



Urgent Care Association of America

Statement Submitted to the United States Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs

Hearing on Pending Health Care Legislation

July 11, 2017

The Urgent Care Association of America (UCAOA) and its members applaud Senator Bill Cassidy's introduction of the Veterans Emergency Room Relief Act of 2017 (S. 1261) and appreciate the consideration of this legislation by the U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. If enacted, this legislation will provide relief to the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) overburdened health care system and establish urgent care centers as an important health care access point for our nation's veterans.

The UCAOA represents an industry of nearly 7,400 urgent care centers throughout the United States. Urgent care centers play a dominant and important integrative role in health care communities across the country and are uniquely positioned to help address the significant health care access issues facing our nation's veterans.

Urgent care centers have the capacity to care for veterans in the communities where they live. Veterans in need of urgent care are oftentimes unable to access a primary care physician or VA facility in a timely manner and are seeking care in hospital emergency departments, oftentimes unexpectedly finding themselves responsible for the cost of that care.

This legislation would provide veterans access to urgent care centers for non-emergent health care needs, such as lacerations and broken bones that need immediate attention, as well as other common illnesses and injuries that can worsen if left untreated or are not addressed in a timely manner.

The VA has highlighted the essential need to partner with providers in communities across the country to meet the steep increase in demand for care for veterans. Not only will the Veterans Emergency Room Relief Act serve to help meet the health care needs of veterans, but it has the potential to reduce health care costs to the VA system.

UCAOA believes it is important for all veterans to have a regular source of health care. Access to urgent care in the community should be used as appropriate and not as a substitute for a patient's medical home. Co-management with the patient's dedicated primary care provider is a central tenet of urgent care delivery. UCAOA's member surveys have shown that urgent care centers serve a crucial nexus for the American health care system, ensuring patients are referred to a necessary source of primary and preventive care.

The Veterans Emergency Room Relief Act of 2017 is an important step toward ensuring that our nation's veterans receive the highest level of quality, timely health care. UCAOA members thank the members of the U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs for their consideration of this important legislation.