2024 Advocacy Award
Awarded to: Ochsner and Premier Health Private Radiologic Tech (PRT) Program

Working with the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners, the team led crucial initiatives, navigating the state requirements for PRT practices, and lobbied for program approval, as well as approval of a virtual remote supervision operating procedure. Below are the biographies submitted by each awardee.

**Gerry Cvitanovich, MD:**
Dr. Gerry Cvitanovich (aka Dr. Gerry) has been involved in Urgent Care for over 20 years and has experience in multiple different Urgent Care scenarios. He started with a stand-alone clinic in Kenner, Louisiana and opened a second location 3 years later. His centers were the first non-system owned centers in the country to achieve Joint Commission Accreditation. Eventually, he took a private equity investment, renamed the company MHM Urgent Care, and went through rapid expansion including adding occupational medicine. In 2017, MHM was sold to the Ochsner Health system, and Dr. Gerry now serves as Chief Strategy Officer for Ochsner. His responsibilities include operational and administrative support for Urgent Care, Occupational Health, Student Health, Employee Health, and Executive Health.

Dr. Gerry has been a member of the UCA since 2003, was elected to the UCA Board in 2022, and currently serves as Treasurer. He’s involved in both the Bylaws committee and the Advocacy committee.

Outside of Urgent Care, Dr. Gerry has been the elected Coroner for Jefferson Parish, a community of 425,000 people since 2012, and is the current President of the Louisiana State Coroner’s Assn. Additionally, he and his family own Drago’s Seafood Restaurants, which has 6 locations.

Dr. Gerry and his wife Heidi have four children. He’s a big sports fan and is also a lover of all things Mardi Gras. He was King of the Argus Parade in 1998, and currently is a member of the Krewe of Hermes. You can see Dr. Gerry in an all-male dancing group called the Dead Rock Stars that performs in the Muses Parade every year.

**Kevin DiBenedetto, MD:**
Kevin DiBenedetto, MD, has been a driving force in the Urgent Care industry for over two decades. As founder of Premier Health, Dr. DiBenedetto, or Dr. D. as he is affectionately known, and his partner, Dr. Graham Tujague, opened their first clinic in 1999, in partnership with a well-known hospital, making Premier Health one of the first Urgent Care operators to specialize in health system partnerships. Today, Premier manages the day-to-day Urgent Care operations of health system joint venture clinics across 10 states.
Dr. DiBenedetto has played key roles in advancing UCA’s initiatives in the areas of antibiotic stewardship and opioid prescribing guidelines. He has also been instrumental in ongoing industry lobbying efforts for legislation favorable to patients and the Urgent Care industry, such as the passage of the Mission Act in Congress, giving our veterans access to Urgent Care services for the first time. He has made support for the communities Premier serves a top priority through sponsorship of local athletic programs and grass-roots initiatives like “Stuff-the-Bus,” which collects and distributes school supplies to children of families that couldn’t afford them otherwise. Dr. DiBenedetto supports St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, and the Muscular Dystrophy Association. He has also supported physician care outside the United States through medical mission work in Haiti. Last year, he received Outstanding Achievement award at the UCF Celebration and After Party in 2023.

**Lori Noel, MSN, RN, CNL, CNOR:** Lori is a Master’s prepared Clinical Nurse Leader with expertise in leading organization-wide, inter-professional quality improvement initiatives. She is enthusiastic about improving patient outcomes and empowering teams to design process improvements using Lean principles. In her role with Ochsner Urgent Care, Lori assumes responsibility for strategic planning, direction and overall accountability for Patient Relations, Risk Management, Ethics and Compliance, Quality Assurance, Education Department, Infection Control and Employee Health. Lori has extensive experience with clinical quality indicator data benchmarking, analysis and application. She is passionate about projects and programs that optimize organizational performance and operational efficiency.

Recent key achievements include two Workforce Development programs which Lori serves as the administrator leading design and implementation: Ochsner Urgent Care Private Radiology Technician (PRT) Program and Ochsner Urgent Care MA Certs Medical Assistant Program. Lori also created and serves as the council chair for the Urgent Care, Occupational & Employee Health LEAN program. In the past two years, this program has graduated 19 new Lean Certified employees and produced 33 projects.