On Demand. *In* Demand

■ LAUREL STOIMENOFF, PT, CHC

The Urgent Care Association (UCA) maintains a comprehensive list of urgent care centers (UCCs) in the United States. Our latest count places that number just under 10,000, and we anticipate that 2020 will be the year we firmly step over that threshold. UCA's most recent *Benchmarking Report* illustrated that the industry grew 9.6% from fourth quarter 2018 to 2019. The *Report* also supports year-over-year creep of UCCs into rural communities and an increase in visits per day from the prior year.

What is clear is that the demand for convenient access to quality healthcare services has not waned. And our evolution is ongoing.

We Have Arrived

Urgent care is being welcomed into the mainstream, whether by our clinical colleagues, the government, or the consumer. Healthcare systems view urgent care as the *front door* to care delivery and leverage it as a patient acquisition strategy. Government agencies have been reaching out to determine how urgent care centers can participate in the event of a disaster or pandemic. The Mission Act specifically identified urgent care centers as a healthcare destination for eligible veterans. And just recently a study was published showing that from 2008-2016 adult visits to primary care providers decreased 24.2% in a commercially insured population, while visits to "alternative venues such as urgent care" increased 46.9%.[1] In short, *we have arrived*.

Only the Paranoid Survive

But we need to listen to the late Andy Grove, who had an amazing career culminating as the CEO of Intel. He said, "Success breeds complacency. Complacency breeds failure. Only the paranoid survive." Urgent care's success came from being scrappy, nimble, and disruptive—and we need to figure out how to keep that edge. Otherwise, we risk blending into the mainstream and losing the forward-thinking momentum that has manifested in

YOY Growth – Urgent Care Centers
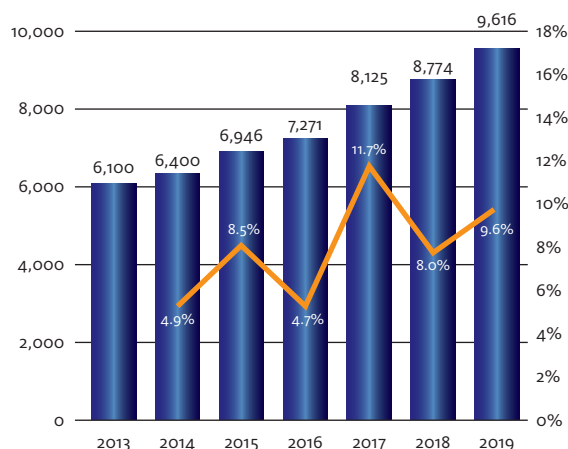
Data source: Urgent Care Association *2019 Benchmarking Report*.

over 9,600 healthcare destinations in record time.

Be Part of the Solution at the UCA2020 Hackathon

So how do we keep that edge? The essence of UCA's mission is to advance the industry. UCA2020 will be held May 3-6 at the Paris Hotel in Las Vegas. It will include a Hackathon, where our members can join colleagues in thought leadership breakout sessions. We are borrowing the concept from the computer world and applying it to advancing urgent care. And we want to hear from *you*.

These sessions will be fun, fast-paced, and provocative and we know you'll take home valuable insights that you can apply in 2020 and beyond. Because, let's face it, we're all *in it to win it*. And we only win when we run faster and ahead of the rest because we're a bit paranoid. Bring your energy and your brain to the Hackathon. Together, we've got this! And stay scrappy, my friends. ■

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

Reference
1. Ganguli I, Shi Z, Orav EJ, et al. Declining use of primary care among commercially insured adults in the United States, 2008–2016. Available at: https://annals.org/aim/article-abstract/2760487/declining-use-primary-care-among-commercially-insured-adults-united-states. *Ann Intern Med.* Accessed February 12, 2020.