



Health Level Seven, Inc.  
*For Immediate Release*



International Health Terminology  
Standards Development Organisation

### ***HL7 and IHTSDO Sign Agreement***

*Up front coordination will bring significant improvements in interoperability and patient safety*

**Chicago, IL., U.S. and Copenhagen, Denmark – April 5, 2009** – Health Level Seven® Inc. (HL7®), the leading authority for global healthcare IT standards, and the International Health Terminology Standards Development Organisation (IHTSDO®), the leading provider of standardized clinical terminology, today announced a collaboration agreement that will foster interoperability and lead to improvements in patient safety by eliminating gaps and overlaps between the HL7 and IHTSDO standards.

The terms of this agreement complement both organizations' involvement in the Joint Initiative on SDO Global Health Informatics Standardization, which was established to enable common, timely health informatics standards by addressing counterproductive standardization efforts. The Joint Initiative seeks to promote interoperability by coordinating standards strategies and plans and using mutually agreed upon processes that meet international standardization needs.

Central to the HL7 IHTSDO agreement is up front coordination between the two standards organizations. "While HL7 and SNOMED have worked together for several years, their collaboration was informal and without oversight. As a result, the independently developed standards were not harmonized and often were not easily integrated," said HL7 Chair-elect Bob Dolin, MD. "Coordinating the efforts of these two leading standards groups at the start rather than at the end of the standards development process is a major step forward in the industry's goal of seamless interoperability. HL7 is committed to working with groups such as IHTSDO to advance the delivery of safe and effective patient care."

"Stronger links between standards development organizations will provide an improved service to both health authorities and healthcare system implementers, and make a significant improvement to patient safety by reducing overlaps and gaps between the various standards," said John Gutai, IHTSDO's Chief Technical Architect. "IHTSDO looks forward to working in cooperation with HL7 and other standards bodies to achieve this, within the context of the

ISO/TC215 Joint Initiative on SDO Global Health Informatics Standardization, which both organizations have committed to support."

### **About IHTSDO**

The IHTSDO (International Health Terminology Standards Development Organisation) and its Members seek to improve the health of humankind by fostering the development and use of suitable standardized clinical terminologies, notably SNOMED CT, in order to support the safe, accurate, and effective exchange of health information. SNOMED Clinical Terms™ (SNOMED CT™) is a standardized terminology that can be used as the foundation for electronic health records and other applications. For example, different clinicians often use different terms to describe the same concept. SNOMED CT contains more than 310,000 unique concepts and more than 1.3 million links or relationships between them that ensure that this information is captured consistently, accurately, and reliably across the health system. The terminology is in use in more than fifty countries around the world. SNOMED CT was originally created by the College of American Pathologists by combining SNOMED RT and a computer-based nomenclature and classification known as Clinical Terms Version 3, formerly known as Read Codes Version.

For more information: [www.ihtsdo.org](http://www.ihtsdo.org).

### **About HL7**

Founded in 1987, Health Level Seven, Inc. ([www.HL7.org](http://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.; 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.

For more information: [www.HL7.org](http://www.HL7.org).

**Media Contacts:**

**For HL7:**

Andrea Ribick

Email: [andrea@HL7.org](mailto:andrea@HL7.org)

Phone: +1 734-677-7777

**For IHTSDO:**

Jennifer Zelmer

Email: [media@ihtsdo.org](mailto:media@ihtsdo.org)

Phone: +45-3644-8736