

Looking ahead with optimism as we continue to transform healthcare

By Alan B. Miller

As I transition CEO responsibilities after 41 years, I see continued opportunity across the industry for technology innovation, patient-centricity and alignment of incentives. We are also, of course, in the throes of arguably the most challenging global pandemic, pressure-testing the healthcare system in an unprecedented fashion.

Consistent with our long-standing succession plan, Marc D. Miller has taken over as CEO and president of Universal Health Services. Marc is uniquely suited, with 25 years of experience in both hospital-based and corporate leadership positions.

Knowing early in my career that I wanted to do something meaningful with my life, I turned to healthcare because it is a noble calling and I felt my work would have purpose. I joined American Medical Corp, a private hospital management company in 1969. Following a hostile takeover, I immediately founded UHS in 1979, starting with six employees.

I have always believed in the value of perseverance, hard work and building a strong team. Some have noted that I was the longest-serving CEO in the healthcare sector before stepping down. This is humbling. To be candid, I surrounded myself with a team of individuals of good character who shared my vision to provide superior quality care. UHS has grown to become a leading provider in the U.S. and the UK.

A focus on behavioral health

Against the advice of many, we entered the behavioral health space in 1983. We saw a great need and I was convinced of the sector's vital role. Today, behavioral health represents half the company.

Data suggests that nearly 60% of the 44 million U.S. adults living with a mental illness did not receive treatment in the previous year, according to the Nation-



Alan B. Miller is now executive chairman of the board at Universal Health Services after serving as CEO for more than 40 years.

al Alliance on Mental Illness. The pandemic is accentuating the need for more support for more people. Care must be specific to the individual, supporting their journey to healing and recovery.

There is an important connection between physical health and behavioral health. Fully integrating those services for "total patient care" requires change in the healthcare system, which I encourage our industry to pursue.

Supporting America's military

After serving for 10 years in the U.S. Army Reserve 77th Infantry Division, I was discharged in 1968 with the rank of captain. I take pride in serving the healthcare needs of our military community. They have served us; now it is our opportunity to serve them.

We established the UHS Patriot Support Program in 2001, annually serving thousands of active duty service members, veterans and their families to address and recover from the emotional and psychological effects of combat, multiple deployments and separation

from loved ones. Further, UHS has prioritized hiring veterans—1,000 annually in recent years—appreciating their valued skills, training and leadership potential. I urge the industry to support America's military, both in care delivery and employment opportunities.

Networks of accessible care

Early on, we focused on strategies to establish and expand networks of services. Standing in the undeveloped desert near Las Vegas, I saw great possibilities. In the years following the purchase of Valley Hospital in 1979, we established what is today our largest network, Valley Health System, comprising six acute-care hospitals, free-standing emergency departments, a bariatric-care center, six medical office complexes along with two behavioral health facilities—with further growth to come.

Patients want choice—and they also want consistency, convenience, access to diverse clinical expertise and a meaningful, personalized experience.

Making an impact

Our team remains committed to a core purpose: growing the company to deliver superior quality care to more patients in more communities. As an industry, it is incumbent upon us all to build on our foundations and take healthcare to its next level of excellence.

For me, it's always been about making an impact—and looking ahead with optimism. ●