

# Marketing Insights: Urgent Care for People with Dogs



Recently upon picking my dog up from an overnight kennel stay, I noticed in the lobby a “PAWS Chicago” magazine, which is a publication of the no-kill shelter foundation bearing the same name. Flipping through the pages, I came across an [ad](#) for ImmediateMD, which offers urgent care services—not for pets, but rather, for people—because:

“We know how important your pet’s health is to you. We also know you need to maintain your health to maximize the time you can spend with your pet.”

Furthermore:

“ImmediateMD is an urgent care center designed to treat YOU in a timely manner so you can get back to the important things in life like playing with your pet.”

What struck me about this advertising for “people urgent care” in a “dog magazine” is that it’s directed at individuals who live a particular lifestyle involving their animals. According to the [ASPCA](#), over 40% of U.S. households have a dog. Dogs are creatures of habit so when they can’t get their daily walk or play time because “master” is ill, such minor illness or injury disrupts the entire household. As the owner of an 85-pound Collie named Winston, I can relate to this well.

Pages of the “PAWS” magazine contained additional ads I could relate to...the brand of car I drive, outdoor activities I enjoy, and home-related services I am prone to buy. As a consumer who’s healthy, insured, and who places a premium on my personal time, I turn to urgent care first whenever I have a personal medical need. The array of advertising in this publication seemed to fit me like a glove.

Coincidence?



Whenever you think you the life you lead is unique, think again. There are millions of other Americans who share your political views, media preferences, leisure activities, and brand loyalties. In marketing, a “cohort” is a “group of people banded together or treated as a group.” And an affinity group is a “group of people linked by a common interest or purpose.” One way to impact consumers whose lifestyle aligns with a particular service, like urgent care, is to engage in affinity marketing.

As the nation’s populace has become more diverse and as media has shifted from the “big three” networks, local newspapers and national news magazines to highly niche Internet and social media resources, marketing has likewise become far more individualized. Instead of buying Tide detergent, a Ford vehicle, and Stouffer’s frozen dinners, consumers are now just as likely to buy private label from ALDI, take Uber instead of driving, and pick fresh veggies from their community garden. People can no longer be painted with the same “mass” brush; the number of unique segments of the population has expanded exponentially.

In order for urgent care to reach the unique cohorts who have a need for urgent care services, it must expand its number of advertising channels. That starts with understanding the needs, desires and preferences of the “typical” urgent care patient. They tend to be those who:

[Live active lifestyles](#) which leads to periodic illness and injury.

Are proactive in managing their own personal health and are aware of the cost and services of different health care providers in the community.

Value and seek to maximize their discretionary time, due to heavy work and family obligations.

Have private or government-sponsored insurance that offers urgent care as an in-network benefit.

Have funds to pay the increased co-pay differential of urgent care over primary care.

Such personal attributes can describe a wide variety of consumers ranging from upwardly rising young professionals living in urban apartment high rises to suburban “soccer moms” who balance career and family obligations with grace and style. The key is their lifestyle indicates a need for urgent care.

Upon identifying a cohort who historically utilizes urgent care, next look at their activities, interests, and media habits. For urgent care cohorts, affinity may be found not just in pet ownership, but in outdoors activities like hiking, cycling or kayaking; in organized athletics ranging from children’s sports leagues to community 10Ks and marathons; or in health/wellness interests such as yoga, organic foods, or “combat-style” training. Identify the [media outlets](#), including [social media](#), which tap into those interests and then demonstrate how urgent care is relevant to helping the cohort maintain its “active lifestyle.”

*Check back for more marketing tips and strategies we’ll be rolling out in May to help centers highlight Urgent Care Awareness Month. And send any specific marketing questions or topics you’d like to see addressed to [dwallheimer@practicevelocity.com](mailto:dwallheimer@practicevelocity.com).*

This resource was first published prior to the 2019 merger between DocuTAP and Practice Velocity. The content reflects our legacy brands.

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