

Transitions, Transformations, and Trees

■ LAUREL STOIMENOFF, PT, CHC

"A society grows great when old men plant trees in whose shade they know they shall never sit."—Greek proverb

Transitions

Earlier this year I notified the UCA Board of Directors of my desire to retire by year end. As long as I live, I don't think I will ever completely leave this organization, but I truly believe the timing is right to do so as your CEO.

Just as so many urgent care organizations have been deeply impacted by the pandemic, so has UCA. And the recovery will be a protracted one requiring skilled and steady leadership over years vs months. As you are likely aware by now, Lou Ellen Horwitz has agreed to step into the role of CEO, and I am excited to move into a part-time position as the Executive Director of Quality & Innovation with some defined deliverables that should be accomplished throughout the coming months.

Transformations

Just as healthcare will emerge anew from this watershed moment in its evolution, so shall UCA. Lou Ellen's skill set is perfect to shepherd the organization through what will be a transformative period while collaborating with your board to reshape the association such that it best supports the success of our members. I move into my next role knowing that you and UCA are in highly capable hands.

I Hope I Have Planted Trees

The proverb above is both deep and meaningful to me. It is apparent that our founders and so many of the colleagues I have met along the way are committed to creating a great society, and I aspired to follow their lead. It is about finding a bal-

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ance between those things that have an immediate impact while never losing sight of the future, even though they may not be a part of it.

Another Transition—Cindi Lang, RN, MS

It would be difficult to find someone as accomplished at this balance as Cindi Lang, who stepped aside as UCA's Certification and Accreditation Advisor on July 1. UCA was built on the backs of committed and passionate volunteers whose sweat equity in the organization cannot be repaid. Cindi Lang is one of those volunteers who persevered year after year, giving us her time and her talent. I am pleased that she will remain an active member of several of our accreditation committees, and equally pleased that her former position will be assumed by an active committee member, Tracy Patterson, MBA, MHSA, CHC—again, an amazing successor. You shall benefit from the shade Cindi created for years to come. Thank you, Cindi, for graciously committing to playing an ongoing part—while also easing into enjoying the fruit of a long and impressive career.

This Is Not Good-Bye

It has truly been a privilege to serve UCA in many capacities. I have met so many along this UCA journey whose friendships I can only hope will endure. This is not good-bye. It is merely passing the baton to a new leader who I know is deeply committed to ensuring a bright future for urgent care.

As I walk up the metaphorical 18th fairway of life, I hope there are saplings—some of which I played a part in planting. What you do is simply too important, and I need to know it will be there for generations to come. ■



Laurel Stoimenoff, PT, CHC is the outgoing CEO of the Urgent Care Association.

Hello Again

■ LOU ELLEN HORWITZ, MA

When I left UCA(OA) in 2012 and started working in urgent care myself I had a realization: I didn't really know much about urgent care. I had spent over 6 years creating conferences and events, programs and affiliate groups, talking to the media about us and talking to members every day—but I didn't truly understand urgent care until I was in your shoes.

Now I Understand

I didn't know that feeling of standing in a clinic on grand opening day praying someone will show up. I didn't know how to use visit volume trends to create a staffing matrix. I didn't know how hard it is to find, train, engage, and retain staff in urgent care. I didn't know how great it felt to get that five-star Google review. I didn't know how it felt to sit with potential investors and try to sell the company you cannot possibly be objective about. Now I do.

I didn't know it at the time or recognize it until very recently, but the day I left was the day I began preparing to return to UCA.

Thank You

Before I thank Laurel Stoimenoff, I want to thank all of the colleagues, coworkers, and friends I've made in urgent care. You've taught me how and why we do what we do, how tough it is, and how much fun it can be. I've loved learning with and from you, and am counting on you to be part of our future. Hug emoji times 10,000.

Laurel and I have shared a love affair with UCA, and I cannot thank her enough for what she did as CEO and in so many other capacities to open doors that had been closed to us. She built relationships and inspired partnerships that we will continue to benefit from for many years. She created and grew programs that move all of us forward and I'm thankful she will use the next few months to lead us in quality and innovation. Laurel, on behalf of the entire membership, we appreciate you more than we can ever adequately express.



Lou Ellen Horwitz, MA is the incoming chief executive officer of the Urgent Care Association.

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And Yet...

For all of the things I do understand now that I didn't understand in 2012, one thing still puzzles me. Actually, it doesn't puzzle me, it makes me angry. How is it that urgent care can still be overlooked on a national level and by many states after all these years of work? Is it simply that effecting change on such a scale takes a very long time—especially when there is resistance from the status quo? I have thought about this a lot lately.

Are We in Our Own Way?

The people of urgent care are mavericks at heart. I love that about us. We looked at traditional healthcare and thought we had a better way—so we built it. Innovation doesn't scare us—we embrace it. Constant change is just another day for us. UCA was founded by maverick thinking. However, the *problem* with mavericks is that we *do* like to go our own way—which makes it hard for us to come together like conformists can.

I don't want to change our DNA—but we have to change something if we want to have a national impact. We may not like it, but we do need each other. It's not enough to just be good at what we do. It's not enough for us to unite 4 days a year and compete the other 361. It's not enough.

We all want this alliance. We see every day how critical urgent care is in our communities. We can be an "alliance of mavericks" if we must, but we have to come together, and in greater numbers. We will all be the better for it, and so will the world.

Thanks for having me back. Lots to do. Let's keep in touch. ■