CEN TC, ISO TC and HL7 Chairs Announce Broad Agreement on Coordination and Collaboration

Ann Arbor, Michigan, U.S.A.—November 13, 2006—Health Level Seven, Inc. (HL7) today announced that the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) Technical Committee (TC) 251, International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Technical Committee (TC) 215 and HL7 chairs recently met in Geneva to further advance shared plans to coordinate and collaborate in delivering global standards that enable interoperable capabilities in the healthcare domain. These plans will enhance the contributions of the three standards development organizations (SDOs), strengthen the delivery of standards-based solutions to all customers, and support the goal of safe, accessible, quality and effective health service delivery.

The meeting in Geneva focused on key principles that will be applied in harmonizing the processes of standards development across the three SDOs. Building on existing collaborations and work already underway across the SDOs, the chairs noted that their respective business plans all now include a focus on multilateral SDO collaboration, cooperation, and coordination.

HL7 Chair Chuck Meyer stated that “We already have cooperative relationships with ISO and CEN and are undertaking a strategic initiative that will further develop our capacity and structure for coordinating our work program.”

Kees Molenaar, Chair of CEN TC251, provided an overview of the TC’s Business Plan, which includes an assessment of the current environment and the TC’s work program. “CEN is not in the business of competing in standards development and will be collaborating and cooperating with other SDOs, along with the vendor, government and provider communities as we fulfill our role in the EU.”

Dr Yun Sik Kwak, Chair of ISO TC215, agreed with the importance of engaging the three communities, particularly noting the recent Global Summits for National Health Information initiatives in 2005 and the summit with health IT vendors in Geneva. “ISO TC215 is undertaking a leadership role in the harmonization of globally
based health informatics standards. This important effort is in response to a call for such action by government and industry leaders, and reflects the evolving business model of ISO TC215 which includes a greater global focus on orchestration of standards.”

The meeting identified a number of principles that will be incorporated into a draft terms of reference for SDO collaboration, coordination and cooperation. Building on the shared goodwill of the organizations, the principles included agreement to:

- Continue to accommodate member bodies’ needs and processes, individual SDO mandates and external influences;
- Be business requirements driven;
- Be customer-focused through strengthened connection with governments, vendors and providers;
- Undertake joint strategic and operational planning;
- Coordinate standards starting at the beginning of the standards development processes;
- Jointly determine which standards to harmonize and include in respective work programs;
- Be topic and project-focused in undertaking collaboration, coordination and cooperation;
- Support, facilitate and effectively use collective resource capacity and expertise in the development of health information standards; and
- Provide common communications to our various external stakeholders and communities of interest.

These principles will be applied to the processes for choosing, launching, communicating, marketing and supporting standards that need to be developed or are currently being developed.

Recognizing the commitment of ISO/TC 215 to serve as a coordinating mechanism and focal point for the collective work of the SDOs, the three SDOs clearly acknowledged that they will be inclusive and open to other international SDOs joining in this growing and evolving harmonization effort.

A small work team has been assigned the task of detailing and continuing the planning process in time to table a full plan for the March 2007 ISO/TC 215 meeting in Montreal. At that meeting, specific plans will also be tabled for collective harmonization work targeted for delivery in 2008.

**About HL7**

Founded in 1987, Health Level Seven, Inc. (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 2,400 members represent
approximately 500 corporate members, including 90 percent of the largest information systems vendors serving healthcare.

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