

NERUCA AND UCA TEAM UP FOR A MAJOR VICTORY FOR URGENT CARE IN MASSACHUSETTS!

BUT ONGOING VIGILANCE AND ACTIVISM REQUIRED



Massachusetts was looking for ways to support struggling community health services and with little warning urgent care centers and retail clinics were in the crosshairs. The Massachusetts House had proposed an 8.75% tax on commercially billed charges (versus receivables). H.4639 would have been devastating to an urgent care industry that, according to the Massachusetts Health Policy Commission, **had reduced ED traffic by 30%**. The Senate language was far more reasonable and did not impose a tax.

We are pleased to report that on July 31, the Massachusetts Legislature adjourned for the year without reaching consensus, ensuring that no bill would be forwarded to the Governor. In late June, the North East Urgent Care Association (NERUCA), a UCA Chapter, and the Urgent Care Association (UCA) moved into action to defeat the tax and other provisions that would have upended the urgent care industry in Massachusetts and would have set a troubling national precedent.

Representatives of NERUCA met with state legislators and a grassroots advocacy campaign was launched. It is likely the tax and other urgent care-related provisions included in the bill (H.4639) will resurface next year when the legislature reconvenes. NERUCA and UCA will work together to launch an early offensive, including a campaign to educate lawmakers about urgent care centers and their contribution to better health care delivery and cost savings. UCA and NERUCA teamed up with members from the retail clinic community, including the Convenient Care Association in efforts to ensure state representatives understood the ramifications of H.4639.

Special thanks to Jonathan Halpert, MD and the NERUCA Government Affairs Committee as well as UCA's lobbyist, Camille Bonta. These individuals worked tirelessly to squelch game changing legislation. Shaun Ginter, CEO of Massachusetts-based CareWell Urgent Care and UCA Board Member, was quoted in the [Boston Globe](#) stating that this legislation ran the risk of shutting down the entire urgent care industry in the state of Massachusetts. The bill's potential outcome inspired NERUCA and UCA to begin discussions about starting our own Political Action Committee (PAC) to assume more offensive strategies. UCA will keep our membership updated on next steps.