



# What's Our Rallying Cry?

■ LAUREL STOIMENOFF, PT, CHC

Periodically like to see what other associations are doing on behalf of their members and industries. Recently, I was intrigued by an initiative of the Brewers Association. The Association launched the largest crowdfunding campaign in history to #TakeCraftBack from Anheuser-Busch In-Bev (ABI). Belgium-based ABI has been acquiring smaller, independently owned craft breweries since 2011, so the Brewers Association elected to rally their membership to raise a mere \$213 billion (yes, with a B) to buy ABI. Only pledges, not actual donations, will be accepted unless those pledges reach the targeted purchase price—a hypothetical figure to demonstrate the potential of the Association's membership. Nonetheless, this represents an association orchestrating a message that is being heard by many.

## Identifying Our #TakeCraftBack

It was the simplicity of the message that I found so intriguing. Each day, team UCAOA is engaged in a myriad of industry and member-supporting activities. We do this through multiple channels including, but certainly not limited to, education, advocacy, board-member strategy sessions, benchmarking, media communications, research, committee work, chapter and section support, and the contributions of valued volunteers.

UCAOA is privileged to support a diverse membership who join with equally diverse agendas and expectations. So, what is our singular message we cannot only all agree upon, but also support with a vengeance?

In a recent survey of middle-market healthcare companies, *reimbursement* was cited as the #1 challenge for 2018. Many urgent care copayments have become so high that they represent the bulk of the anticipated payment, while the costs associated with billing the payers for a shrinking percentage of the total claim continue to rise. It baffles me that urgent care centers are not universally recognized as an essential component in the provision of acute primary care services.



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The shortage of primary care physicians is deemed a crisis. Urgent care integration with the PCP practice is a clear solution, yet reimbursement models seem focused on creating disincentives to seek care in the UC setting. So, should our singular message center on fair compensation for the important role we play in keeping communities healthy? Or perhaps we agree that even though emergency departments are overcrowded, patients continue to seek care for conditions that could be cost-effectively cared for in the urgent care center. Should our mantra therefore be focused on breaking down barriers and getting patients to the right care at the right time in the right setting?

## Make Your Voice Known

We want to hear from you. Urgent care's largest convening of key stakeholders takes place at the UCAOA Annual Convention & EXPO, May 6–9 at the Paris Hotel in Las Vegas. I will be accompanied by UCAOA colleagues and Board members who all want to know what you believe our agenda needs to be to ensure member and industry success. While we are committed to our long-term strategic plan, we remain open to responding to needs of our members as they arise.

## Aretha Knew

I have said it before, but I repeat it because it is heartfelt: We are privileged to serve urgent care centers and stakeholders. Cost-effective access to a competent, caring medical provider *today* should be an option for all. The providers and operators who open their doors every day, particularly at times when others don't, deserve fair reimbursement for what they do. Aretha Franklin may have articulated our rallying cry many years ago. We just want a little R-E-S-P-E-C-T. #UrgentCareRespect. ■