

# The Fights We Can Win

■ LOU ELLEN HORWITZ, MA

There's been a lot of deep thinking around here lately. The questions we've been pondering have been with us for a long time, but often the answers don't fully emerge when we want them to. They emerge when the moment is right. And sometimes, it takes new questions, or the same questions asked in a different way at a slightly different time or by a different person, for the answers to open up. It seems the universe finally speaks when it is darn good and ready.

One of the questions was, *Who does what?* across UCA, the College of Urgent Care Medicine (CUCM), and the Urgent Care Foundation (UCF). Everyone involved in any of these organizations is passionate about the current and future states of Urgent Care, and those states are multifactorial. If we could, we'd all work on everything, but a lack of focus can make it extremely difficult to make progress.

Focus has its own challenges, however. Choosing to focus on a few things means giving up focus on several other things—and when you are passionate, giving up those other things is also extremely difficult. There's nothing that's *not* important to us in Urgent Care.

The good news we've discovered is that “giving up” on something actually means trusting someone else to handle their part. And these three entities have learned to trust each other. It's not giving up; it's giving *to*. This trust enables each of us—UCA, CUCM, and UCF—to truly focus on our unique roles in creating the world we all believe can come to pass.

What we've also discovered is that we are committed to taking on some pretty hard work together. Our core purposes are not easy. Our visions are not small. And we know this is the right direction because what you, our members, do is not easy or small, either. It's difficult and it's incredibly impactful on the local, national, and increasingly global level.

For a long time, it seems, we have looked at the large

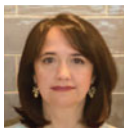
mountains in front of us, and the hostiles standing in front of us, and the support we have around us, and asked, *Is this really a fight we can win?* Urgent Care's lobbying spend vs the lobbying spend of the commercial payer community is not a remotely fair fight. The AMA and ABMS are entrenched behemoths compared to us. So, when we have looked at running up that mountain we've asked whether we should be throwing our limited resources and energy and focus and reputations at problems that seem so insurmountable and odds that seem so daunting.

It's taken me too long to fully realize that the size of the mountain and the pocketbooks of the hostiles don't matter. What matters is that all of you are fighting these battles already because you do not have a choice, and consequently neither do we. We—UCA, CUCM, and UCF—don't just get to fight the fights we can win. Eventual victories would make us look good, but that's not why we are here. We are here to fight the fights that need fighting—win or lose.

Our boards of directors and trustees are fully committed to this. We are going to make positive change happen for Urgent Care even if we all die trying and the next generation has to pick up the swords. We're not going to ever stop, because we know you aren't either.

We've spent a lot of time working out what that fight looks like—who has what role—and how we continue to support your day-to-day improvement (“advancement”) while we take to the largest battlefields. We've drilled down on how our armies support and reinforce each other and how we soften beaches that other waves of work won't get to for many years, and I am so grateful to all of the volunteer leaders and other members who have helped with this work. This column is way too short to lay it all out, but we will be sharing soon in longer formats.

While you wait, check out our newest White Paper, written by Communications Director Samantha Wulff, “The Essential Nature of Urgent Care in the Healthcare Ecosystem Post-COVID-19.” It's available at <https://urgentcareassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2023-Urgent-Care-Industry-White-Paper.pdf>. Keep your swords sharp. ■



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