HEALTHCARE
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Dr. Steven J. Corwin • CEO
NewYork-Presbyterian

A National Model:
Jeffrey Flaks • President & CEO
Hartford HealthCare

Safety Net Hospitals:
Gary Terrinoni, President & CEO
The Brooklyn Hospital Center

Behavioral Health:
Alan B. Miller • CEO & Chairman
Universal Health Services

Wellness:
Richard Ashworth • President & CEO
Tivity Health

INNOVATION
5G:
Tami Erwin • CEO
Verizon Business

Communication Infrastructure:
Rob Johnson • CEO
Vertiv

Digital Transformation:
Mohamed Kande • Vice Chair
PwC US

COVID Solutions:
Ken Lamneck • CEO
Insight Enterprises

Financial Services:
Salene Hitchcock-Gear • President
Prudential Individual Life Insurance

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BUILDING BUSINESS
POST-PANDEMIC
Healthcare • Innovation • Leading Through Crisis
The CEO Forum Group has selected Alan B. Miller and Universal Health Services as recipient of the 2020 Transformative CEO Award in Healthcare in the category of Behavioral Health. This is bestowed for leadership in helping the mental health community during this COVID-19 pandemic.

Robert Reiss: What’s rare in such a large enterprise is that you are not just the CEO, but you started the company. As founder, share what the UHS business model is and the role it has in our society.

Alan B. Miller: Since our founding over 40 years ago, Universal Health Services has grown from six employees and a single hospital management contract to 90,000 employees across an expansive international network, serving over 3.5 million patients annually.

UHS has steadily expanded through a combination of strategic acquisitions, construction of new hospitals and facilities in attractive markets, expansions at existing facilities and joint-venture partnerships with highly regarded health systems. We remain as committed today as we were in 1979 to providing superior quality care and being the preferred provider in all of the markets we serve.

I am proud of the reputation we have earned as a leader in the healthcare industry. For the 10th consecutive
year, UHS was recognized among the “World’s Most Admired Companies” by Fortune magazine. We rank #281 on the Fortune 500 list, and our employees and facilities continue to be honored by national, state and local organizations for delivering high quality care, for pioneering innovation, for thought leadership, and for our commitment to serving local communities.

We continue to look ahead with great optimism and believe that the future will feature continued growth and expansion, operational excellence and achievement of new milestones.

How has the pandemic impacted UHS’s work in acute hospitals and in behavioral hospitals, and how are you responding?

Over the past few months, the nation has lived and worked through one of the most stressful times in our history. Yet, we continued to deliver superior care to high-risk patients and vulnerable populations, while working to keep our communities safe. It reminds me of the John Maxwell quote, “The pessimist complains about the wind. The optimist expects it to change. The leader adjusts the sails.” As leaders in healthcare, we adjusted our sails adeptly, and kept saving patients.

At UHS, we put patients first, delivering consistent and superior quality patient care across all access points, service lines and programs. Our care teams on the front lines have demonstrated their exceptional resilience and commitment. They are truly Healthcare Heroes, courageous and dedicated to serving patients, even in the midst of contagious conditions.

At the start of the COVID-19 crisis, we quickly activated UHS Incident Command to direct the clinical guidance, protocols, operational adjustments, supply chain, human resources needs and communications necessary to equip our facilities to meet the evolving needs as the pandemic expanded across the U.S.

Every UHS team member – whether they are working at one of our hospitals or working from our corporate office supporting our facilities – realizes and appreciates his or her necessary role in providing and supporting patient care. This era is unprecedented, and I am proud to say our healthcare team has been exceptional.

We have scaled and greatly expanded our telehealth engagements month after month, and expect the trend to continue. Clinicians at our hospitals are engaged in leading-edge medical discoveries and advances. For example, we announced the first-in-nation use of Virtual Reality at The George Washington University Hospital to visualize the effects of COVID-19 [https://youtu.be/XzlrgELhS5M]. Clinicians and Physicians at Manatee Memorial Hospital https://www.facebook.com/manateeememorial/ in Florida, at Northwest Texas Health System https://www.facebook.com/nwtxhealthsystem/ in Amarillo, and at South Texas Health System https://www.facebook.com/SouthTexasHealthSystem/ in the Rio Grande Valley are participating in clinical trials studying the prospects of using convalescent plasma as a treatment. Working with MIT, UHS innovators participated in the MIT COVID-19 Challenge, a hackathon to develop new, innovative healthcare solutions to address the pandemic.

What is it that most CEOs don’t know about the role mental illness plays in the fabric of our nation?

One in five adults in the U.S. (approximately 43 million people) experiences mental illness in a given year. Often mental health, which today is called behavioral health, is overlooked. UHS is a leader in this sector with over 50% of our hospital portfolio focused on behavioral health and delivering compassionate care to individuals during the most vulnerable time of their lives.

Within our Behavioral Health Division, through a continuum of inpatient, partial hospitalization and outpatient programs, we provide a broad range of behavioral health solutions. As we continue to increase awareness and change the conversation about mental health and addiction issues, we remain committed to our top priority of taking care of patients, providing superior quality
care, and treating individuals with respect and dignity.

Quality of care and patient satisfaction are our most important metrics. UHS is one of few behavioral health providers voluntarily measuring clinical outcomes. We deliver industry-leading outcomes including: 91% feel better at discharge than when admitted; 90% of patients were satisfied with their treatment; and 86% would recommend the facility to someone needing treatment.

An important population that we also care for is our nation’s military. UHS has worked on these issues for years. We continue to expand our efforts to more local communities. Since UHS’ founding, we’ve expressly sought to deliver care to deserving service members, veterans and their families. Over the past decade, UHS has expanded its collaborations with military leaders and behavioral health experts including the establishment of the UHS Patriot Support Program. This initiative was born out of a shared objective and to complement the great work being supported through the Department of Defense, Defense Health Agency, Tricare and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

In fact, last year, UHS received the Distinguished Civilian Award for the work we do in serving the behavioral health needs of our nation’s military and veterans. In 2019, we were honored to care for over 7,500 members of the military and their families.

Through our subsidiaries we operate 328 behavioral health facilities, 26 acute care hospitals, 42 outpatient facilities and ambulatory care access points, an insurance offering, a physician network and various related services located in 37 U.S. states, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico and the United Kingdom. Activating Incident Command quickly and in a comprehensive fashion was critical to ensuring consistency of appropriate clinical protocols, operations, communications and supply chain.

As the pandemic intensified, we communicated with and recognized the efforts of our 90,000 employees frequently, and still do today. We emphasize that as healthcare providers, we fulfill a very special mission in society – and during times of crisis, the work that we do, and the dedication with which we do it, is even more important. Despite the medical complexity of the coronavirus, our employees never fail to step up. We are so proud of how our teams are addressing adversity and hardship. These are the #HealthcareHeroes delivering care with compassion and respect.

While no one knows exactly when this will end, we do see glimmers of a light at the end of the tunnel. We tell our team that we will push through, for we know we will emerge even stronger on the other side.

While there are many acute care hospitals and systems nationally, UHS is the leader in behavioral healthcare services. Discuss the role this plays in our society and economy and how COVID is impacting your behavioral health hospitals.
The Behavioral Health Division provides necessary care that transforms lives and families. In 2019, our dedicated clinicians were privileged to provide care to over 700,000 patients, providing hope and healing to those struggling with mental health challenges.

We drive health transformation by focusing on “total patient care,” a reference to treating both the body and mind. By looking at healthcare in a total way, we are in a position to focus holistically. As providers, UHS advocates that we redouble our efforts to close the historical treatment gap, provide integrated care to more people, and recognize that total health management is critical to improving population health.

As the number of COVID-19 cases begins to flatten across the country, many experts are speculating about a second wave of illness that will stress the health systems this fall, as the country enters into the normal flu season. However, other experts are warning of a second wave of medical crisis caused by COVID-19 that is happening now and strengthening quickly: the behavioral health surge.

There is a lot of evidence that supports our call for action. Suicide hotlines, including the federal crisis line Disaster Distress Hotline, have reported an increase of over 800 percent in calls since the pandemic started. A new national report detailing the psychological impacts of COVID-19 released by the Well Being Trust (WBT) and the Robert Graham Center for Policy Studies in Family Medicine and Primary Care project states an additional 75,000 Americans could die due to “diseases of despair”—suicide, alcohol and drug overdoses—due to the COVID-19 crisis. As Chuck Ingoglia, president of the National Council for Behavioral Health, has publicly stated, “This is the greatest crisis to ever hit community mental-health and addiction-treatment providers.”

Concern lies with the fact that fewer acute behavioral health patients have been seeking help at the hospitals due to COVID-19 fears. We have seen a reduction in patients who have transferred from hospital Emergency Rooms to inpatient behavioral health hospitalization since the start of the pandemic. In a time of a crisis, where personal lives are being impacted we had expected to see an increase in patients presenting to hospitals in distress, but the opposite is happening.

Individuals with current mental health issues may be fearful to seek professional help in the community at this time. These individuals may already be struggling to function on a daily basis. Add in new struggles exaggerated by the current COVID-19 situation, such as a job loss, problems with loved ones, increased anxiety, and individuals in recovery from addiction may be more tempted to drink or use again, leading to relapse. As the pandemic subsides, we are ready to meet pent-up demand for behavioral health services and support.

Describe your philosophy for leading through crisis in business.

We have been in the hospital and healthcare business for a very long time. UHS has grown and advanced because we have been able to attract and retain outstanding peo-
In every crisis, there are silver linings. This pandemic is no different. Uncertainty and disruption often drive change and many times, these changes are accelerated in their deployment. For example, at UHS we have scaled telehealth, delivering thousands of virtual care sessions via laptop and mobile over the past few months. Telehealth is here to stay. It is one aspect of life that is likely to become more commonplace, as we ease into a new normal following the pandemic and as Americans continue to approach daily activities with more caution. As healthcare providers, we will continue to enhance our telehealth offerings, providing clear communication on how patients can immediately access care at the time of crisis and receive assistance.

Another silver lining has been the adroitness and flexibility of our employees. During the pandemic, every day the CDC published updated information and guidance about the virus. Our team members adjusted protocols and practices immediately, in order to continue to keep patients and staff safe. Our hospitals converted units and patient areas to safely manage testing and isolation. We suspended visitation and used electronic means to keep patients connected with loved ones.

From a safety perspective, Personal Protection Equipment was a challenge across the entire healthcare industry. For the U.S., PPE products are overwhelmingly sourced overseas, with approximately 80% coming from China and Southeast Asia. The risks associated with this overreliance on Asia came into sharp focus during the pandemic as shutdowns prevented U.S. access to supplies, triggering widespread shortages of products needed to protect healthcare workers. While our UHS facilities were equipped with the required PPE, we are moving forward with a long-term agreement with U.S. producers of PPE. Not only does this create more diversity in the supply chain, but it also helps ensure that our workforce has the supplies they need to stay safe, healthy and able to provide quality care for the patients that count on us.

You are a historian. Talk about what you’ve learned from leaders of the past.

Several leaders have influenced my leadership style, but none more than the first President of the United States, George Washington. I am a student of history and have carefully studied the courage of our nation’s founding fathers and their bold entrepreneurial style. From Washington, I have learned the importance of perseverance, the power of remaining calm under pressure and the value of being ambitious.

Perseverance is the hallmark of both Washington and Winston Churchill. Never give up. Always expect to prevail, and convey that outlook to your people.

In the case of Churchill, one of his famous mottos was ‘Stay the course.’ For example, even while their cities were being devastated, the Brits cleared the rubble in the streets every morning and faced a new day. From them, I have adopted the phrase, ‘Stay calm and carry on,’ which was their watchword.
Washington was determined but mostly retreated for six years, preserving his Army until circumstances led him to prevail at Yorktown, which led to Britain’s ultimate defeat.

Can you share what lessons you’ve learned from growing a business from start-up to one of the largest companies in the world?

I am certainly appreciative of the success we have achieved. I was an entrepreneur intent on doing meaningful work and making a difference with my life. It is an honor to lead this very successful company and know that every day, we provide superior quality care, save lives, and help families in their times of greatest need.

UHS stands among the most respected providers of hospital and healthcare services in the world, leading the industry with its unique combination of quality patient care, financial stewardship and integrity. I often give a few pieces of advice to other CEOs and leaders, sharing the lessons I have learned from growing an enterprise:

● Character is destiny – an organization with good character will always be better off and prevail. Choose your friends carefully because you are known by the friends you keep. That extends to executives, as well.
● Hard work is critical and if you are going to do something, do it well.
● Hire the best team possible. When you have built trust, your team will focus on the goal you have put forth.

What can CEOs do to emerge stronger post-pandemic?

Even in these challenging times, we are asking ourselves, ‘How do we get ready for a post-COVID world?’ No one knows exactly what that world will look like, but we will certainly play a key role in determining what healthcare will be. We adjusted the sails early on in this pandemic. We will keep adjusting to harness the winds, care for our patients and serve our communities.
Our network of treatment centers, support staff and medical professionals are dedicated to meeting the needs of active duty service members, veterans and their families. Our primary focus is to provide the support and treatment through collaboration and integration with Military, VA and TRICARE® healthcare infrastructures.

As a leading provider of behavioral health services through TRICARE, we continually enhance programs to ensure military personnel and their families receive the support and care they need. Specialty treatment centers can help individuals who are struggling with:

- Substance use
- Post-traumatic stress
- Eating disorders
- Military sexual trauma
- Complex trauma

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