ANN ARBOR, Mich.—September 7, 2005— Health Level Seven (HL7) and Integrating the Healthcare Enterprise (IHE) announced today the two organizations have signed a two-year, renewable associate charter agreement to formalize the existing cooperative relationship between the two groups, convey mutual benefits to their members, and establish the framework for future joint work projects. The first of these HL7/IHE collaborations will be on display at the HIMSS 2006 IHE Interoperability Showcase where HL7’s Care Record Summary (CRS) will play a key role in IHE’s Cross Enterprise Sharing of Medical Summaries Integration Profile.

The Care Record Summary is an HL7 Implementation Guide currently undergoing HL7’s informative ballot process. It describes how to use the HL7 Clinical Document Architecture (CDA) Release 2 standard to create clinical documents that support communication of a patient's relevant health history over a given time period between healthcare practitioners.

IHE promotes the coordinated use of established standards like HL7 and DICOM to address specific clinical needs in support of optimal patient care. IHE Integration Profiles organize sets of IHE actors and transactions in order to address specific patient care needs.

“IHE intends to create profiles from existing standards for commonly used clinical documents that are exchanged between physician offices and hospitals—for example, the discharge summaries sent from a hospital to a physician office or a history and physical sent from a physician office to a hospital,” said Dan Russler, MD, vice president of clinical technology at McKesson Provider Technologies, co-chair of HL7’s Patient Care Technical Committee, and co-chair of the IHE Patient Care Coordination Technical Committee.
“The resulting IHE Integration Profile will be used in the HIMSS 2006 Interoperability Showcase to illustrate the importance of HL7’s Care Record Summaries in communicating relevant patient information between healthcare providers,” said Keith W. Boone, senior consulting engineer for Dictaphone Corporation, co-chair of the IHE Patient Care Coordination Technical Committee, and editor of the HL7 Care Record Summaries Implementation Guide. “Care Record Summaries will be exchanged between EHR systems connected in various Regional Health Information Organization (RHIO) environments to allow for the transfer of clinical information between providers. Visitors to the HIMSS Interoperability Showcase will be able to see real-time sharing of patient information from one EHR to another as they progress through the clinical scenarios where this Integration Profile is used.”

Boone says that this Integration Profile further constrains the CRS to support two very common clinical scenarios: a hospital discharge summary to an ambulatory care setting, and a referral from a primary care physician to a specialist. He says these constraints further specify the format of key patient safety data (problems, medications and allergies) into fielded and possibly coded information sets so that it may be accessed and imported into an electronic health record (EHR) system.

“Interoperability can only be achieved in healthcare by using standards-based applications,” said Joyce Sensmeier MS, RN, BC, CPHIMS, FHIMSS, vice president of informatics at the Health Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS). “Through its sponsorship of IHE, HIMSS is pleased to be able to build upon the foundational standards work of Health Level Seven in the recently published draft of the Cross Enterprise Sharing of Medical Summaries Integration Profile.”

The HL7/IHE Associate Charter Agreement encourages the establishment of similar meeting schedules, joint meetings, and joint projects between the two groups. In addition, both parties have agreed to:

- encourage the harmonization of any information model(s) with the HL7 Reference Information Model (RIM);
- appoint one liaison each to the other group who will actively participate in all discussions between them; and
- provide limited member privileges to members of the other group, including discounted registration fees at sponsored meetings and events.

The agreement also provides that IHE will:

- give preference to healthcare IT standards over cross-industry standards if the former meets IHE defined profile use cases;
- use the most current HL7 standards in new IHE profiles where HL7 standards are used;
- communicate to HL7 any incompatibility issues with using HL7 standards in IHE profiles and provide HL7 the opportunity to address them; and
- engage HL7 in a dialogue before making a decision on which standard to use where competing standards exist.
About IHE

IHE (www.ihe.net) is a global initiative, now in its seventh year that creates the framework for passing vital health information seamlessly - from application to application, system to system, and setting to setting - across multiple healthcare enterprises. IHE brings together healthcare information technology stakeholders to implement standards for communicating patient information efficiently throughout and among healthcare enterprises by developing a framework for interoperability. Because of its proven process of collaboration, demonstration and real world implementation of interoperable solutions, IHE is in a unique position to significantly accelerate the process for defining, testing, and implementing standards-based interoperability among electronic health records systems. The principal sponsoring organizations of IHE are the American College of Cardiology (ACC), HIMSS and the Radiological Society of North America (RSNA).

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.

HL7’s endeavors are sponsored, in part, by the support of its benefactors: Capgemini; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); Documentum; Duke Clinical Research Institute (DCRI), 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 (SAIC); Siemens Medical Solutions Health Services; Solucient LLC, the U.S. Department of Defense, Military Health System; the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Wyeth Pharmaceuticals.

HL7 International Affiliates have also been established in 25 countries throughout the globe including Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain, Switzerland, Taiwan, Turkey and the United Kingdom. Recently, the HL7 Board approved the establishment of two new affiliates in Malaysia and Uruguay.

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