

Urgent Care Braces for Unprecedented Growth

UCAOA Survey results help pave a plan for the future

In its 2014 Benchmarking Survey Report, the Urgent Care Association of America (UCAOA), which provides education, leadership and resources for the successful practice of urgent care (UC), said that one of the reasons the urgent care industry continues to grow is “the shortage of primary care physicians and, therefore, access to them.”

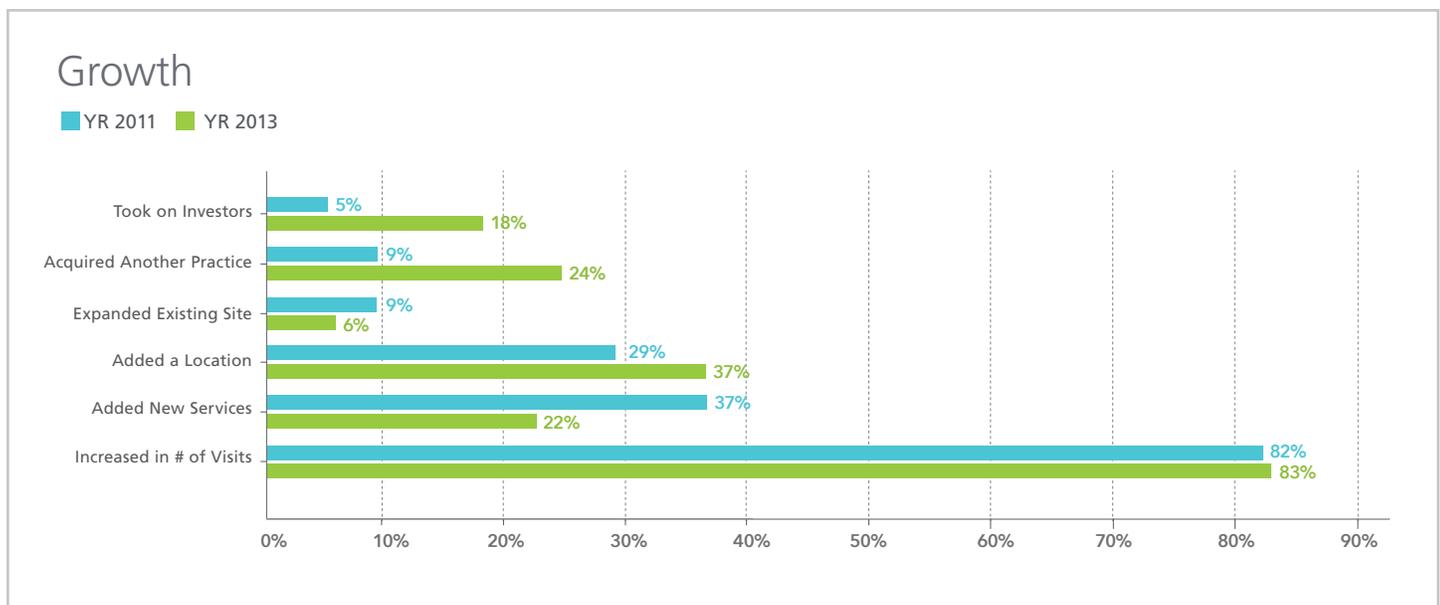
The catch-22 is while the UC bottom line blossoms from an expanding patient base, the very same types of practitioners hit hardest by the shortage — family practice doctors, internal medicine physicians, nurse practitioners and physician assistants — are also the ones who keep UC centers running. While UC centers surge, they, too, are in competition with hospitals and other facilities that are picking from the same talent pool. So the questions becomes: How long before the shortage affects the attainment of high-quality practitioners and the growth of UC centers?

“In an urgent care market expected to grow 6% a year until 2018, there is no better strategy to surviving the shortage and meeting patient expectations than having a UC staffing plan in place,” said Jeff Waddill, division vice president of Staff Care, a locum tenens company that is part of AMN Healthcare.

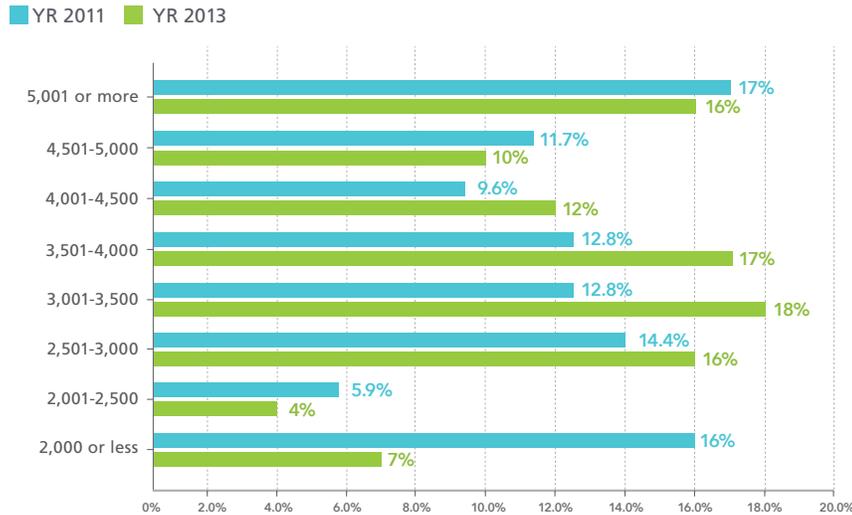
With that said, the 2015 Benchmarking Survey Report not only supports the need of a staffing plan, but it also helps you plan for growth.

Organic growth

According to the survey, over 80% of UC 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.



Square Footage: Urgent Care Only



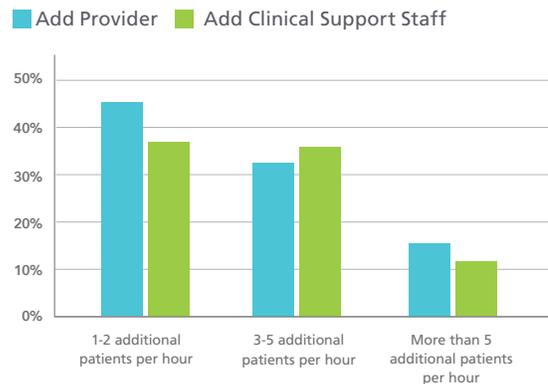
Facility size

Facility square footage is also growing along with the number of patients. Square footage of UC centers increased from 3,284 average square feet based on 2011 data to approximately 4,085 square feet in 2013. According to respondents, facility growth took place in all facilities between 2,500 and 4,500 square feet. The study authors said they assumed that more space is being devoted to patient care activities and experience versus document storage and administrative needs.

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.

2013: Staff Increase Triggers



“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 Waddill. “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



We've earned The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval™



Workforce Solutions—MSP

