

Practitioner Support

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Presenting the Pros for Third Party Reimbursement for Energy Medicine Practice

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As you have seen in previous articles of Energy Magazine the Healing Touch Professional Association (HTPA) Insurance Initiative Committee has been researching documentation that will allow energy healers to receive payment from various insurances. In this article we will offer information on the *background, current status and the advantages* of submitting billing to Medicare, Medicaid and private insurance companies.

Let us begin by looking at the history of what has happened to support energy healers, like Healing Touch practitioners, during this process of moving toward reimbursement for services. In 1990 there were 425 million visits made to Complementary/Alternative Medicine (CAM) providers (currently most CAM services are included in the growing profession of Energy Medicine and fall into the category of *energy practice*). This exceeds the number of visits to conventional health care providers by over 40 million appointments. In the same year, The American Academy of Pediatrics encouraged parents who were frustrated with traditional scientific methods to turn to CAM therapies.

In 1995 Washington State was the first state to pass a law requiring insurance companies to cover CAM. Since 1996 CAM has been covered by insurance in Washington, Oregon, Alaska, and California. In California most of the Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) cover CAM services such as, acupuncture and chiropractic care. In 1997 The Matthew Thornton Health Plan (specific to New Hampshire) began reimbursement for CAM services. Additional Insurance companies in our nation have, and are providing, CAM coverage. In 2002 The National Institutes of Health (NIH) found that 36 percent of Americans used some sort of alternative therapy in the previous year. In 2013 the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reported 54.4 percent of Americans use CAM. Consumer demand is having a huge influence on the establishment of insurance reimbursement for CAM therapies. Healing Touch is an established CAM/Energy Medicine modality.

What is the current situation? Healing Touch has been implemented in various hospitals, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and cancer clinics around the country. The validity of evidenced-based outcomes in the practice of Healing Touch is recognized in these established organizations. National statistics prove that stress, anxiety, back pain, and mental illnesses, such as depression, are the leading cause for employees to call off work. Some Health Benefits' Departments report that their employees are spending 90 percent of insurance costs on anxiety and anti-depression medications. As they explore solutions to reduce this high percentage, they are becoming open to including energy therapies like Healing Touch within their insurance coverage. The hope is to decrease the amount of money spent on medications and increase employee wellness.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA), also known as "Obama Care", opens the door for millions of Americans to have insurance to help them with their health care costs. The current Federal and State activities around the country in both private and public health care, as well as consumer demand, appears to be moving toward supporting Healing Touch and other energy therapies, to be covered by major insurance companies.

The advantages of insurance payment to Energy Medicine Practitioners, specifically Healing Touch Certified Practitioners, include the following:

- Consumers will have access to services through their medical coverage which will decrease their concern for out of pocket expenses.
- Traditional physicians will have another option for treating patients using Energy Medicine therapies.
- Hospitals and other health care facilities will be able



to bill a patient's insurance company for treatments provided by Energy Medicine Practitioners.

- Energy healers will be members of the Health Care Team supporting the patient/consumer holistically - body, mind and spirit.

Keep in mind, the journey to receive insurance payments is a process, and although we are getting closer, it is still going to take some time. We are not discouraged. Massage and acupuncture have paved the way as examples of modalities that not so long ago, were not eligible for insurance payments.

So what can you do to help us along in this journey?

Continue to educate physicians, nurse practitioners, and other health providers about Energy Medicine modalities like Healing Touch as valid practices for insurance payment. Suggest that prescriptions be written for Healing Touch and other Energy Medicine modalities by health care providers for patients to submit to their insurance companies as one way to educate their carriers about consumer demand for services. As practitioners, educate your clients to assist them to be confident when they speak to their health care providers about Energy Medicine as an appropriate reimbursable health care service.

Very soon, you will be able to make a living with your heart-centered practice and skills - doing the work you love to do.

We look forward to the benefits of being able to work with insurance carriers -- working full time, having a referral system through the insurance companies, having a close relationship with primary health care providers and being part of the health care team. We are close to a radical shift when the focus will be on offering holistic care for optimal wellness. We know that energy modalities like Healing Touch will become more accessible to the population at large as a result of coverage by insurance companies.

The HTPA Insurance Initiative Committee is currently preparing application to Medicare and Medicaid to obtain a CPT Code for Healing Touch. (CPT® stands for Current Procedural Terminology, which was developed by the American Medical Association for coding medical procedures.) If you have a background in submitting such an application or any knowledge you think would benefit our efforts, please contact us at info@HTPProfessionalAssociation.com. We will keep you posted on our progress. 