Using Immigration Physicals to Enhance Operating Margin Alan A. Ayers, MBA, MAcc Content Advisor, Urgent Care Association of America Vice President, Concentra Urgent Care Dallas, Texas

Urgent care is a "volume-driven business"—meaning once recurring costs like salaries, rent, utilities, advertising and depreciation are covered, each incremental visit contributes directly to the bottom line. To increase volume and enhance the profitability of their centers, many urgent care operators turn to "ancillary services"—generally cash-only services administered by urgent care providers that leverage existing infrastructure but do not entail treating minor injury and illness.

For more information on common ancillary services in urgent care, see: <u>Boosting Revenue by Working Harder—or Smarter?</u>, Journal of Urgent Care Medicine, February, 2008, pg. 29.

A common ancillary service for urgent care providers is "Immigration Medicine"—documentation of physical exam, vaccinations, and lab tests required by the United States Citizen and Immigration Services (USCIS) for every non-U.S. citizen desiring a change in his/her immigration status.

In order to practice Immigration Medicine, a physician must have a "Civil Surgeon" designation, which according to www.uscis.gov entails locating the USCIS District Office serving the provider's state and sending:

- A letter to the District Director requesting consideration
- A copy of a current medical license
- A current resume that shows four years of professional experience (excluding residency)
- Proof of U.S. citizenship or lawful status in the United States
- Two signature cards showing name typed and signature below

There is no separate form or application required. However, there are only a limited number of designated Civil Surgeons appointed to each area and new applicants will be turned away or waitlisted if there is already a sufficient supply of Civil Surgeons in their community. Once designated as a Civil Surgeon, a provider will be listed on the USCIS website and may begin offering Immigration Physicals to the general public.

Paperwork and Examination

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides technical instructions for conducting the physical examination on its website at http://www.cdc.gov/immigrantrefugeehealth/exams/ti/civil/technical-instructions-civil-surgeons.html. Current USCIS vaccination requirements include:

- Mumps
- Measles
- Rubella
- Polio
- Tetanus and Diphtheria Toxoids
- Pertussis
- Haemophilus influenzae type B
- Hepatitis B
- Any other vaccine-preventable diseases recommended by the Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices

Although the actual physical exam is not particularly time consuming for the doctor, there is a lot of paperwork involved for the front office staff. Front office staff will need to be trained in this documentation—flow sheets or checklists (such the one provided in Appendix 1) can facilitate transactions and assure all documentation is complete.

Patients are required to bring several items to the physical:

- Patient Information Form
- Form I-693 (see Appendix 2)
 - Patient should complete Section 1 in advance of the appointment.
 - Clinics providing immigration physicals should also keep the forms on-site.
- Vaccination records, showing proof of vaccination, which includes:
 - Type of vaccination administered
 - Date administered
 - Physician who administered the vaccination
- Copies of previous test results, if applicable
 - HIV, Tuberculosis Skin Test or Chest X-Ray
- Photo identification

Once the front desk staff reviews all materials, it determines which immunizations and tests have been administered and which are needed. Necessary vaccinations are administered and a physical examination is conducted by the Civil Surgeon. The I-693 Form specifies different examination components dependent on the age of the patient. Laboratory tests may also be required as part of the examination requirements—samples are collected and sent out by the clinic staff and once results are received, they are documented by the physician on the I-693 Form.

The completed original I-693 Form, with the Civil Surgeon's signature, is sealed in an envelope along with a copy of the patient's photo ID and chest x-ray (if applicable) and provided to the patient to submit unopened to INS with his/her application for processing.

Revenue Opportunity of Immigration Physicals

Immigration Physicals constitute a cash-only business that entails assuring an applicant is current on all required vaccinations, conducting tests for HIV, Syphilis, and Tuberculosis, and providing a physical examination by an authorized Civil Surgeon. Fees come from processing the paperwork, conducting the physical exam, and administering necessary tests and immunizations.

USCIS does not have a set or recommended fee schedule for Immigration Physicals so pricing is up to the individual provider. Typically an urgent care center will charge a base fee of \$75 to \$150 for the physical and then charge a la carte for vaccinations, tests or x-rays administered resulting in a total visit charge of \$250 to 300 or more. To simplify pricing, some practices will offer an "all inclusive" immigration physical for \$400 to \$450 or more. A sample Immigration Physical Charge Ticket is available to UCAOA Members on UConnect. With moderate volume in a metropolitan area, immigration physicals can easily add \$100,000 or more to a center's net collections.

When setting pricing, thought should be given that families tend to come for immigration physicals together. A married couple with two children could easily generate \$800 to \$1,200 in cash revenue in a single appointment. Applicants with USCIS also span the economic spectrum—from Ph.D. engineers to day laborers—so price elasticity may be determined by the applicant profile in your community. To capture business and keep word-of-mouth, pricing must be competitive relative to other Immigration Medicine providers in the community.

It's also important to "hold firm" on pricing. Some cultures are accustomed to bartering and will attempt to "talk down" or engage other antics to secure a lower price—yielding price for just one patient may establish a reputation that a center's pricing is negotiable and result in an expectation of discounts for all. Likewise, paperwork should never be released to a patient without payment in full. When Immigration Physicals are promoted as a "cash only" service—onus falls on the patient to seek reimbursement from an employer, insurance, or any other third party.

Marketing of Immigration Physicals

Because the duty to obtain an Immigration Physical falls on the applicant, those requiring the service will generally look to the USCIS website, inquire of their Congressman or local immigration office, or ask friends and family where to go. Although some urgent care providers will develop relationships with local immigration attorneys and advocacy groups, providing marketing materials for them to display or hand out, generally referrals are directed by word of mouth and some providers see fairly significant immigration physical volume without any paid marketing at all.

There may be operational factors, however, that determine how appealing a facility is to certain immigrant groups. For instance, does a facility have available both male and female Civil Surgeons? Some cultures prohibit a patient from seeing a provider of the opposite sex. Is the facility open on Sunday? Some religious groups hold Friday or Saturday as holy days. Is the staff bi-lingual or is a translator available? If there are large immigrant populations in your community, it may be useful to enlist the assistance of ethnic advocacy groups in providing translation services. And is the facility accessible to a bus line? In urban areas it's common that recent immigrants lack reliable transportation. Applicants have been known to drive three hours or longer to another metropolitan area if there is a provider who better meets their needs.

Because Immigration Physicals bring new patients to the urgent care center, they provide an opportunity to "educate" patients who are less familiar with the US medical system as to when to utilize urgent care for their family's personal injury and illness needs. Patients who are satisfied with their Immigration Physical experience should return to the center and tell friends and family to do likewise.

Walk-in vs. Scheduled Appointments

Although most urgent care centers treat illness and injury on a walk-in basis, they use scheduled appointments for immigration physicals. Typically, walk-in clinics see declines in visit flow during the mid- to late-afternoon, mid-week, and seasonally during weekend hours. The ability to direct immigration physicals to these timeslots can result in better utilization of fixed staff and facility investments without affecting overall wait times. A simple scheduling process using an appointment book typically available from office supply stores will facilitate this process at your front office.

The only limitation is that the times that may work best for the provider are less convenient to applicants—if the center chooses to perform Immigration Physicals during "peak urgent care times" (such as Saturday morning), it should consider adding additional front office staff and/or providers to avoid extending waits in the core urgent care business.

Conclusion

High fixed costs and third-party payer reimbursement in urgent care mean that after a "breakeven" volume of patient visits is attained, additional visits serve to enhance the center's operating margins. Ancillary services like Immigration Physicals have been embraced by many urgent care operators as a way to increase profitability through relatively high priced visits that incur no Accounts Receivable carrying costs. Key is to have providers who are engaged and willing to seek the Civil Surgeon designation, learn the requirements of an Immigration Physical examination, and provide a quality patient experience that will generate word of mouth referrals.

Appendix 1: Sample Process Flow and Quality Assurance Checklist for Immigration Physicals

Chart Creation: Items to be assembled into the patient's chart prior to consultation with the physician.

Patient Information Sheet* Medical Questionnaire* Copy of Previous Immunization Records Immunization Record (Top Section)* **Copy of Previous Test Results** Physical Form (Top Section)* Tuberculosis Skin Test (PPD)* or Proof < 90 days Old **Photo Identification** Results of Chest X-Ray if < 6 Months Old **HIV Testing Consent Form**** Pregnancy Form - Females Over Age 15* Consent for Vaccines* *Samples of forms are provided to UCAOA members through the UConnect portal. ** Each state provides a template for informed consent—download the appropriate form by visiting your State Department of Health website. Physician's Examination: Items to be completed in the chart after the physician's physical examination. Civil Surgeon Copy of I-693 Form **Copy of Tuberculosis Skin Test (PPD) Copy of Chest X-Ray (If Positive PPD) Copy of Immunization Record Copy of Photo Identification Bloodwork Results** Patient's Packet: Items to be returned to the patient upon payment and discharge. **Provider's Cover Sheet Letter* Copy of Immunization Record Photo Identification Copy of Tuberculosis Skin Test (PPD) Copy of Chest X-Ray (If Positive PPD) Copy of Bloodwork Results** NOTE: Patient <u>does not</u> receive the I-693 Form. This goes in the INS envelope. INS Envelope: Items to be sealed into the envelope patient returns to Immigration & Naturalization Service. 3 Remaining I-693 Form Copies **Original Immunization Record Copy of Photo Identification Copy of Chest X-Ray (If Positive PPD)**

NOTE: Bloodwork results are <u>not</u> included in the INS envelope.

Appendix 2: Sample Form I-693: Report of Medical Examination and Vaccination Record

A writable PDF version is available for download at: U.S. Citizenship and Immigrations Web Site

OMB 30. 165: 501). Equin. 169:011 Department of Humeland Security U.S. Cittorochip and Immigration Services Examination and Vaccination Record	Part 2. Communicable Diseases of Public Health Significance (Cont.d)
START HERE - Type or print in CAPITAL letters (Use black ink)	
Part 1. Information About You (The person requesting a medical examination or vaccinations must complete this part) Family Name (Last Name) Full Middle Name	Positive (class X-ray required)
Home Address: Street Number and Name Apt. Number Gender:	Initial Screening Test Result and Chest X-Ray Determination:
City State Zip Code Phone # (Include Area Code) no dather or ()	Chest X-ray not required (medically cleared for TB for UNCLS) Chest X-ray required date to TB sign or yraptions, or the no laminosupportation (e.g. ERS) Chest X-ray required date to initial screening unit results Chest X-ray required the No. TST or KDFA recoptions
Date of Birth (mm (dd/5339) Place of Birth (Clty-Town-Pillage) Country of Birth A-Number (if any) U.S. Social Security # (if any)	Caser.X-vey required case to minut screening seer resums (Less very required case to minut screening seer resums (The villa surpease must clarify specify the TST or IGRA exception in the "Remarks" field below:)
Applicant's Certification	4. Cheet X-Ray: Required based on TST or 1678A result, or if specific TST or 1678A exceptions upply, or for an applicant with TB signs or symptoms or immunosuppression (e.g., 1877). Almah a copy of X-ray separt.
To entire the angular of rejective made United Steens in text at man approximate the instantion in text 1 and in process when it is destinated in Part 1 at the first 1000 Age percent of Medicined Examination and Very Continuous Research and the instantional in the region of the first instantion was the research and processed and the made of the stanting of the stanting of the first instantion of the region of the stanting of t	Date Chen X-Ray Date Chen X-Ray Results Taken Read
or provided file-ishared information or documents with regard to my medical exam, I understand that my immigration beautiff derived from this medical exam may be revoked, that I may be encowed from the United States, and that may be subject to civil or criminal penalities. Signature - Do not sign or date this form until instructed to do so by the civil surgeon Date (monida/3555)	Mareia Normal Normal Normal Absormal (Describe restits in remarks.)
Part 2. Medical Examination (The civil surgeon completes this part)	TE Classification Findings (shock only if chort x-ray wax performed): No Class A or Class B TB Class B1 Pollmonery TB Class B2 Pollmonery TB Class B, Other Class Condition (now. TE).
1. Examination	Class A Pulmonary TB Disease Class B1 Evers Pulmonary TB Class B1 Evers Pulmonary TB Class B1, Lieset TB Infection Condition (non-TB) Remarks: (Include any signs or symptoms of TB, additional twos, and therapy given, with stop and start does and any changes.)
Date of First Date(s) of Follow-up Examination(s) if Required: Examination Date of Exam Date of Exam	лежных сцинает вар эдро на узирован на каз вомноми того, кам истору дачен, того пор наи запачает нак научаецем
Summary of Overall Findings: No Class A or Class B Condition Class A Conditions (see 2 through 5 below) Class B Conditions (see 2 through 6 below)	
 Communicable Diseases of Public Health Significance Tuberculous (TB): An initial accreaing near either a Tuberculin Skin Test (TST) or an Interferon Gamma Robert Assay (IGRA) is required 	
A. Tuberceloris (TE). An initial versating two, other of Tubercella falls Two (TES) or an Interface General Rabass August (GORA) is required for the first plantament by your of equire and two above for a falls and an above for a fall season and a year of equire and re-best of intervention or a birthy fived gove include displicible flatter. The civil surgeon should perform one type of initial screening test only, followed by further evaluation, if a restort (Cells VES) and the civil surgeon should perform one type of initial screening test only, followed by further evaluation, if a restort (Cells VES) are described.	
1. Tuberculin Skin Test (TST): Not administered (TST exception applies)	
Date TST Applied Date TST Rend Size of Reaction (non)	
Result: Negative (4mm or less of induration) Positive & 5mm; chest X-ray required)	
 Interferon Gamma Release Assay (IGRA) (for acceptable IGRAs consult the Technical Instructions and any updates posted on CDC's Web site at http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dq/civil.htm); 	
Not administered (IGRA Name of Test Date Blood Sample Drawn exception applies)	
Fem:1-60 (Rev. 025/10)N	Pens 1-691 (der. 50-2510)(F. Page 2
Part 2. Medical Examination (Continued) B. Syphilis	Part 2. Medical Examination (Continued) 5. Vaccinations (See Technical Intractions at http://www.ede.gov/ncided/dq/civil.htm for list of required vaccines.)
Serologic Text for Syphilis (Required for applicants 15 years and older) Date Screening Run Screening Noureactive	Vaccine History Transferred From a Written Record Vaccine Gives Completed Series Waiver(t) to Be Requested From USCIS
Screening contractive Screening Reactive, Ther 1:	Date Date Date Date Date Date Date Date
Confirmation Nonrescrive	Vaccine Received Received Surgeau mumatery "Var State Age unmadery mumatery "Var State Age unmadery mumatery unmadery mumatery unmadery drawricht haber? Appropriation indications Transferient and the state of the
No Class A or Class B Syphilis, Class A Syphilis, Class A Syphilis, Class B (with residual Syphilis (untreated) deficit, and treated in the past year)	Specity DT Viscolate DTP
Remarks: (Include any therapy given with doses and dates.)	Specify Ti U
	Viscine: Yap □
C. Other Class A Class B Conditions for Communicable Diseases of Public Health Significance Findings:	IV LI
No Class A/B Condition Gramuloma Inguinale, Class A Lymphogramuloma Venereum, Class A Chancroid, Class A Genocribae, Class A Hansar's Disease (Leprosy, Infectious), Class A	MODE (Marshe Manus, Pachalaja et i manuschast et rether combassion of the
Remarks: (include any therapy given and any counseling or referrals.) Hanzen's Disease (Leprony, Noninfactions), Class B	Traccines are given, gently recolmenty):
	386
 Physical or Mental Disorders With Associated Harmful Behavior No Class A or B Physical or Mental Disorder 	Hepatici B Varicella
Physical Mental Disorder, With Associated Harmful Behavior, Class A Physical Mental Disorder, Without Associated Harmful Behavior, Class B	Paemacoccal
Remarks: (Include diagnosis, with likelihood of harmful behavior to recur, therapy given, and any counseling, or referrals.)	Referenza Referenza
4. Drug Abuse Drug Addiction	Reputitis A
No Class A or B Drug Abuse/Addiction Substance (Drug) Use, Lissed in Section 202 of Controlled Substance Act, Class A	Munitysescal
Substance (Drug) Use, Not Listed in Section 202 of Controlled Substance Act, But With Associated Harmful Behavior, Class A Prior Substance (Drug) Use in Remission, Class B	Give Copy to Applicant
Remarks: (Include any therapy given, rehabilitation, counseling, or referrals.)	Results: Applicant may be eligible for binater waive(s) to indicated above: Applicant may be eligible for binater waive(s) to indicated above: Applicant may be eligible for binater waiver beaut on sulfgions or neural convictions. Vaccine history complete for each vaccine, all represents may. A-Dinables (if any)
	Applicant does not meet immunication requirements.
	Remarks: (If noeded, provide any remarks; e.g., reason for contraindication)
Form 1-693 (Rev. 0.025/10N) Page 3	
	From 1-690 (Rev. 0025110)Y Page 4
Part 2. Medical Examination (Continued)	Part S. Civil Surgeon's Certification (Do not sign form or have the applicant sign in Part 1 until all health follow-up
6. List other medical conditions, Class B other (e.g., hypertension, diabetes)	requirements have been met.) I certify under penalty of perjusy under United States law that: I am a civil surgeon in current status designated to examine applicants
Part 3. Referral to Health Department Other Doctor/Facility (To be completed by civil surgeon, if referral was required	seaking certain immigration benefits in the United States; I have a currently valid and unscripted license to practice medicine in the state where I am performing medical examination; I performed this examination of the person identified in Part I of this Form 1-693, when having made always reasonable effort to variety that person whom I examined is the person identified in Part I; that I
and made)	performed the examination in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Technical Instructions, and all supplemental information or updates; and that all information provided by me on this form in true and cornect to the best of my knowledge, and behind:
Type or Print Name of Doctor or Health Department Receiving Required Referral Date of Referral (mm/dd/3202)	Type or Print Full Name (First, Middle, Last) Signature
Address: (Street Number and Name, City, State, and Zip Code) Daytime Phone # (Include Area Code) so dather or ()	Address (Street Number and Name, City, State, and Zip Code) Date (non-tidd);3339)
Remarks: (Include name of medical condition and reasons for referral.)	
	Nume of Medical Practice or Health Department
Part 4. To Be Completed by Physician Or Health Department Performing Referral Evaluation	Daytime Phone # (Include Area Code) no databas or () E-Mail Address
The applicant identified on this form was referred to me by the civil surgeon named in Part 5 of this form. I have provided appropriate evaluation/treatment, having made every reasonable effort to verify that the person whom I evaluated/treated is the person identified in Part 1.	Part 6. Health Department Identifying Information (If completed by State or local health department on behalf of a
Type or Print Full Name of Evaluating Physician or Health Department Signature	refugee, place a stamp or seal where indicated.) Type or Print Name (Place State or local health
	department stamp/real below)
Address: (Street Number and Name, City, State, and Zip Code) Date (mm 6dd)2000)	Signature
Name of Medical Practice or Health Department Daytime Phone # (Include Area Code) no databas or ()	Date (non-idd/))))) Daytime Phone # (Include Area Code) no dacher or ()
Remarks: (Attach a separate sheet of paper, if needed.)	
	Part 7. For USCIS Use Only (Not to be completed by the civil surgeon)
	212(g)(2)(3) Blanket Waiver for Vaccination Granted
	Remarks (if needed):
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Ferm 1-997 (flee 0205/10)N Page 5	Ferm 1-93 (Jan: 0035/0)N Page 6