



## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# Promises, Promises

■ LOU ELLEN HORWITZ, MA

2012 is going to be such a big year I can hardly contain myself. There are eight things on a big flipchart on my wall labeled “2012 Initiatives” and they all feel huge. I alluded to some of them in my October column, and thought I’d end the year by unveiling a few more. Plus, saying all this out loud before it’s done certainly makes us stay accountable to you, our members and stakeholders!

We’ve talked here about the new “unlimited” membership structure for our Practice Members, and that rollout has already begun. If you are part of a current Practice Membership, we’ll be contacting you soon to let you add people (and to make sure we have all your centers on our list!), even before your renewal is due. If you don’t want to wait to hear from us, go ahead and contact Jami Kral, our membership manager, at [jkral@ucaoa.org](mailto:jkral@ucaoa.org), and she can get those expanded benefits started for you right away.

We’ve also talked a bit about the 2012 Benchmarking Survey. I’m only bringing it up again now to tell you how important it is for every center that is invited to participate. Now that you’ve seen how compelling the results were in the 2010 survey, I’m sure you realize that it’s a big contribution to report all that data—but you also see the rewards for doing it. UCAOA members have always been a “help each other” kind of group, and this is the NUMBER ONE way you can contribute to the industry. When you get that invitation email from us, remember that.

So, what haven’t we told you about yet?

### New “Awareness” Initiatives

The watchword for 2012 is AWARENESS. You told us loud and clear that it’s one of your top priorities for us, so we are all over it. The UCAOA Board voted to take a sizable set of funds and launch a truly national awareness campaign next year for the industry.

The first change you will notice is with UCAOA itself. We are doing “us” first because, when the world comes calling on the association as a resource on the industry, we want to do you

*“When the world comes calling on the association as a resource on the industry, we want to do you proud.”*

proud. That means some re-working of our image, and creation of several resources for external stakeholders in addition to the “Case for Urgent Care” white paper.

We also have to make it easier for outsiders to find information about the industry. We have gotten better at talking to each other, but we’re not yet great enough at providing information for the media, legislative bodies, payors, and other influencers. So that’s the second change you will see—an overhaul of [www.ucaoa.org](http://www.ucaoa.org). We’ll not only make it easier for these influencers to hear our messages, we’re going to do a better job of organizing our resources for you, too.

The third change is the most exciting, and we’ll do that together. This is where most of the special Board funds are going—to a national awareness campaign for our industry. I say that we will do this “together” because, while UCAOA will be taking the lead, we’re setting up the campaign so that every single center can have access to specially-created national campaign materials that you can use locally. We plan to roll it out in Las Vegas in April for the first time ... so make plans to be there to see it.

In closing, I want to thank everyone for their participation in the 2011 Urgent Care Awareness Week on November 14-18. In addition to UCAOA and individual member center efforts, many of our Corporate Support Partners got involved this year, and that added support was much appreciated. There was a lot more participation and media coverage this year than last, so even our small collective efforts are continuing to build upon each other. We hope it was a fun and motivational event for you and your staff as well. With our new year-long national awareness campaign coming next year, 2012’s Awareness Week should be even bigger.

I’d best stop writing now or JUCM is going to have to give me another page! There’s obviously more to come, but hope this gets you excited for what is coming! ■



**Lou Ellen Horwitz** is Executive Director of the Urgent Care Association of America. She may be contacted at [lhhorwitz@ucaoa.org](mailto:lhhorwitz@ucaoa.org).