Health Level Seven, Inc.

HiMSS Electronic Health Record Vendors Association

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HL7 Launches eHealth Effort for Katrina Relief

HL7 standards make an impact on the ground in the wake of Hurricane Katrina
EHRVA Onboard Representing Key Industry Constituency

ANN ARBOR, Mich.—September 29, 2005—The Health Level Seven, Inc. (HL7) community is supporting the development of portable, interoperable electronic health records for the hundreds of thousands of people whose lives have been disrupted by Katrina. Many HL7 members are already involved, improving access to vital healthcare information and HL7 has formed a task force to support and guide further efforts. Last week, HL7 issued a call to members to participate and is forging relationships with other industry groups to solve the immediate and long-term problems of disaster relief and preparedness.

"The HL7 community represents the most concentrated group of interoperability expertise anywhere. We are rising to the challenge of rebuilding the medical records of the displaced population and doing so in a way that can become a model for the future of the country," says Mark Shafarman, HL7 Chair. "We stand ready to work with anyone and everyone implementing standards-based applications. Our Reference Information Model for healthcare, our community of experts and our standards and specifications for interoperability can guide this process." The Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS) Electronic Health Record Vendors' Association (EHRVA) is already working with the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONCHIT) towards constructing and integrating an electronic health record (EHR) infrastructure within the areas of the gulf coast affected by Hurricane Katrina.

HL7 Standards Making a Difference

HL7 standards are already making an impact on the ground in the wake of Katrina providing access to records of childhood immunization records. The American Immunization Registry Association (AIRA) (*www.immregistries.org*)—an HL7 member organization—reports that nine registries are now using HL7 messages to query the Louisiana Immunization Network for Kids Statewide (LINKS), resulting in retrieval of 4,250 records as of Tuesday, September 27. Immunization registries querying LINKS are: Arizona, Houston, Idaho, Indiana, Maryland, Ohio, Washington, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

"The importance of HL7 standards was never more evident than during Katrina," said Julie A. Boom, M.D., Medical Director, Houston-Harris County Immunization Registry and Director of the Immunization Project at Texas Children's Hospital, and AIRA member. " Literally overnight, the Houston-Harris County Immunization Registry was able to be connected to the 'LINKS' Louisiana statewide immunization registry with the assistance of Scientific Technology Corporation. Because each registry was fully HL7 compliant, this link was able to be made quickly and easily. Retrieving these records from LINKS has saved the public health community thousands of dollars for the cost of re-immunizing these children and it saves the children of Louisiana from the discomfort of additional immunizations. This experience truly highlights the importance of following national standards and should encourage other immunization registries to fully support HL7 standards as soon as possible."

More solutions are in the works:
- Oracle Corporation, an HL7 benefactor, had been working in close cooperation with the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospital to create a regional solution for health information sharing before the hurricane struck and is now accelerating those efforts.
- HL7 member organization OZ Systems, which provides information technology for the State of Texas' Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program (TEHDI), is exploring ways to use HL7 messaging standards to transfer hearing screening results data for Louisiana newborn evacuees who had to have their screenings done in Texas. This data needs to be sent back to respective birthing facilities in Louisiana or the Louisiana Department of Health as needed for CDC reports, or to assure that an infant receives care if necessary.
- Intel Corporation is coordinating the donation of 1,500 laptop personal computers to the American Red Cross for distribution to shelters in support of Katrina disaster relief efforts. In addition, Intel will donate 150 wireless Internet access points.
- Additional support for the Gulf region has been pledged by HL7 members including the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services, Information Systems Branch; MedQuist Corporation; Microsoft Corporation and TeleVital.

HL7 and its more than 2,220 individual and corporate U.S. members have information technology expertise in all segments of the healthcare industry, and real-world experience in developing an infrastructure that is standards based and allows interoperable records to be distributed over multiple sites using multiple local applications. In addition, HL7's more than 500 corporate members include not only EHR vendors, but infrastructure and integration vendors together with suppliers of standards-compliant dictation and transcription.

HL7 Response and Recovery Taskforce

The HL7 Response and Recovery Taskforce has been meeting daily, speaking with government officials, technologists and planners. The Task Force will coordinate education and outreach to the HL7 community including vendors and providers, HL7 International Affiliates as well as other standards development organizations, and U.S. national bodies such as the Office of the

National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONCHIT), the Department of Defense (DoD), the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The Taskforce will design, coordinate and organize implementation projects focusing on the creation of a healthcare information infrastructure to help address the personal and public health information crisis created by Katrina.

HL7 members wishing to be involved in this effort should respond via katrina@HL7.org and sign onto the Katrina support listserv available on the HL7 web site (ww.HL7.org).

Participation by EHRVA

In the aftermath of Katrina, the EHRVA has been actively engaged with the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information (ONCHIT) and other healthcare stakeholders to support the potentially nomadic evacuee population in the goal of making medical record information available wherever they receive care.

- The EHRVA is on task of suggesting immediate means to meet emergency patient information needs and laying the groundwork for rebuilding a patient information management infrastructure. During this process, the EHRVA is dedicating workgroup and executive committee time to plan a practical framework.
- EHRVA contribution to Katrina Relief leverages the organization's partnership with IHE and an ongoing commitment to devise viable interoperability models.
- EHRVA is in dialogue with ONCHIT and channeling updates and requests to members to support roll-out of response plans now and in the near future.

EHRVA has joined with HL7 in this call to members to participate and pool resources for interoperable electronic health records. The two organizations are ideal partners in this effort, since two of their core goals are based on making progress in the areas of standards and interoperability. EHRVA is comprised of 35 member companies that serve the vast majority of healthcare providers in the nation with Healthcare Information Technology (HIT) solutions, which complements and overlaps with HL7's membership.

 "Since Hurricane Katrina we've been humbled by the dedication of our clients in hospitals and physician practices as they have brought EHR technology into the heart of the crisis. We are taking our cues from providers who are working from the conviction that a stronger HIT foundation will better prepare us for any eventuality such as these recent storms," said Charlene Underwood, EHRVA chairperson and Director, Government and Industry Relations for Siemens Medical Solutions.

Collaborative Efforts toward a Regional Recovery

The HL7 community has the largest single pool of expertise on healthcare information systems and how to connect them for effective collection and delivery of healthcare information. Its members are active in efforts with state and local and national agencies, including the Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In addition to EHRVA, HL7 is offering to collaborate with all organizations providing solutions for the affected area.

About EHRVA

HIMSS EHRVA (http://www.himssehrva.org) is a trade association of Electronic Health Record (EHR) vendors who have joined together to lead the HIT industry in the accelerated adoption of electronic health records in hospital and ambulatory care settings in the US. The association provides a forum for the EHR vendor community to speak with a unified voice relative to standards development, the EHR certification process, interoperability, performance and

quality measures, and other EHR issues as they become subject to increasing government, insurance and provider driven initiatives and requests. Membership is open to HIMSS corporate members with legally formed companies designing, developing and marketing their own commercially available EHRs with installations in the USA.

The association, comprised of 35 member companies, is a partner of the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS) and operates as an organizational unit within HIMSS.

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: Accenture; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); Duke Clinical Research Institute (DCRI); Eclipsys Corporation; Eli Lilly & Company; the Food and Drug Administration; GE Healthcare Information Technologies; Guidant Corporation; IBM; IDX Systems Corporation; Intel Corporation, Digital Health; 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; Solucient, LLC; 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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