



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Two Most Powerful Words

■ LOU ELLEN HORWITZ, MA

Like all of you, I've been reading the commentary and praise and doom and predictions about what the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act will be bringing to all of us as patients, employers, providers, suppliers, and citizen taxpayers.

It's an interesting time, to say the least.

One thing that struck me as I was reading one of these news stories talking about the concerns many states have about the impact this will have on their budgets is the common use of the phrase "will be paid for by the Federal government."

I realize that this is a somewhat naïve point of view, but my first thought was that all of this is not paid for by the Federal government; it's paid for by you and me. It's paid for by employers, pharmaceutical companies, physicians—individuals with certain incomes.

Many of us will start to pay more in taxes of various sorts (or see reductions in payments) so that this Act can be implemented. It is paid for by specific people and groups—not a magical money tree called "the Federal government."

Here's where the naïve part comes in.

Wouldn't it be something—shocking, really—if someone were to say "thank you" to the people who, voluntarily or not, will be giving up funds to make this happen?

If physicians and pharmaceutical companies and employers and high-end taxpayers got praise and acknowledgment for what we are giving back to our fellow man?

For the sacrifices and changes we are going to have to make to our business models or individual plans for the greater good?

Naïve or not, I am sorry to see that there is no new Agency of Funding Appreciation being formed.

When I was growing up, my parents taught me the value of "thank you." It's a simple phrase. Short, easy to say,

"Your support of existing programs makes the next new ones possible."

absolutely free, with a great rate of return. Nobody hates to hear "thank you."

The translation of all of this to what we do at UCAOA was almost instantaneous to me.

While it seems that we do what a normal association does—provide member benefits, educational programs, research, resources, recognition programs, etc., which seem like normal business activities—something amazing is taking place virtually every single day. Hundreds of you—members, non-members, vendors, and other interested parties—make regular decisions to call, e-mail, or fax us to give us your money.

We provide something in return, of course, but it is still an active choice you are consciously making that is very humbling for us. This is also a "normal" business activity, but, to us, it is still a wonderful and beautiful thing.

In the four years that I have been in this role, I have watched the UCAOA board, staff, and volunteers work extremely hard to continue to evolve to meet your needs by creating new programs and pushing the envelope on existing ones. Your continued support of those activities is, of course, what makes the next new ones possible. It's a great cycle to be a part of.

Later this month, I will again have the privilege of gathering with many of you at our National Convention. The continued success of this meeting is a thrill to us every year, and we hope you have found that it gets better and better and better.

Whether I get to tell you in person, or this column is my only communication with you, accept my sincerest appreciation for all that each of you has done and continues to do to make UCAOA the organization that it is.

Thank you. ■



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