

Framing the Discussion – Primary and Urgent Care

Definition of Primary Care from American Academy of Family Physicians:

“A primary care practice serves as the patient's first point of entry into the health care system and as the continuing focal point for all needed health care services...Primary care practices provide health promotion, disease prevention, health maintenance, counseling, patient education, diagnosis and treatment of acute and chronic illnesses in a variety of health care settings”

Definition of Urgent Care (no universally agreed upon definition):

- Care for unscheduled patients with acute illness and injury not immediately threatening to life or limb but that could progress if not treated within a short period of time
- No agreed upon definition of time urgency of “urgent care”
- Some would argue urgent care is a construct from suburban and urban areas that arose in the 1980s onward – is “urgent care” an irrelevant construct in rural areas?
- The definition of primary care and family medicine incorporate urgent care
- Continuum of urgent care to emergency care can be difficult to define depending on the setting and medical condition