

Why My Urgent Care Group Joined UCA—and Why Yours Should, Too

■ MAX LEBOW, MD, FACEP, FACOEM

The Urgent Care industry is at an inflection point. From barely earning a footnote in the Affordable Care Act 12 years ago to becoming a vital part of the nation's healthcare delivery system, Urgent Care center operators and providers can be proud of our accomplishments. Yet even now, many healthcare leaders at the highest levels have failed to recognize the importance and potential benefits of bringing the Urgent Care industry to the table as a full partner.

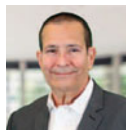
Some of this changed during the COVID-19 pandemic. While other healthcare facilities and private medical offices either closed or significantly reduced services, America's Urgent Care centers remained open, performing the vital services of COVID screening and testing, as well as providing treatment for acute and chronic illnesses unavailable elsewhere.

Recognition of the importance of Urgent Care has advantages and disadvantages. With increased visibility comes increased scrutiny from government entities, policymakers, and within the House of Medicine.

This is where membership in the Urgent Care Association becomes important. Through the years, the UCA has built relationships with organizations like the CDC and local and state health departments, legislators, and policymakers at all levels and partnered with industry leaders to continually promote the Urgent Care industry. The voice of the UCA is strong, and its strength comes from its members. By joining the UCA, your group will join this voice and benefit from its collective power, ensuring that our Urgent Care centers remain strong and have a say in our future evolution to improved healthcare quality and access both here and abroad.

Aside from the advocacy benefits of joining UCA, there are dozens of reasons your group should join. Among them:

- **Educational Resources** – UCA offers the most comprehensive menu of educational resources for Urgent Care



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medicine, for both providers and managers. Many presentations offer CME, and most are free to members.

- **Benchmarking Reports** – These UCA-produced reports are the most in-depth and comprehensive study of the Urgent Care ecosystem. The data presented establish Urgent Care benchmarks to help organizations develop meaningful key performance indicators and aspirational goals.
- **Conferences and Online Events** – At the Annual Urgent Care Convention, regional conferences, and online meetings, UCA members stay abreast of national, regional, and local trends and changes in the UC environment so your UC group can plan for the future.
- **UCAccess** – This important resource collates healthcare headlines, articles, and recently published studies that impact the Urgent Care industry, keeping UCA members informed of the latest events in the practice and management of Urgent Care centers of all sizes.
- **Regular Publications** – Though not owned by the UCA, *The Journal of Urgent Care Medicine* is the official publication of the Association and is the first peer-reviewed journal dedicated to the practice of Urgent Care medicine. *Urgent Caring* is published by the College of Urgent Care Medicine (CUCM) and includes free CME and discusses topics important to providers.
- **Accreditation Services** – Urgent Care accreditation is an evolving standard for payers looking for a way to differentiate quality Urgent Care centers. This also offers specialty accreditation of occupational medicine and pediatric Urgent Care centers.
- **Affiliation with the College of Urgent Care Medicine** – The College offers even more educational resources. CUCM also offers an Urgent Care Medicine Fellowship to those physicians and APPs who have shown dedication, commitment, and excellence to our specialty.

Whether your Urgent Care group has one clinic or 100, you will reap great rewards by joining me and others in becoming members of the Urgent Care Association. Together, our voices will ensure that Urgent Care continues to grow and takes its place as a leader in healthcare delivery. ■