

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

Bearman G, Bryant K, Leekha S, et al. Expert Guidance: Healthcare Personnel Attire in Non-Operating Room Settings. Inf Control Hosp Epidemiol 2014; 35(2):107-21.

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Disclosures on website

OPINION

HARI Reacts to Governor's Proposed Budget

The FY18 proposed state budget released by Gov. Gina Raimondo on January 19, 2017 includes elimination of upper payment limit payments (federal funds used to ensure Medicaid reimburses hospitals at an amount equal to Medicaid), Medicaid payment reductions, and cuts to inpatient mental health providers. The Hospital Association of Rhode Island continues to analyze the impact of these proposals.

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