

UCAOA Study Shows Hospitals Leading the Way in Urgent Care Center Ownership

Will reported rise in patient visits challenge this growth?

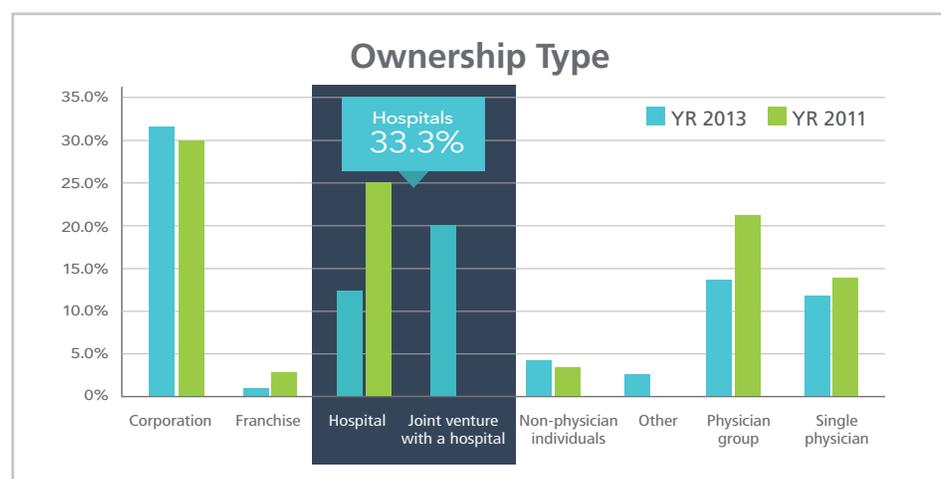
To meet patient demands, create revenue and add new patients, hospitals are making urgent care part of their ambulatory care strategy. For example, patients who use urgent care might be referred to the main hospital for further care, or they could be introduced to a larger healthcare network that the hospital belongs to.

In an urgent care market expected to grow 6% a year until 2018*, hospitals are leading the charge. According to the 2014 Benchmarking Survey Report from the Urgent Care Association of America (UCAOA) — a membership association that provides leadership, education and resources for the successful practice of urgent care — this rapid growth is fueled by:

- Hospitals including urgent care as part of their ambulatory care strategy, access to growth capital, and a model that caters to the needs of consumers and the patient experience
- The shortage of primary care physicians and, therefore, access to them
- The newly insured as a result of the Affordable Care Act (ACA)

Ownership

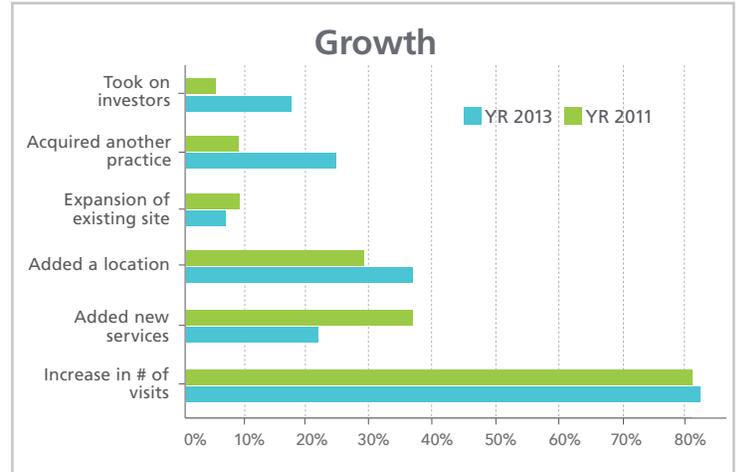
Hospitals are clearly adopting an urgent care model: The study reports that hospital ownership of urgent care centers in 2013 was 33.3% of the market, which is up from 25.2% in 2011 and slightly more than 2013 corporation ownership (32.7%).



Growth

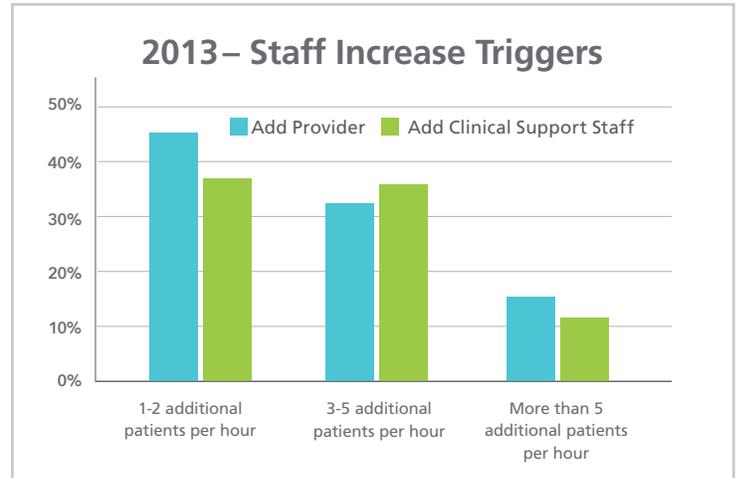
Urgent care growth, from adding a location to patient visits, is also evident. Greater than 80% of urgent care centers reported growing organically through an increase in patient visits from the 2011 calendar year to 2013. This increase is critical to the strategy of managing patient expectations, especially during a staffing shortage. Urgent care visitors want extended hours, short wait times and lower healthcare costs.

The concern that underlies this exciting evolution of hospital and urgent care ownership is whether the shortage of healthcare professionals, aptly pointed out by the study's authors, along with the reported increase in patient visits, will challenge urgent care success.



Staff increases

Related to increased patient visits, the survey also reported that patient volume is the primary trigger for adding additional staff. The majority of respondents (45.2%) said that when their urgent care center averaged one to two additional patients per hour, that became a trigger to increase provider staff, while 16.2% of respondents said it took more than five additional patients per hour to trigger staff increases.



Almost 17% of recruited physicians are locum tenens.

-UCAOA Survey

"The UCAOA survey helps make the case that staff planning is integral in a fast-growth environment such as urgent care," said Jeff Waddill, Division Vice President of staff care, a locum tenens company that is a part of AMN Healthcare. "Early signs of trouble from rapid growth include difficulties in filling shift schedules and staff burnout. A staff plan that considers temporary and permanent clinicians can avoid such problems while containing costs, improving employee and patient satisfaction and decreasing adverse events."

To learn more about AMN Urgent Care Staffing Services, call **(866) 352-5959** or visit www.amnhealthcare.com/urgentcare

