less scientific, more grounded in social approaches rather than clear-cut “medical” treatments. It is often considered a less prestigious field than many of the other medical specialties, and, I believe, the choice of not wearing a white coat reinforces the belief that it does have a reduced status. I have not seen any other specialty routinely eschew this symbol of our profession. The “white coat ceremony” symbolizes the importance of this.

I am certain that there are strong reasons that psychiatrists do not wear their white coats and that the choice reflects an attempt to foster a closer therapeutic alliance. Nevertheless, I suspect that this is a mistake. A simple experiment would answer that question. ☞

Reference

Author
Joseph H. Friedman, MD, is Editor-in-chief of the Rhode Island Medical Journal, Professor and the Chief of the Division of Movement Disorders, Department of Neurology at the Alpert Medical School of Brown University, chief of Butler Hospital’s Movement Disorders Program and first recipient of the Stanley Aronson Chair in Neurodegenerative Disorders.

HARI Reacts to Governor’s Proposed Budget
The Hospital Association of Rhode Island and its members are disappointed the proposed budget includes hospital payment cuts. We will continue to work with the General Assembly and Administration to find lasting solutions that address state fiscal problems while ensuring a financially stable healthcare system.

Hospitals provide nearly $7 billion in economic impact to our state. Elected officials must recognize hospitals are critical to a strong, healthy and stable Rhode Island. We urge them to make the appropriate investments to ensure the safety net is protected for Rhode Island patients.

As officials in Washington, D.C. consider the repeal of the Affordable Care Act, nearly ten percent of our state faces future problems accessing healthcare. In addition, hospitals could struggle with $1.7 billion in cuts on top of the $1 billion in reductions used to fund implementation of the Affordable Care Act.

We urge Governor Raimondo and the General Assembly to protect access to healthcare during this time of uncertainty.

— Michael R. Souza
President, Hospital Association of Rhode Island