Perfection doesn’t come easily, but when it comes to the accreditation survey for Circle Health Urgent Care, that’s exactly what was achieved…perfection.

“UCA made it easy for us to review our standards, revise, renew and update what needed to be taken care of in order to achieve accreditation,” said Tracie McPadden, Director of Emergency and Urgent Care Medicine.

“The Urgent Care Association accreditation manual is amazing. It’s formatted nicely and is like a cookbook full of details.”

Circle Health Urgent Care has four locations in Massachusetts, all staffed with experienced urgent care physicians from Merrimack Valley Emergency Associations. They also staff registered nurse to improve physician and patient satisfaction. “The physicians have an RN with them every step of the way,” McPadden said.

Last year, Circle Health started seeing Occupational Medicine patients in their clinics. They serve many municipalities such as the police department, fire department and school systems, and these groups help to keep Circle Health deeply rooted within their communities.

One of the things McPadden explained that was different about their centers is that every quarter their urgent care physicians have a meeting with the hospital emergency department. During this meeting they discuss quality issues, processes, and protocols on different cases and talk about when it’s appropriate to send patients to the ED. Because of these meetings, McPadden said there has been a reduction in the amount of patients needing to be sent to the ED.

“Our insurance company was pushing for us to earn accreditation for our centers and UCA had the most robust program for urgent cares,” McPadden said.

“We went through the UCA book of standards line by line. We tightened up and improved our quality across all centers.”

To learn more, visit ucaoa.org/accreditation or call 877-698-2262
LEVERAGE UCA RESOURCES TO ACHIEVE ACCREDITATION

- Attend an Accreditation Workshop or other UCA events to network with those in the accreditation process and to help you prepare for an on-site survey
- Participate in live webinars to learn more about the Accreditation process
- Invest in the UCA Accreditation Standards and Preparation Manual to establish best practices in your organization
- Purchase the Policy and Procedure Manual to augment and standardize your organization’s policies

Because Circle Health is backed by Lowell General Hospital, they are able to provide a promise of complete connected care to their patients. The urgent care physicians will follow up with primary care physicians and coordinate access to specialists if needed.

“We are proud to employ twenty-eight physicians, all of whom are board certified in emergency medicine and/or family practice,” McPadden said. “These physicians are under the same leadership as the hospital and there is a good flow back and forth between the two entities. In addition to our RNs, we also employ nurse practitioners, and physician assistants.”

Circle Health’s recent accreditation with the Urgent Care Association was a renewal from their initial accreditation several years ago.

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Bringing on occupational medicine was the third interaction with UCA Accreditation for Circle Health. McPadden explained that this renewal wasn’t too difficult, and that “the best part was being able to upload everything into the new portal (UCA’s Certification Bank)”.

When asked if she had any advice for urgent care centers who want to earn UCA Accreditation – McPadden stated “take the time to go through everything with your staff and the people who support your organization. Have them help you write your policy – they are the experts and they are the ones taking care of the patients.”

She also stressed the importance of having a system to catalog and maintain your documents. “Keeping it organized is the key in maintaining your accreditation.”

McPadden appreciated the ease of being able to reach out to the accreditation department at UCA with questions and the fact that they were there to help with the process.

“Since we received a perfect score on our most recent accreditation renewal, our urgent care centers are helping our hospital go through their accreditation process,” McPadden said. “It’s efficient and makes sense to help another organization figure out the methods we have already figured out.”

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