

# The Practice Model: Explained

Dear Valued Patient,

I have decided to change my medical practice from insurance-focused to patient-focused. Starting in January 2020, I will no longer be a participating provider with private insurance companies and Medicare.

By removing the insurance companies from the examination room, my attention can be fully directed to you, the patient. After all, 'you' are the reason I went to medical school: to be a doctor... not an insurance representative.

As a physician, I know that medical care can be expensive. Between insurance premiums, drug pricing, specialty care, and medical testing, the costs of being a patient can add up fast. In taking back control of my practice and the care that I provide, I am dedicated to keeping medical care in my office accessible and affordable.

Here's how:

There are four basic components of the medical care that I provide to patients:

1. Office visits
2. Diagnostics (ordering, interpreting, and communicating test results)
3. Procedures and Injections
4. Telehealth (phone appointments, medication refills, medical triage)

## **Office Visits**

Let's start with what it will cost to see me for an office visit. An office visit will be \$79. This will cover medical services such as physical examinations, medication refills, new prescriptions, pre-ops, annual physicals, medication management, urgent care, physical therapy prescriptions, and referrals. During an office visit, I can still assist you when necessary with the completion of medical forms from entities such as employers, the DMV, Jury Service, and disability insurance companies.

Most insurance companies include reimbursement for out-of-network medical care, and my office can help you bill your medical insurance for these office visits.

## **Diagnostics**

Diagnostic testing is essential because blood, urine, microbiology (cultures), and medical imaging (MRIs, CAT scans, X-rays, Ultrasounds) provide vital information that I need to prescribe optimal treatment and prevention strategies.

Starting in January 2020, all standard diagnostic testing will be sent to in-network labs and imaging centers that take your medical insurance. My office will no longer charge patients or insurance companies for blood, urine and microbiological laboratory testing. This means that these in-network labs and imaging centers will bill your insurance company for these diagnostic tests. As before, specimens will be collected in my office or the adjoining phlebotomy center.

Sometimes specialty laboratory testing from out-of-network labs may be recommended, and patients will be informed of these expenses before the service is provided. Out-of-network labs cannot bill your insurance company because they do not have a contract to do so.

As your trusted diagnostician, I utilize advanced medical testing to home in on the correct diagnosis quickly and accurately. Additionally, my nuanced expertise allows me to interpret your test results differently than other providers. To partially offset the associated costs of interpreting, communicating, and managing test results, there will be an additional charge between \$19 to \$39.

- For ONE blood/urine/culture/stool lab panel: \$19
- For TWO blood/urine/culture/stool lab panels: \$29
- For THREE or more blood/urine/culture/stool lab panels: \$39
- For each MRI, CAT scan, X-ray, Ultrasound, Nuclear Medicine tests ordered by me: \$29

For all lab panels, this service fee is also applied if the diagnostic testing has been ordered by other health care providers and is received and reviewed before, during, or after your visit. This includes blood/urine/culture/stool test results that are printed, emailed, texted, or viewed on any device during your office visit.

## **Procedures and Injections**

The fee for most procedures will be \$79. Procedures include therapies such as Prolozone injections, puncturing and draining wounds, and cryotherapy (freezing). For example, if the only care provided during a visit is the procedure, such as a Prolozone injection, the fee is only \$79. If you need both a Prolozone injection and an office visit with examination, then the fee will be \$158 (Prolozone \$79 + Office Visit \$79).

Service fees for many injections (such as B-12 and testosterone) will remain very reasonable (around \$20). As always, you can receive an injection with or without an office visit provided that you have had at least one recent quarterly office visit.

## **Telehealth**

My office will continue to provide the convenience of telehealth services. Telehealth is medical care that is provided to patients via phone, fax, email, or texting. Telehealth services include triage and prescriptions for urgent care (i.e. cold and flus, UTIs), medication refills, and doctor phone appointments.

## **Pricing**

A comprehensive pricing list for each type of medical service is available in my office and on my website, [www.drhirt.com](http://www.drhirt.com), under the tab '[Office Information](#)'. Those of you with large insurance deductibles should appreciate significant cost savings under this new pricing plan.

I remain grateful that you have entrusted me with your health care, and I look forward to strengthening our physician-patient bond in a new paradigm that allows me to focus solely on your best health.

With gratitude,

Michael Hirt, MD