



Start a Revolution at Evolution 2.0

■ LAUREL STOIMENOFF, PT, CHC

It's not surprising that Amazon, Berkshire Hathaway, and JPMorgan Chase have joined forces to impact the rising costs of healthcare. The complexities of healthcare and the billions spent annually on healthcare lobbying have limited the ability of the government to implement any material change. The 1976 movie *Network* features fictional broadcaster Howard Beale's famous speech where he implores the people to open their windows and yell out, "I'm not going to take this anymore!" He tells his listeners to first get mad, then we'll all figure out how to solve the problem.

This seems to be the approach being taken by these titan corporations. They have indicated that they intend to leverage technology as a solution, but little else is known about how they are going to revolutionize healthcare delivery. But they're mad. And we can help.

The Affordable Care Act made changes, but 11.7% of adults were uninsured in 2017.¹ And the average family who *did* have coverage experienced their employer-sponsored healthcare premium grow 20% from 2011 to 2016, with an anticipated increase of another 6.5% in 2018.² Some predict that as healthcare costs increase and income remains relatively constant, staying well will consume the average worker's income in the not-too-distant future. And when two lines cross on a graph, something big is bound to happen. Mike Ferguson, chief operating officer of the Self-Insured Institute of America, wrote "By breaking free of the conventional coverage model, self-insured companies are finding innovative ways to improve the health of their workers, and at lower cost. Business leaders and policy-makers should take note."³

Consumer-driven healthcare isn't going away. But we need to do more than adapt to these inevitable changes. We need to collaborate with these innovators and invent the future. Telemedicine's growth was catalyzed by the self-insured employers. When Cigna and United Health put their toe in the

"We need to do more than adapt to change. We need to collaborate and invent the future."

water to cover telemedicine visits several years ago, the coverage was limited to the self-insured groups they administered.

So, what can we do? Our growth strategies must extend beyond penetrating the traditional payer community to partnering with employers. The next time you have an opportunity to speak with an employer about their injured worker, why not bring up the benefits you can provide by caring for their entire workforce? You can set up an on-site or provide care in your near-site center. Many payer contracts restrict you from providing care that extends beyond episodic illness and injury, but employers shouldn't care where the wellness care is taking place. You have the opportunity to provide unfettered care where the employee's health and future savings are the ultimate goals.

Embrace change, embrace technology, and embrace integration. Get involved in healthcare policy at the state level and help UCAOA when we need your voice at the federal level. It's much more satisfying to proactively influence policy than fall victim to it.

I hope you'll join us next month at the Paris Hotel in Las Vegas for UCAOA's Annual Convention & Expo. We will address employer strategies and update you on the regulatory climate. We'll host state and chapter networking discussions and encourage thought leadership on strategies to influence meaningful change. The convention has been dubbed Evolution 2.0 to reflect the next trajectory of our relatively nascent industry. Think of it as **(R)EVOLUTION 2.0**, and together, let's lead it. ■

References

1. Well-Being Index. U.S. uninsured rate rises in 2Q 2017. July 2017. Available at: <http://www.well-beingindex.com/u.s.-uninsured-rate-2q-2017>. Accessed March 6, 2018.
2. PwC. Medical cost trend: Behind the numbers 2018. Available at: <https://www.pwc.com/us/en/health-industries/health-research-institute/behind-the-numbers/reports/hri-behind-the-numbers-2018.pdf>. Accessed March 6, 2018.
3. Ferguson M. Self-insured companies help push health care innovations. *Investor's Business Daily*. March 22, 2017. Available at: <https://www.investors.com/politics/commentary/self-insured-companies-help-push-health-care-innovations/>. Accessed March 6, 2018.



Laurel Stoimenoff, PT, CHC, is Chief Executive Officer of the Urgent Care Association of America.