



Balancing short-term and long-term goals for healthcare employees

Universal Health Services President and CEO Marc D. Miller dives into the core drivers of culture and performance across business sectors that have created a proven track record for employees, and subsequently patients, over the past 44 years.

Photos above: In March 2023, UHS ceremoniously named and broke ground on a de novo hospital in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. The Alan B. Miller Medical Center is named in honor of UHS Founder and Executive Chairman Alan B. Miller, who was CEO until 2021, when he transitioned responsibilities to Marc D. Miller.

Robert Reiss: Explain the unique Universal Health Services healthcare model.

Marc D. Miller: We're unique in a few ways. We were established in 1979, so we're in our 44th year. What makes us different than most others in our sector is that, for a healthcare company, we concentrate on two significant aspects of the business: acute care hospitals and behavioral health facilities. Most of the companies in the healthcare sector would concentrate only on one. But we've done this almost from our inception and have continued to grow in both segments to the point now where we're one of the largest behavioral health companies in the U.S. and the U.K., and we have almost 400 facilities in total. We have very large business segments on both sides—almost equal in revenue—which makes us different from most others in this sector.

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You have over 90,000 associates. Describe your culture.

Our culture is one of accountability, expertise and growth. We are thoughtful and conservative, yet entrepreneurial. We aim to hire the best in the industry. And we are passionate about our mission,

which is to deliver high-quality patient care. Every role contributes, whether on the front line or in support of those who are. It's all about Service Excellence and the care we deliver to patients.

Throughout our 44 years, we've always had the ability to focus on long-term performance, as opposed to making decisions for the short term. We communicate that we'll always do the right thing for the right reason. With a long-term perspective as a public company, that's often difficult to do. We've been fortunate that we've had a very good track record for a long time. We are financially stable and have demonstrated that year over year.

Our employees embrace this long-term philosophy because they know that we're doing things for the right reasons all the time. And I think that makes us a very healthy organization and has contributed to our success over the last few decades.

Let's talk about your leadership philosophy as you've been president for over a decade.

My primary responsibilities are setting strategy, setting vision, and leading our organization. Our senior executive team puts in place whatever it is we need to achieve those goals. I think that it's very important, especially in a large organization like this, because it can become more difficult to communicate that message and ensure that all of your employees know that you're in the trenches with them. So what we try to do is to communicate in different ways.



The CEO Forum Group has selected Marc D. Miller, President & CEO of Universal Health Services, Inc., for the 2023 “Top 10 CEOs Transforming Healthcare in America.” The specific award category bestowed is “Behavioral Health,” in recognition of his unparalleled leadership in delivering exceptional patient care and quality from an aligned team of over 90,000 who focus on always doing the long-term right thing. This is delivered throughout over 400 facilities and is making a palpable difference in behavioral health in America.

Marc D. Miller



Marc addresses UHS Marketing Directors at an internal conference

In the past, much like other organizations, we would rely on distribution of printed materials to keep employees informed. We would visit our hospitals as much as we could. However, now with digital technologies including social media, we do so much more online.

There are more two-way touchpoints for not just our staff, but also our patients, our physicians, referral sources and our communities. They see us communicating with them more frequently, in a way that I think they can relate to much better. We've gotten into more use of video on our platforms—another example of improving the way we communicate and engage. I think that shows all our folks who are caregivers at the facility level that we're in this with them, and we're setting a vision that they can buy into and agree with. And we're celebrating news, milestones and our collective successes. Hopefully, that will help them continue to make the decision to work for our company for the long term.

“No matter how big or small we are, we are focused on high quality at all of our facilities.”

Talk about some leaders whom you respect and admire whom you've learned from.

I've been a student of Apple and Walmart for many years for different reasons. Walmart because of their growth every quarter each year. They have to reinvent themselves to figure out how they're going to grow, because they're nearly in every market around the globe at this point. It's interesting to read and see how they run their business. And it's always been fascinating to me how a company like Apple was able to stick to certain core values and really gave up early on the ability to grow because they wanted to perfect their technology first.

Even though they had only about 10% of the market, Steve Jobs for many years didn't really consider himself competitive with Microsoft, per se, because he thought their products were inferior to what he was trying to create.

We are learning lessons from both Walmart and Apple. At UHS, we talk a lot about quality. And we also talk about doing things “the UHS way,” meaning we've never been obsessed with growth for growth's sake. For us, no matter how big or small we are, we are focused on high quality at all of our facilities. That's the most important thing. So whether we have 400 hospitals or 700 hospitals, \$13 billion or \$50 billion revenue, we will never grow for just growth's sake; our focus is always going to be on patients and



Marc presents the Quality and Service Excellence Awards to our stellar Behavioral Health Facility leaders for their excellence in quality healthcare.

on quality. Of course, I've certainly learned a lot from my father—who was the founder of this company—how he set out his goals, how he grew the business and we continue to live up to that and do things the right way.

When you talk about leadership, when you're interviewing candidates for leadership positions, what do you look for?

We want honest, ethical people. Also, culture fit is a big thing. There are many wonderful people, and many bright individuals who have had success elsewhere. But you're always trying to find people who will fit well in your culture. And lastly, something I've always focused on, is self-awareness. With every candidate that I interview, it's one of the things I don't talk to them about overtly but try to glean through the conversation. We're not looking for the perfect candidate; we're looking for the people that understand what they need to be working on. And I have my own lifelong journey with different facets of my personality that I'm trying to improve. But if you're not aware of them, then it's impossible to improve upon them. Self-awareness is a big one for me.

Talk about behavioral healthcare and staffing.

There are many challenges in the behavioral health sector right now—some that were exacerbated by the COVID pandemic. We're seeing an increase in need for effective behavioral health services across the board. And that's only increased through COVID. For the last three years, we've seen people trying to access services in different ways, but we also have a reality of looking for staff that you sometimes can't find and trying to navigate through various new barriers that have been put up because of the pandemic.

Now, luckily, we're on the tail end of this, and things have opened back up. We still find ourselves actively recruiting for staff to be able to accommodate the needs of patients, but we're making tangible progress, especially the last 12 months.

We run so many different types of programs that it seems like when one settles a bit, then something else pops up. We're always trying to meet needs as quickly as we can. Because of our size and our scope, we're able to meet those challenges, in a great deal of cases, quickly. We're proud of the work that we've been doing, but we recognize that some challenges continue to exist.

What is it that CEOs need to know about behavioral health?

I think the most important aspect revolves around stigma. Stigma in the industry and in the country has always been a big issue. People have shied away from sharing troubles that they had with their mental health. For obvious reasons, folks are worried about getting negative reactions, being judged, perhaps shunned.

“The good news is that the stigma [of mental health] has decreased over time due, I believe, to education, outreach, the public sharing of personal stories by celebrities and other known public figures, and legislative and infrastructure measures.”

My message to CEOs is to remove within their organizations any stigma toward behavioral health. Of course, it's critical to address when issues first surface so they can be prevented from getting worse. Mental illnesses are legitimate and can become crippling if not treated, so getting folks help early on can really make a huge difference.

The good news is that the stigma has decreased over time due, I believe, to education, outreach, the public sharing of personal stories by celebrities and other known public figures, and legislative and



On a visit to Southwest Healthcare Rancho Springs Hospital in Murrieta, CA, Marc signs the vision wall.

infrastructure measures. Due to increasing numbers of people experiencing mental health issues, it's no longer rare. Importantly, the 988 Suicide and Crisis LifeLine was launched nationally in July 2022 for those in mental health crisis. While 911 remains the primary emergency line for police, fire, and medical emergencies, the establishment of 988 is the most significant transformation in the behavioral healthcare space in years.

Is that the most important challenge you see in the behavioral health industry today?

I think that there are many, many challenges. Patients' access to effective care has always presented barriers. I do think that the different ways that we provide patient care these days actually helps. Access is much better than it was five or 10 years ago. For example,

a lot of people think of psychiatric care as only inpatient care, but we do so much in an outpatient setting. We have intensive outpatient programs and we do partial hospitalization programs where there's a component in a hospital, but the patient lives at home and is integrated with his or her family and community. And now with telehealth, we're able to engage virtually, which has only increased the availability of effective services for patients. And that's a terrific thing. The offerings now are so much more versatile. There's really no excuse to not be able to get help whether it's for a family member, a staff member, or anybody who needs it.

Let's talk about reputation.

Reputation is important in any walk of life. But it can't be any more important than in an organization providing patient care. It's the core to everything that we do. People are choosing one of our facilities, one of our nurses, one of our doctors, in a situation where they're most vulnerable. Our reputation is so important. I've often heard—and many of us have heard this as well—that it takes a lifetime to build a reputation, but it can take a minute to ruin a reputation. So we really think about everything that we do, on a daily or weekly basis, to make sure that we're emphasizing the importance of reputation to everybody that works here, all 90,000 employees.

Everybody knows, and they often hear from us, how important reputation is. I talked already about doing things for the long term, but it's doing the right things all the time—you can't deviate from that. Reputation is the most important thing to us here, as I know it is for many people. But again, because of the type of business we're in, I think it's critically important for us.

How do you view the future of Universal Health Services?

The future is bright. The healthcare business as a whole has always been a tough business. It's gotten tougher in the last few years. We have some economic

challenges now throughout the country, and they're affecting everybody, including businesses. But we have a mission to serve patients well. Whether we have a booming economy or a struggling economy, or if we're in a pandemic or not in a pandemic, people need health care services. There's a great responsibility that's inherent in what we do, and we take that responsibility seriously.

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We are excited about a lot of the things that we're working on and planning for the future, but the core of it is taking care of patients in both of our business segments. And beyond that, we look to grow in new areas beyond our traditional acute and behavioral services.

We're doing a lot with tech on the innovation side, and we're looking into some different business models, as well. We have expanded over the last 10 years domestically and in the U.K. Further expansion into other markets is certainly on the horizon. We have a very bright future that we're excited about.



Mary Mullen, RN at Brooke Glen Hospital, a subsidiary of UHS located in Pennsylvania, is honored by the Ben Franklin Global Forum as the 2022 Distinguished Healthcare Professional, in recognition of her steadfast commitment to serving behavioral health patients over her 40+ year career.



Marc D. Miller is President and CEO of Universal Health Services, Inc. (NYSE: UHS). Mr. Miller was named CEO in January 2021 after having served as President since 2009. He is a member of the UHS Board of Directors, serving on the Executive Committee and the Finance Committee. He joined UHS in 1995 and over the years has held various positions of increasing responsibility at hospitals and the Corporate office. Prior to assuming executive leadership roles at the Company's Corporate Headquarters in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, Mr. Miller served in various operational leadership roles at several UHS Acute Care Hospitals.

Mr. Miller is a member of the Board of Directors of Universal Health Realty Income Trust (NYSE: UHT), a real estate investment trust that has investments in 65 properties located in 20 states. In 2021, he was selected to serve on the Board of Directors of the Federation of American Hospitals (FAH). Additionally, he has served as a member of the Board of Directors of Premier since 2015. In 2022, Miller ranked #49 on Modern Healthcare's "100 Most Influential People in Healthcare" list, in recognition of his visionary leadership, and most importantly, for upholding the company's patient-centered focus. He earned a Masters of Business Administration degree in Healthcare from The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and holds a Bachelors of Arts degree in Political Science from the University of Vermont.

