

Reflections

■ Lou Ellen Horwitz, MA

Clarity is a good thing, but achieving clarity isn't always easy. It requires a deep understanding, and reaching that depth takes time and energy. It's taken us a few years.

In 2022, we got clarity around the role of the Urgent Care Association (UCA). For a long time, we tried hard to do anything that anyone in Urgent Care needed, and that led to a lot of good work but also a very unclear identity. Now we know: We are here to ensure the advancement and long-term success of Urgent Care. That framework has helped us figure out what we should be doing and will continue to guide our product and program development for a long time.

For the last two years we've worked through the exercise of articulating our values. First, we had too many, then they were too vanilla, then they got too wordy, then...we really had it. I tip my hat to our Board of Directors and to staff members Samantha Wulff and Brandon Davis for all of the brainstorming meetings and critiques and honest talk about who we are at UCA and what we stand for.

I've titled this column "Reflections" not because I am looking back but because what we encountered through our values discovery process was how much UCA reflects Urgent Care itself. Many times, we had to ask, "Are we talking about Urgent Care or are we talking about UCA?" I came to realize that not only is it a good thing that we are reflections of each other, it's the only way it could have turned out right.

The Values of UCA

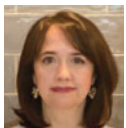
First, **We Commit**. Here at UCA and out in the field, what we do requires commitment. There are so many frustrations and barriers that we have to push through to get where we need to go, and if we aren't embracing those

challenges, we are not going to get there. Patients need Urgent Care, clinicians and operators need support, and healthcare delivery needs improvement. At UCA and in Urgent Care, we own our role in the future of healthcare.

Second, **We Collaborate**. The entities of the Urgent Care "universe" (UCA, the College of Urgent Care Medicine, the Urgent Care Foundation, and the Urgent Care College of Physicians) must not only support each other from a distance but fully integrate our goals and pursuits so our whole is larger than the sum of our parts. Our industry vendors are key collaborators in creating products and services that are perfect for Urgent Care and also in supporting the work of UCA and our Affiliates. Collaborating with our Affiliates—the *Journal of Urgent Care Medicine*, Hippo Education, Site Data Services, and Control the Dose—allows us to advance Urgent Care in ways UCA could never do alone. We work closely with each of our chapters, and we create collaborations outside of our "universe" to connect Urgent Care to a larger whole. Collaboration pushes us all. We believe the best innovations come from diversity of thought, experience, perspective, and approach, and we own our role in fostering collective ingenuity.

Lastly, **We Advance**. We have a drive to make things that we touch better than they were when we found them, including ourselves, our colleagues, our members, and our work together. For us, good enough is never good enough. It's how we are made, and we couldn't turn it off if we wanted to. We own our role in driving change.

Once we were done with unearthing these for ourselves—**We Commit, We Collaborate, We Advance**—we were struck with how these 3 statements are emblematic of Urgent Care itself. You have to love it. You have to commit because it's hard. And there's no better example of collaboration than the symphony of front and back office teams guiding people through an exceptional patient experience. And you can't hold Urgent Care back. It's going to advance, no matter what. I hope that when you see what we stand for, when you see UCA, you see yourself too. ■



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