

Accreditation—Part of Urgent Care’s Offensive Line

■ LAUREL STOIMENOFF, PT, CHC

We’ve all heard the adage, *The best defense is a strong offense*. Whether entering a battle, participating in sports, or in life itself, the premise is to mount actions that distract the opposition and therefore curtail or abate the enemy’s attack. It’s time we start thinking about our strategy to protect the services we provide to millions of grateful patients.

Accreditation is an offensive play and a proactive measure to defend your organization—and urgent care medicine as a whole.

Thanks to a growing number of urgent care operators playing offense, the Urgent Care Association (UCA) achieved a major milestone in early 2019 when it accredited its 1,000th center. Five years after the launch of its program, UCA now accredits more urgent care centers than any other accrediting body.

UCA established its accreditation program in response to industry stakeholders’ pursuit of a recognition program that would be affordable and customized to the uniqueness of urgent care medicine. As the program matured, UCA sought feedback from the field on its merits. Here is a sampling of what we heard:

- It added *credibility* to the organization’s commitment to quality. Todd Martin, chief operating officer (COO) at Emergency One, stated, “It assisted us in communicating our position in the overall healthcare delivery system and the value we bring to our patients and their families. It not only provided a mechanism for self-assessment on best practices internally, but it served as an acknowledgment to the community, patients, insurance companies, and all other healthcare stakeholders that our urgent care centers meet the highest standards.”
- Steven Hull, COO of Integrity Urgent Care expressed, “UCA accreditation challenged our organization on every

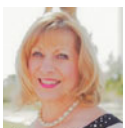
“Accreditation may just be one page in the playbook, but it’s a solid one that’s being embraced by urgent care owners and operators across the country.”

aspect of what we were doing and left us considerably stronger. In short, the UCA has helped *legitimize* our organization as a true urgent care.” Todd Martin agreed, stating, “It has become increasingly important in our State (New York) as lawmakers struggle to understand the definition of urgent care amid mixed messaging from the hospital association and other competitors about our *relevance* in the delivery system and the governance that exists in our practices to ensure the safety of the patient when receiving care in our facilities.”

Perhaps one of the most compelling reasons that we’ve heard from accredited organizations relates to how the process creates a culture of quality and pride within the organization, manifesting in improved retention of talented providers and valued staff members. Accreditation is one way leadership can emphatically demonstrate to internal and external customers that the organization is on a mission to excel.

In today’s climate, it is important that the industry clearly demonstrates that it’s serious about good medicine and continuous improvement. Accreditation may just be one page in that playbook, but it’s a solid one that’s being embraced by urgent care owners and operators across the country.

UCA is hosting two Accreditation Workshops this year; attend and receive access to accreditation experts and a simulated survey experience, and earn credits toward the Certified Urgent Care Management Professional (CUCMP) designation. Seventy-five percent of the attendees from the 2018 AUC workshop are now successfully accredited! Learn more and register at <https://www.ucaoa.org/Education/Events/Accreditation-Workshop>. ■



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