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*For Immediate Release*

**Health Level Seven International Project Supports the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's Blue Button® Requirements**

**Ann Arbor, Michigan – February 28, 2012** – Health Level Seven® (HL7®) International, the global authority on standards for interoperability of health information technology with members in 55 countries, today announced a response to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) recent requirement that U.S. Federal Employees Health Benefit Program (FEHBP) health insurance carriers support the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Blue Button® text file format as a means of conveying personal health information to federal employees. In January 2012, HL7 launched a project that defines the conversion of an HL7 Continuity of Care Document (CCD®) to the Blue Button format via an XSLT style sheet tool. Because most Meaningful Use–certified health information exchange systems already possess CCD-export capabilities, the tool will be able to leverage those capabilities as a simple and effective way for many carriers to meet OPM's new requirement.

The Blue Button, developed by the VA in collaboration with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), empowers Veterans to access and download their health information as an ASCII text file or PDF® document. The Blue Button initiative was made nationally available in October 2010. In December 2011, OPM issued a formal request to all carriers in the FEHBP to add Blue Button functionality to their web-based personal health record systems. (See: <http://www1.opm.gov/news/blue-button-added-to-health-insurance-carriers-for-federal-employees.1744.aspx> )

The Blue Button service participates in the health information exchange continuum by enabling Veterans and consumers to share their data with clinicians and other caregivers via a simple text file. The service is part of the expanding landscape of national and local initiatives such as the Office of the National Coordinator's Standards and Interoperability Framework and the Beacon Community Programs.

John Ritter, co-chair of the HL7 Electronic Health Record Work Group (EHR WG), noted that HL7 quickly assembled a broad set of industry stakeholders, including vendors, providers, payers, and federal agencies, as part of its ongoing commitment to be responsive to the industry's needs in a timely manner.

The EHR WG and Structured Documents Work Group, co-sponsors of the project, expect to offer the file conversion tool and User's Guide in April 2012. Doug Dormer, President of SPINNphr and member of the project team stated, "I am pleased to be involved in this project. This tool will reduce my technical team's effort to offer a data download channel to consumers in the Blue Button format and help our clients meet OPM's requirement."

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

### **About HL7**

Founded in 1987, Health Level Seven International is the global authority for healthcare information interoperability and standards with affiliates established in more than 30 countries. HL7 is a non-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 2,300 members represent approximately 500 corporate members, which include more than 90 percent of the information systems vendors serving healthcare. HL7 collaborates with other standards developers and provider, payer, philanthropic and government agencies at the highest levels to ensure the development of comprehensive and reliable standards and successful interoperability efforts.

HL7's endeavors are sponsored, in part, by the support of its benefactors: Abbott; Accenture; Allscripts; Booz Allen Hamilton; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Duke Translational Medicine Institute; Epic; European Medicines Agency; the Food and Drug Administration; GE Healthcare Information Technologies; GlaxoSmithKline; Hospital Corporation American (HCA); IBM; InterSystems Corporation; Kaiser Permanente; Lockheed Martin; McKesson Provider Technology; Microsoft Corporation; NICTIZ National Healthcare; Novartis; Oracle Corporation; Partners HealthCare System, Inc.; Pfizer, Inc.; Philips Healthcare; Quest Diagnostics Inc.; Siemens Healthcare; Thomson Reuters; the U.S. Department of Defense, Military Health System; and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. For more information, please visit: [www.HL7.org](http://www.HL7.org)

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