



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Promise of Spring

■ LOU ELLEN HORWITZ, MA

I am a Southerner, born and raised. We didn't get many snow days when I was going to school. And yet, outside my window today it has been snowing for 10 hours, with no sign of stopping.

When we are transplanted—into a new home, a new job, a new relationship, a new challenge—we have some choices to make. We can hold onto the past or to our outdated vision of what the future should have been, or we can embrace our reality and start shoveling the car out of the snow.

In dealing with change, it helps to have some small victories early and often; they can provide enough encouragement to “stick it out” through the transition. I think we all have had that feeling of needing a win, even a small one, just as a symbol for ourselves that everything is going to be OK.

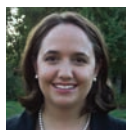
As managers and leaders (regardless of our formal place on the organizational chart), it is important for us to help our colleagues find those small victories when they are going through a transitional period.

For instance, are you...

- bringing in an electronic medical record system?
- expanding your hours or services?
- adding new staff?
- adding a new location?
- reorganizing the supply closet?

Even the little changes can completely throw your urgent care center's smooth operations off track for a while.

While most of us have been educated in some level of change management strategy (e.g., include all stakeholders in the planning, communicate well and often, deal with cultural as well as process issues, etc.), we also know that the hardest part is that murky period after the change has been announced and implemented, but before it is fully integrated. This is the time when leadership is truly needed, and where you can start planting the small victories.



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How do you do this? By making sure the ground is fertile (you have created a safe environment for people to learn new things, ask questions, and have failures and learn from them) and the gardener (yep, that's you and the rest of your leadership team) is attentive. When that first person (or 21st person) finally “gets it,” make sure they are getting recognition and celebration from you. Over time, your small victory plantings will start to flower and then bear fruit.

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Our Own ‘Small Victories’

We have been very lucky here at UCAOA. We have had lots of small victories, and we have all of you to thank for that. Your great feedback on the new website, the overwhelming success of the first-ever Fall Conference, the launch of this increasingly excellent journal, and our rapidly expanding membership are all very exciting for the UCAOA staff and board.

So, we're having a little celebration of our own this spring; perhaps you've heard about it.

If you haven't already registered (and we are looking forward to seeing the hundreds of you who have!), please consider yourself invited to join us May 9-12 in Daytona Beach, FL for a grand event full of fellowship and learning and celebration of all that we have accomplished together—plus some glimpses of all of the new things that we are working toward for the future. Full details and registration information are available on the UCAOA website (www.ucaoa.org).

More to come! ■