgent care center owners, practitioners, and patients in New York, but potentially patients and clinics across the country. The collective voice and energies of local and national entities working together have the power to make a difference.

Organized medicine has an astounding record of achievements in this country. Urgent care is new to this collective endeavor. Last month, Dr. Nate Newman highlighted the beginnings of key agency partnership meetings in Washington, DC. The collaborative influence we can wield will surely help to shape the environment within which we practice and operate.

More and more, media representatives including *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, *The Huffington Post*, and NBC.com (to name a few) are turning to UCAOA representatives as the experts not only about urgent care but about the health care climate in general. We bring a unique perspective to the dialogue and our role is poised to continue to grow.

Together we can accomplish what none of us could have done alone. This is true in the health and public policy, practice management, clinical practice, and patient experience arenas alike. There is so much more to be learned, accomplished, and shared. Reach out to your colleagues. Encourage involvement by your staff. Embrace UCAOA and get engaged with the organization yourself. Contact the UCAOA office today to learn how you can join us and make a difference! ■



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