

Push the Button

■ LOU ELLEN HORWITZ, MA

Over the past several months, various member groups and committees have been working to finalize our advocacy priorities for 2022–2025. This is no easy feat because there’s a lot we want to do for you.

What we’ve had to remember through this process is that the path to progress often involves doing less, not more. By doing less we can focus our attention and resources on those initiatives that are of vital importance to our industry, and that we have a good chance of influencing with enough leverage.

That leverage comes from relationships with:

1. Governmental agencies – We’ve been working on this for many years through collaborations with several groups within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR), and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).
2. Other associations—We’ve also been working on this for a while and are collaborating more with organizations like the American Academy of Physician Assistants and the American College of Emergency Physicians. They have already won battles we are now fighting, and by working with these more seasoned groups we are able to advance parts of our goals more quickly than we could on our own. We don’t agree on everything, but where we do it can be an accelerator.
3. Members of Congress and other policymakers – We’ve also stepped up our advocacy work by hosting congressional briefings, meeting with key staff, and collaborating with others on lobbying efforts. We have also partnered with Northeast Regional Urgent Care Association (NERUCA) and California Urgent Care Association (CALUCA) chapters at the state and local levels. In addition, our own political action committee, UCAPAC, has made a number of donations to key members of the Senate and the House of Representatives



Lou Ellen Horwitz, MA is the chief executive officer of the Urgent Care Association.

who serve in leadership positions or those who have oversight of legislation impacting the urgent care industry.

It also comes from the collective voice of everyone in 10,000 urgent care centers—or it should. And here’s where we arrive at the title of this column: we need you to make more noise. When we send out an Advocacy Alert (by email) requesting that you take action, we need you to “push the button.” Tens of thousands of voices can make a lot of noise, but not if they remain silent. The last time we sent an alert less than 10% of you took action.

Theodor Seuss Geisel’s *Horton Hears a Who!* was published in 1954. In addition to being a wonderful story about the compassion of an elephant, the book teaches that sometimes *every single person* has to make some noise to save a world. Our industry is a bit bigger than Whoville (the size of a speck of dust), but the lesson remains—no one believed that Whoville existed until every single Who “no matter how small” shouted out—and only then were they finally heard and believed.

We know that members of Congress track constituent responses and that’s all about numbers! When you see these Advocacy Alert emails, don’t assume “one more won’t matter.” In advocacy work you never know what small thing is going to get something over the finish line. Advocacy is often a long, long, long road...and every step gets us closer. What you do matters.

In the next few weeks UCA will be announcing our new advocacy priorities and strategic initiatives. Our main objectives include educating members of Congress and regulatory agencies on the urgent care industry and engaging these policymakers to make tangible policy changes in support of the urgent care industry and the patients we serve. Stay tuned for these announcements by the end of the year.

If you are interested in learning more about our recent and upcoming advocacy efforts and priorities—and I hope you are—check them out on ucaoa.org. We’ve added an Advocacy heading in our topline navigation so it’s easy for you to find. You can learn about the positions we’ve taken in the past year, and what we’ll be focusing on for the next several years.

We’ve also invested in technology to make it easy for you to participate in Advocacy Alerts. So next time you get an email from us with a picture of the U.S. Capitol on it, go ahead and push that button. Every voice matters. ■