



Cloudy Crystal Balls

■ LOU ELLEN HORWITZ, MA

“Dewey Defeats Truman!”

CHICAGO TRIBUNE, 1948

“Prediction is very difficult, especially about the future.”

NIELS BOHR

“The empires of the future are the empires of the mind.”

SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL

If any of you have ever written for publication, you know that little twinge of fear that by the time your words are published they will be completely outdated.

By the time this is in your hands, you will probably either be standing outside a ballroom in the Daytona Beach Hilton during our annual conference, or in your own urgent care center just after our conference is over. I wish that I could see into the future and be able to give you exciting details on the conference attendance and our plans for next year, but this column will have to wait for that until July.

What we *will* be doing is bringing you daily updates from the meeting via e-mail and the UCAOA website, so if you are not already on our e-newsletter list, quickly visit us at www.ucaoa.org and click “Join Mailing List”. We’ll be sharing some of our benchmarking survey results, tidbits from some courses, the 2008 conference site, and much more.

What We Do Know

Recently, I took a call from someone who was considering opening a new urgent care center (we get three to five of these *per week*). They wanted to know if this was a good time to get into

healthcare since it looked like a certain person was going to end up in the White House in 2008.

While I was unable to make any specific predictions, of course, we did discuss that it is very likely that urgent care will not be able to fly under the radar too much longer—which may be a good thing or a bad thing, but likely somewhere in between. We may make some strides in some of the issues you are all facing (reimbursement), but those strides will probably come at a price. It’s hard to predict.

Trust Winston Churchill to get it right—what we do know about the future is that it will be conceived and created by us, *but only if we choose to participate in that creation*. If we don’t, it will be created by others, and we will be in the unenviable position of living and working in a world we may not have wanted.

Remember the old adage that if you don’t vote, you shouldn’t complain? I think that we need to start voting. It’s time for us to make progress on participating in the creation of the urgent care world that we want—the urgent care world that we believe is the best for patients and for providers. And that progress is going to take work from *all* of us.

“While one person can make a difference, a thousand people can make a bigger difference.”

Keeping our business successful and growing and developing requires so much of our attention day-to-day that we may need to remind ourselves that that business takes place within an industry. And it’s an industry that requires a very big, very firm, very sustained push to get moving in any particular direction.

We need your involvement, knowledge, time, and energy to make those moves begin. I can assure you, while one person can make a difference, a thousand people can make a bigger difference.

If you have something to say about what you see in urgent care’s future, and what we collectively can do about it, say it in an e-mail message to me—lhhorwitz@ucaoa.org—and help us start planning for your future. ■



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