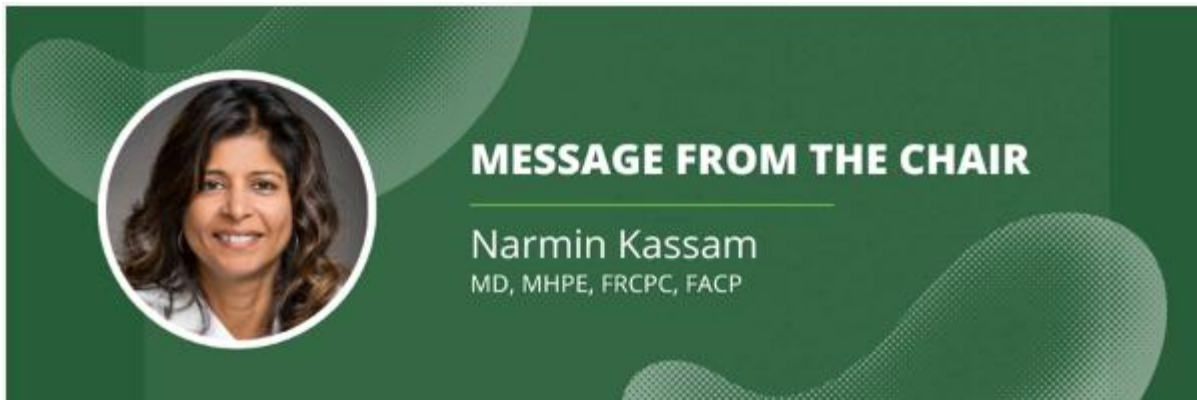




The February Pulse article on medical dress codes prompted concern among some members of our Department regarding its tone and impact. I want to thank colleagues for bringing forward their feedback. The article was written to examine how concepts of professionalism, particularly dress standards, may unintentionally create barriers for some trainees and physicians. While it was not intended as a personal attack or as a dismissal of any colleagues' identities, histories or contributions to medicine, I recognize the concerns raised about the tone and language used. I value psychological safety and am committed to creating an environment in which all members of our Department can express differing perspectives openly and respectfully.

Articles published in Pulse are intended to stimulate reflection, critical thinking, and open conversation on complex issues affecting our professional community. They are not policy statements nor do they represent formal Departmental positions. The purpose of the piece was to invite discussion about how we define professionalism in contemporary medicine, not to prescribe change or characterize colleagues in reductive ways.

Without a doubt, conversations about professionalism must account for patient expectations, clinical context, safety and the symbolic meaning of traditions such as the white coat. At the same time, it is reasonable to examine whether certain norms may have unintended, differential impacts on individuals from diverse cultural, religious, gender or socioeconomic backgrounds.

I believe this issue presents an opportunity, not for polarization, but for thoughtful engagement. By grounding discussions in evidence, lived experience and mutual respect, we can advance inclusion while preserving trust, professionalism and excellence in patient care. I look forward to continuing this discussion in a climate of openness, inclusion and respect.

Sincerely,

Narmin Kassam, MD, MHPE, FRCPC, FACP
Professor and Chair, Department of Medicine