



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

End of an Era

■ LOU ELLEN HORWITZ, MA

The first UCAOA National Urgent Care Convention was held at the Radisson Resort in Orlando from April 13-16, 2005. To put that in perspective, remember that UCAOA itself was incorporated in November of 2004—only five months earlier. Planning, marketing and hosting a national-scope convention when you have been in existence for a few short months is an audacious move!

The man who made that happen was Dr. John Koehler. Dr. Koehler was a founding board member of UCAOA, and took on the role of convention chair, working with UCAOA's only staff person at the time, Becky Burress. Between the two of them they found a location, planned a program, secured speakers, arranged for audiovisual, food and beverage, and on and on. They had 231 attendees and the meeting was a huge success.

For those of you who pull off complicated operations every day, and especially if you've ever been part of the planning of a major event (in a distant city), you know that success in these areas requires a certain combination of talents and characteristics. First, you have to have vision. What will the event look like and feel like? What do people want to know about? Who do we know that can talk about those things? You have to have a plan in mind.

Next, you have to have dedication and perseverance, because vision rarely takes on a life of its own this early in the game. You have to get personally involved. You have to get on the phone, send emails, negotiate (and occasionally beg), think about it all the time, bother your families with opinion solicitation, call in favors, and generally do whatever it takes to bring that vision to reality.

Of course, that's exactly what happened. Dr. Koehler brought all of his talents and personality to bear, and lo and behold, come April 13th when those 231 people showed up, there was a National Urgent Care Convention to meet them. Did I mention there was also an exhibit hall that first year?



Lou Ellen Horwitz is Executive Director of the Urgent Care Association of America. She may be contacted at lhorwitz@ucaoa.org.

"This April in Las Vegas will be our 7th Annual Convention, and whether every attendee knows it or not, the meeting has made it this far because of Dr. John Koehler's early vision and leadership."

Just for icing on the cake.

As the years have passed, under Dr. Koehler's direction the convention has grown and evolved. It has gotten bigger and better, been held in some fantastic venues, allowed us to expand the education programs significantly, and become the premier event in our industry. For all of us who have had the opportunity to see him in action, our hats are off to him for his intensity and drive and vision for the success of the event. This April in Las Vegas will be our 7th Annual Convention, and whether every attendee knows it or not, the meeting has made it this far because of Dr. Koehler's early vision and leadership.

By the title of this column, however, you probably already have an inkling that Dr. Koehler will soon be passing the torch to a new Chair, who we'll be announcing at the Convention in April. That person will have big shoes to fill, but as an organization and an industry, we are always moving forward and evolving and the convention will continue to do so as well.

Dr. Koehler, we thank you and we salute you. ■

P.S. Speaking of leadership, you will also notice a new "co-host" of the convention this year, our colleagues at the Urgent Care College of Physicians. UCCOP's leadership has been working with UCAOA to further develop the clinical programs at the meeting, and you will start to notice some changes brought on by that relationship in 2012, with more to come. By the time you read this, registration will be open, so we'll look forward to seeing your name added to the roster!