



PAs Aren't Just 'Assisting' in Providing Urgent Care

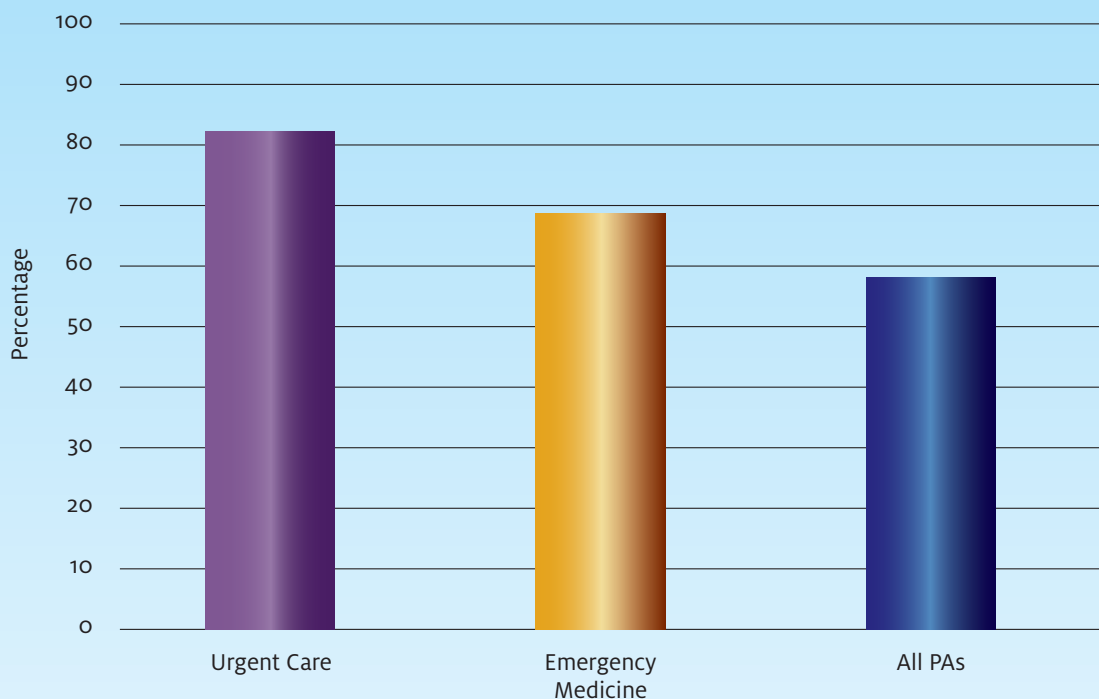
In this issue's Health Law article, What's the Best Policy for Unlocking an Urgent Care's Doors When a Provider Isn't Present? (page 19), author Alan Ayers, MBA, MAcc points to the capabilities of advanced practice providers as one rationale some urgent care operators use when opting to stay open for business when a physician isn't present. You could even go a step further and make the argument that the degree of direct care provided by APPs is one thing that distinguishes urgent care from other settings.

One study of the role physician assistants play in various practice settings revealed that urgent care PAs are entrusted with direct patient care to a greater degree than their peers in

emergency medicine, primary care, retail, and student health centers. The graph below compares the proportion of PAs who perform procedures (eg, suturing, incision and drainage) in various settings.

PAs who practice urgent care are by far the most likely to be performing minor surgical procedures; 82.3% of PAs in urgent care conduct minor surgeries, compared with 69.2% of PAs in emergency medicine and 58.7% of all PAs. In this way, PAs in urgent care are more like those in emergency medicine than all other PAs combined. That PAs in urgent care perform the highest percentage of minor surgical procedures is unsurprising, given the scope of practice of urgent care medicine. ■

PERCENTAGE OF PAS WHO PERFORM PROCEDURES IN URGENT CARE VS OTHER SETTINGS



Data source: Ritsema TS, Cawley JF, Smith N. Physician assistants in urgent care. *J Am Acad Physician Assistants*. 2018;31(8):40-44.