

Healthcentric Advisors Develops Guidelines for Urgent Care Settings *Standards may address concerns raised with MinuteClinic approval*

PROVIDENCE – With seven MinuteClinics slated to open their doors in late 2014, newly published standards for urgent care centers' communication may help ease primary care providers' concerns. Healthcentric Advisors led a collaborative process with providers and stakeholders to develop Safe Transitions Best Practice Measures for Urgent Care Centers, the first-known standards for urgent care communication during patient care transitions. The newly developed best practices:

- Are the first to define standards for urgent care communication with primary care
- Address primary care providers' concerns about urgent care interfering with team-based care
- Establish consistent expectations for urgent care centers across the state

The team used a multi-stage approach to develop the best practices, including reviewing the medical literature and obtaining provider input on the concepts and definitions.

"Urgent care isn't going away," says **DR. BRIAN MONTAGUE**, an internist at The Miriam Hospital whose clinical practice focuses on patients with HIV/AIDS. "There is an accessibility with urgent care that we can't seem to reproduce

in most clinical settings – but at the same time, we don't have good communication between urgent care and primary care. Issues identified in urgent care may not be communicated [to a patient's internist], and that can lead to gaps in quality of care. We really need to organize this communication and partner in the care of these patients."

The urgent care best practices can help urgent care centers partner effectively with their primary care colleagues.

"Setting standards for how urgent care centers communicate is a very positive development," says **GUS MANOCCHIA, MD**, senior vice president and chief medical officer at Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island.

Dr. Manocchia chairs the multi-disciplinary committee that helped Healthcentric Advisors to create the best practices. "Over the past few years, the Rhode Island health care community has worked hard to transform our primary care infrastructure, but after-hours care remains an issue. On nights and weekends, patients may go to urgent care centers – and primary care providers need to be aware of these visits to provide continuing care. Making communication consistent from urgent care back to primary care supports team-based care, and enhances patient safety." ❖

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