HL7 Assumes Leadership Role in Historic Charter Organization with Leading U.S. Standards Developers
Effort to Provide Needed Collaboration and Breakthroughs for Interoperable HIT Implementation and Health Reform

Ann Arbor, MI., U.S. – March 19, 2009 – As health system reform and the movement to give each American an interoperable EHR by 2014 pick up speed, Health Level Seven (HL7) today announced its participation in the new SDO (standards development organization) Charter Organization (SCO). The purpose of the SCO is to increase coordination and collaboration on healthcare informatics standards development among SDOs. The primary focus of the SCO is the United States but global standards issues are also on the agenda.

The SCO aims to facilitate and support the resolution of the healthcare industry’s standards challenges for efficient and effective information management, and electronic data exchange by:

- Increasing coordination among SDOs through common strategies (e.g., models, vocabularies, data elements, syntax, etc.) and coordinated organizational communications;
- Improving consistency across standards to reduce implementation challenges;
- Enhancing standards usability and quality in the name of meaningful healthcare outcomes improvement; and
- Ensuring the availability of standards that support workflows and operations through enhanced interoperability now and in the future.

SCO members include executives from HL7 and the: Accredited Standards Committee (ASC) X12, ASTM International, Clinical Data Interchange Standards Consortium (CDISC), National Council for Prescription Drug Programs (NCPDP) and Workgroup for Electronic Data Interchange (WEDI). The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) is a permanent non-
voting SCO member. Formal observers such as the Health Information Technology Standards Panel (HITSP), the Social Security Administration, representatives from the Federal Health Architecture and Integrating the Healthcare Enterprise (IHE) are also taking part in this historic collaboration.

HL7’s Chief Technology Officer and SCO Chair-Elect John Quinn said of the collaboration, “In this time of increased patient, policymaker, and profiler expectations, the SDOs’ work together could not be more important. We are pleased to undertake this critical team effort with our fellow standards development organizations. Only through group discussion and planned project action can we provide the enhanced insight required to reach the ambitious interoperability and standards harmonization goals set before us. National efforts to pull together Electronic Health Record information in Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, and the Americas show us that the challenge is great and we must all make an effort to simplify the process.” Quinn emphasized, “HL7 comes to the SCO table ready to contribute our existing and future intellectual capital, and lead and work with our partners to shape standards efforts in the US.”

John Klimek, Senior Vice President of Industry Information Technology for NCPDP and the inaugural SCO Chair, said, "The healthcare industry has made great use of information technology to improve capabilities and reduce costs. But, little work has been done among individual standards development organizations (SDOs) and affiliate organizations to integrate their standards into a seamless interoperable unit.” Klimek added, “Through the SCO (Standards Charter Organization) Summit, various industry SDOs and affiliate organizations are now working on methods to remove barriers and improve capabilities and efficiencies, which will result in a more cost effective healthcare.”

In addition to employing a common approach consistent with ANSI-accredited procedures in standards development to achieve interoperability across the healthcare user community, the SCO is also undertaking initial projects that reflect its diverse membership. Planned projects cover areas such as medication history, common medication information, allergy information tags, and cataloging current services and functional gaps/overlaps.

For more information about HL7, please visit www.HL7.org.
For more information about the SCO, please visit www.SCOSummit.com.

About HL7
Founded in 1987, Health Level Seven, Inc. (www.HL7.org) is a not-for-profit, ANSI-accredited standards development 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, which include more than 90 percent of the information systems vendors serving healthcare.

HL7’s endeavors are sponsored, in part, by the support of its benefactors: Accenture; Booz Allen Hamilton; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Duke Translational Medicine Institute (DTMI); Eclipsys Corporation; Eli Lilly & Company; Epic Systems Corporation; the Food and Drug Administration; GE Healthcare Information Technologies; GlaxoSmithKline; IBM; Intel Corporation; InterSystems Corporation; Kaiser Permanente; Lockheed Martin; McKesson Provider Technologies; Microsoft Corporation; NHS Connecting for Health; NICTIZ National Healthcare; Novartis; Oracle Corporation; Partners HealthCare System, Inc.; Pfizer, Inc.; Philips Healthcare; QuadraMed Corporation; Quest Diagnostics Inc.; Sanofi-aventis R&D; Siemens Medical Solutions Health Services; St. Jude Medical; Sunquest Information Systems; Thomson Reuters; the US Department of Defense, Military Health System; and the US Department of Veterans Affairs.

Numerous HL7 Affiliates have been established around the globe including Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Turkey, United Kingdom and Uruguay.