Health Level Seven Receives ANSI Approval for Arden Syntax, Version 2.5

ANN ARBOR, Mich.—May 16, 2005—Health Level Seven (HL7), one of the world’s most prolific healthcare standards developers, announced that on April 25, 2005 it received approval from the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) for its Arden Syntax, Version 2.5 standard.

“The Arden Syntax Version 2.5 standard represents another example of the good work of the volunteer HL7 members,” said HL7 Chair Mark Shafarman. “Their efforts will clearly benefit the healthcare industry.”

Arden Syntax is a standard for representing and sharing clinical knowledge in Medical Logic Modules (MLM). This specification covers the sharing of computerized health knowledge bases among personnel, information systems, and institutions. The scope has been limited to those knowledge bases that can be represented as a set of discrete modules. Each module, or MLM, contains sufficient knowledge to make a single decision. Examples of the types of information that can be represented using MLMs include contraindication alerts, management suggestions, data interpretations, treatment protocols, and diagnosis scores. Each MLM also contains management information to help maintain a knowledge base of MLMs and links to other sources of knowledge. Health personnel can create MLMs directly using this format, and the resulting MLMs can be used directly by an information system that conforms to this specification.

“The principal advance in this latest version of the Arden Syntax is the addition of an object data type and related operators,” said Robert Jenders, co-chair of the HL7 Arden Syntax Special Interest Group (SIG). “This will facilitate manipulation of complex clinical data in a more structured way than prior versions of the standard. In turn, this will help integrate the Arden Syntax with the family of HL7 standards centered on the object-oriented Reference Information Model (RIM), which is a high-level representation of all the kinds of data used in healthcare.”
The HL7 Arden Syntax SIG is responsible for developing the Arden Syntax standard. Its charter includes developing future versions of the Arden Syntax, with the goals of facilitating its use for representing procedural medical knowledge and promoting knowledge sharing.

The Arden Syntax Version 2.5 standard is expected to be available in June of this year. It will be made available free to members of HL7 and for purchase by non-members via the HL7 website (www.HL7.org). It will also appear on the HL7 Version 2.6 messaging standard CD-Rom when that is published in late 2005.

About HL7

Founded in 1987, Health Level Seven, Inc. (http://www.HL7.org/) is a not-for-profit, ANSI-accredited standards developing organization dedicated to providing a comprehensive framework and related standards for the exchange, integration, sharing, and retrieval of electronic health information that supports clinical practice and the management, delivery and evaluation of health services. HL7's more than 2,000 members represent approximately 500 corporate members, including 90 percent of the largest information systems vendors serving healthcare. Recently, HL7 joined 12 other healthcare stakeholders in a collaborative response to the Request for Information (RFI) issued by the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONCHIT) to learn how widespread interoperability of health information technologies and health information exchange could be achieved through a National Health Information Network (NHIN). The Collaborative response can be viewed in its entirety at: http://www.hl7.org/Library/General/Collaborative_RFI_Responsefinal.pdf. The HL7 additional response specific to Standards and Policies to Achieve Interoperability can be found at http://www.hl7.org/Library/General/HL7Q14-18_final.pdf.

HL7's endeavors are sponsored, in part, by the support of its benefactors: Capgemini; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); Documentum; Eclipsys Corporation; Eli Lilly & Company; the Food and Drug Administration; GE Medical Systems; Guidant Corporation; IBM; IDX Systems Corporation; InterSystems Corporation; Kaiser Permanente; McKesson Provider Technologies; Microsoft Corporation; Misys Healthcare Systems; NHS Connecting for Health; NICTIZ National ICT Institute for Healthcare in The Netherlands; Oracle Corporation; Partners HealthCare System, Inc.; Pfizer, Inc.; Philips Medical Systems; Quest Diagnostics Inc.; Science Applications International Corporation; Siemens Medical Solutions Health Services; the U.S. Department of Defense; Military Health System; the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Wyeth Pharmaceuticals.

International affiliates have also been established in 27 countries throughout the globe including Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Lithuania, Mexico, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Spain, Switzerland, Taiwan, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

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