

Frequently Asked Questions

Why did Dr. Hirt stop being a medical insurance provider?

When I founded The Center for Integrative Medicine more than 20 years ago, I wanted this special type of medicine to be available to everybody. So, I became a participating provider with hundreds of insurance plans. In taking this approach, any patient with an insurance card could see me and benefit from the power and promise of Integrative Medicine.

Over time, the insurance business has changed...and not for the better.

The 'bean counters' have ruined medicine much like they have ruined education. In education, the mantra of 'No child left behind' has also meant that 'No child gets ahead.' Teachers are evaluated based on their student's scores on standardized tests and not the quality of their teaching skills. So, teachers 'teach' for the test, and a child's education is centered on the metrics of these test scores.

If you really wanted to evaluate the skill and impact of a teacher, you would interview all of a teacher's students and their parents. You could then assess the true value of what this teacher has brought to the children's education and the community. Similarly, if you really wanted to assess the skill and impact of a physician, you would do the same: interview every one of the doctor's patients and learn the true value of this doctor's efforts on the lives, the choices, and the outcomes of these patients.

But, for the 'bean counters,' this endeavor would be too much work, take too much time, and cost too much money to accomplish. Instead, doctor's are forced to collect (at our own expense and time) worthless patient data to fill worthless spreadsheets of worthless metrics. A 'good' doctor is now judged to be one that is 'good' at filling out forms.

And for that reason, I'm out.

Starting in January 2020, my practice will be free of these metrics and the distraction they have become in and out of the exam room. To maintain my commitment to universal access to Integrative Medicine, my office charges will be fair and reasonable.

I look forward to sharing in this new paradigm, unencumbered and energized to focus solely on you, the patient.

How much will an Office Visit cost?

An Office Visit will cost \$79. Sometimes, additional services are needed such as labs, EKGs, and cultures. Please see our price list for the costs of these specific medical tests and in-office procedures.

What is the difference between an Office Visit and an Extended Office Visit?

An Office Visit includes a discussion about your new health concerns, follow-up on previous concerns/medication, and a physical examination. Patients can request to have an Extended Office Visit. Additional office time would then be scheduled to allow for more in-depth discussions of any health concerns. Additionally, for patients with more than three medical issues or concerns, an Extended Office Visit service charge will apply.

What will it cost if I need to call Dr. Hirt's exchange for an urgent After-Hours telehealth/phone consultation?

The Center for Integrative Medicine provides 24/7 access to Dr. Hirt or a qualified health care provider. If you need urgent assistance on any weeknight, weekend, or holiday, you may call our main office line and ask to speak with the provider on-call. After-Hours telehealth/phone consultations with either Dr. Hirt or his covering provider are \$99.

Who will help me bill my insurance for Dr. Hirt's medical services?

At the end of your visit with Dr. Hirt, you will be provided with all of the relevant medical records, claim forms, and an envelope addressed to your medical insurance company. Our office has been successfully helping patients get reimbursement for out-of-network medical services for more than 10 years, and we are happy to assist you in filing your insurance claim.

How much can I expect to get back from my insurance company for Dr. Hirt's charges?

Reimbursements for out-of-network care start after you have met your annual out-of-network deductible. Each of the major health insurance companies have different reimbursement rates. For example, Blue Shield typically reimburses 50% of out-of-network charges while United Health reimburses up to 80% for similar charges. Please check with your health plan to gauge your out-of-network coverage.

If I have Medicare, will I be able to get any reimbursement for Dr. Hirt's charges?

No. Medicare does not reimburse patients for any out-of-network care. To offset Dr. Hirt's in-office charges, a 5% discount on our Natural Pharmacy supplements is available to any patient with a Medicare card. This discount is applied to all supplement purchases in our office, but is not currently available for on-line purchases.

Do I have to pay cash for routine lab testing or imaging (MRIs, CAT scans, X-rays, Ultrasounds)?

No. All routine lab testing and imaging will be sent to in-network providers. These providers will then bill your medical insurance. As always, you will be responsible to pay these providers for any co-pays or monies that are applied to your annual deductible. Specialty testing and STAT test orders may have additional fees. When these apply, you will be told of any associated fees before the testing has been ordered.