



Improving Antibiotic Stewardship in Urgent Care

Antibiotic resistance is a serious public health concern that affects patient care, safety, and healthcare costs. The Urgent Care Association of America (UCAOA) is proud to represent thousands of urgent care centers and professionals in one of the United States most rapidly growing healthcare markets, urgent care medicine. Urgent care centers treat more than 160 million patients each year, the vast majority of whom present with acute, infectious disease-related symptoms, such as cough, sore throat, and fever. The proportion of patients with such symptoms seen in the urgent care setting is significantly higher than those seen in traditional office based primary care and internal medicine clinics.

As such, the UCAOA recognizes the vitally important role our clinicians can play in the responsible use and preservation of antibiotics while focusing on the health of patients. The UCAOA is committed to ensuring urgent care medicine supports the White House National Strategy for Combatting Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria. We will strive to meet the White House plan's year 2020 goal of reducing inappropriate outpatient antibiotic use for monitored conditions/agents by 50% from 2010 levels. We will do so via patient education, training and education of both clinical and non-clinical staff, clinical decision support tools, data collection, evidence-based antibiotic stewardship practices and research.

The Antibiotic Resistance Crisis

Antibiotic resistance is driven by the inappropriate use of antibiotics in humans, animals and agriculture. Leading medical and public health organizations from around the world, including the World Health Organization (WHO) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC), have warned of a "post-antibiotic" era in which common infections and minor injuries which have been treatable for decades can once again become deadly. The CDC and WHO consider antibiotic resistance to be an increasingly emergent threat to national and global health with potential and likely dire consequences if antibiotic use in all settings (humans, animals, and agriculture) is not reduced.

The White House Combatting Antibiotic-Resistance Bacteria vision statement is included below:

"Vision: The United States will work domestically and internationally to prevent, detect, and control illness and death related to infections caused by antibiotic-resistant bacteria by implementing measures to mitigate the emergence and spread of antibiotic resistance and ensuring the continued availability of therapeutics for the treatment of bacterial infections."

This vision will require all sectors of the healthcare system (hospitals, long-term care settings, primary care, urgent care, telemedicine and animal/agriculture) that prescribe or use antibiotics to do their part in finding solutions to reducing inappropriate antibiotic use and helping to preserve the utility of these life-saving drugs.

Improving Antibiotic Stewardship in Urgent Care

As a rapidly expanding healthcare sector, urgent care provides an estimated 160 million patient visits each year. Compared to other specialties urgent care providers see a significant percentage of patients with acute, infectious disease-related symptoms. This results in both appropriate antibiotic prescribing as well as a greater opportunity for antibiotic stewardship

UCAOA Position on Improving Antibiotic Stewardship in Urgent Care Centers

UCAOA is committed to leading the Urgent Care sector in improving its antibiotic prescription practices through the following four areas:

- 1) Education and training: Improve provider, staff, and patient literacy on antibiotic resistance and enhance provider training on antibiotic stewardship.
- 2) Clinical decision support: Lead the effort to provide clinical decision support technologies for Urgent Care providers through electronic health records and e-prescribing systems.
- 3) Antibiotic use data collection: Provide guidance and support for Urgent Care practices to collect data on antibiotic use and incorporate quality control measures on inappropriate antibiotic uses.
- 4) Evidence-based practice: Advance evidence-based stewardship practices in Urgent Care through innovative clinical research and stewardship program evaluation.

Notice and Disclaimer

The Urgent Care Association of America (UCAOA) was founded in 2004 to advance and distinguish the role of urgent care medicine as a healthcare destination and to support the ongoing success of UCAOA membership through education, advocacy, community awareness, benchmarking and promoting standards of excellence.

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This position statement is approved and endorsed by the UCAOA and its partner organizations the Urgent Care College of Physicians (UCCOP) and the Urgent Care Foundation (UCF).