

Community

■ Lou Ellen Horwitz, MA

Every time I am able to gather in person with other Urgent Care professionals, I come away enriched and invigorated for the future of our practice. No matter the challenges that we may be facing as an industry or a specialty, there is a stubborn optimism that infuses these events and the people that participate as speakers, exhibitors, planners or attendees. These events are perfect examples of what the Urgent Care Association (UCA) stands for, which I described in last month's column: We Commit, We Collaborate, We Advance.

In September, October, and November, I was honored to join UCA's Chapters—the North East Regional Urgent Care Association (NERUCA), the Southeast Regional Urgent Care Association (SERUCA), and the California Urgent Care Association (CalUCA)—for their annual conferences. Each one of them was a thoughtfully curated experience tailored to local needs that also kept an eye on the national stage. These smaller meetings allow for deep conversations about regional issues, hands-on learning for clinicians, and the great networking and exhibits you have come to count on at the UCA Urgent Care Convention. The shorter timeframe and lesser travel also make them ideal for sending team members who cannot get away for the national Convention. If you have never attended a Chapter conference, I strongly suggest you plan on it for next year in addition to joining UCA in Dallas, May 3-6, 2025.

Speaking of Dallas, registration will be open by the time you read this! The team has been hard at work creating something special and unique for you to enjoy, and we'll look forward to seeing everyone in May at the gorgeous Hilton Anatole for the Convention and Foundation Celebration. Register early and tell your friends!

As I write my December columns, I always look back at the previous December to see where we ended that year



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and evaluate what progress we've made. Last year's column focused on work that was underway in our Commission on Diversity to create a new commitment statement and Commendation for our Certification and Accreditation programs. As you look around your centers, do you see an environment that's more welcoming to all than it was a year ago? I hope you do. In 2025, we'll be launching that new Commendation and look forward to awarding it often.

We have other grand plans for 2025 that should directly benefit your clinical practice and operations, and we want you to be part of those plans. If you'd like to solve your staffing challenges, have better benchmark data for negotiating with payers, or improve the recognition of the value of what you do, we have ways to make that happen.

The Urgent Care Association and the Urgent Care Foundation will both be running end-of-year fundraising campaigns to make sure we can continue our work to change legislation that's holding you back, create new payment structures to get you paid more fairly, and fund research to establish Urgent Care as a recognized specialty. I hope that when you get the "call to action" to support us that you will look around at your workplace challenges and be moved to contribute to our efforts to fix them together.

To close out this year, it's also time to congratulate our colleagues at the Urgent Care College of Physicians and College of Urgent Care Medicine. Their tireless efforts to find creative ways to represent the value of all clinicians practicing Urgent Care medicine have resulted in 2 excellent, collaborative organizations. The good news coming from the clinical corners of our world is just getting started.

It's been a year of accomplishments for Urgent Care. Momentum is starting to build and spread, and I know there is more to come in 2025 and beyond. As we head into the new year, we look forward to sharing all of the happenings together and continuing to be inspired by all of you every day. If you aren't yet a member of UCA, please make 2025 the year that you join us and be a part of the great collective evolution of Urgent Care into the future. ■