

# How Do You Choose?

■ RICHARD PARK, MD

I have a question for you: How do you decide whether to attend a conference? Is it the location, or the speakers, or whether you still need CME, or have continuing education dollars for the year? If you are like most people, those are probably the factors that you look at.

But, if you are reading this, *you are probably not like most people*. Most people don't go into a business like ours, particularly in healthcare. Healthcare is hard enough (increasing regulations, diminishing reimbursements) without adding in the retail aspects of what we do (focusing on patient experience, choosing sites and people to drive visits). Makes me wonder sometimes what we were thinking!

But then, of course, I remember what we were thinking (what we *are* thinking)—we are thinking about taking care of people and *all* that that entails. And that continues to make us unique leaders in healthcare.

So, what does that have to do with deciding whether to attend a conference—and more specifically, our own convention? We've been thinking about this a lot.

If you look at it objectively, there's no reason to come just for content these days. The content is great, but we've made a lot of it available online. There's no reason to come for the location, either—every place we go is open the other 361 days of the year so you could go there anytime. So why am I going and why do I want you to come with me?

*It's because of us.* This is the only time, now once a year, that we get to see and spend time with lots of others like *us*. It's the only time and place we can get out of our centers and out of our own heads and immerse ourselves in each other's points of view. It's where we can challenge each other, question each other, and speak deeply *together* about our successes and failures and fears and hopes for our shared future.

You can't do that online like you can face-to-face; face-to-face is unique. We've been thinking about this a lot, too. We've



*“The 2020 UCA Annual Convention @ Expo is scheduled to take place May 3-6, 2020 at the Paris Hotel in Las Vegas.”*

been asking ourselves whether we've done a good enough job making the convention that unique place and moment in time, and we don't think we have. So, we've been taking it apart and putting it back together again to make it better, and *almost completely different*, starting with UCA2020.

UCA's CEO Laurel Stoimenoff and the UCA team will start sharing details soon on [ucaoa.org/Convention](http://ucaoa.org/Convention), but to me, it ultimately doesn't matter where it is or the specific details of this session or that session, because it's where I'm going to go to connect with my industry and my people.

I already know when it is—May 3-6—and I'm working my calendar (and my team's calendar) around it now to make sure we can be there. I hope you will do likewise. It won't be the same without you. ■

**Richard Park, MD**  
President, Board of Directors, UCA



**Richard Park, MD** is the founder and CEO of CityMD, and president of the Board of Directors of the Urgent Care Association.