



# Urgent Care at the Forefront in the ‘New Normal’ of Healthcare Delivery

■ LAUREL STOIMENOFF, PT, CHC

The CVS/Aetna proposed merger is a watershed moment that profoundly underscores the ongoing departure from old school healthcare delivery systems toward a customer-centric approach focused on access, convenience, and affordability.

While some may have been caught off-guard by this and other recent merger and acquisition announcements in the on-demand healthcare sector, those of us in urgent care already recognized this trend in consumer-driven care and have adopted delivery models catering to patient demands and accessibility.

## Never Stop Innovating

As the healthcare delivery model continues to evolve, urgent care remains the industry leader providing urgent and primary care at a reasonable price point, often in a single stop for the consumer. Urgent care operators have been agile innovators at the forefront of the consumer healthcare revolution.

In November 2017, *Harvard Business Review* published an article entitled 3 Changes Retailers Need to Make to Survive that stated, “The retailers left standing are those that figure out how to treat disruption as business-as-usual in an industry accustomed to slow, strategic planning.” It goes on to conclude, “It’s either adapt to the new environment or step aside and make room for a competitor who can.”

We have never been an industry to rest on our laurels (I had to say it); nor will we be in the future. Wise owners hire visionaries, have cultures that allow failure, and never look back. UCAOA’s conference exhibit halls are replete with innovative technologies, services, and products, and it is exciting to see attendees engage with the vendors and embracing opportunities to ensure ongoing relevance and viability.



Laurel Stoimenoff, PT, CHC, is Chief Executive Officer of the Urgent Care Association of America.

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## Focused Innovation

I’ve always thought that monitoring new and established patients was one way of evaluating practice relevance. What technologies and campaigns were great at bringing a *new* patient into your office? What experience did they have in the office that brought them back as an *established* patient?

If one side of the new vs established patient ratio is weak or trending negatively without reasonable explanation, it’s time to innovate. Where in the continuum of patient acquisition, administration, treatment, follow-up, and billing is your greatest opportunity?

## Maintaining the Legacy of Leadership

We collect patient data—both quantitative and qualitative—to understand the best way to provide care and guide future planning. Vigilantly monitoring trends in patient demands and challenging the status quo will sustain our role as industry prognosticators. Consolidations, mergers and acquisitions, and other reshuffling of industry relationships will undoubtedly continue in response to the purchasing behavior of the consumer. We built the urgent care model on principles of customer-driven care, and we now hold the reins to redefine on-demand care and its role in the healthcare mix.

At the forefront of patient-centric transformations, our urgent care leaders educate consumers on their healthcare options, advocate the need for modernization to regulators, and forge stronger relationships with payers in an environment increasingly focused on value. Urgent care sets the tone for today’s burgeoning delivery models, and remains laser-focused on the future to ensure growth and success tomorrow.

To read more of our thoughts on the future of urgent care, download the 2018 State of the Industry whitepaper at [www.ucaoa.org/whitepaper](http://www.ucaoa.org/whitepaper). ■