

I am introducing legislation that would require the Department of Health to license urgent care centers.

Each year in the United States more than 150 million patient visits are made to urgent care centers for the treatment of acute illness and injury. This number is expected to rise as more Americans gain health coverage through the Affordable Care Act in the next few years. Furthermore, growing prominence of urgent care facilities is expected to increase due to the lack of primary care physicians, especially in rural areas, emergency room delays, high cost of health care treatments as well as an increased desire for convenience and scheduling flexibility for patients.

Currently, urgent care centers are not licensed or regulated, with the exception of those clinics that are operated by a hospital. In those instances the clinic would be licensed as a hospital or ambulatory surgical center, depending upon the services provided and the licensure of the parent facility.

My legislation will require the Department of Health to establish separate regulations and licensure standards for urgent care centers in order to ensure the quality of care for Pennsylvania citizens that utilize these centers as part of their health care continuum.