



Health Level Seven, Inc.

For Immediate Release

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Health Level Seven Highlights Successes of 2005, Important 2006 Initiatives at HIMSS

Support for Hurricane Katrina evacuees, collaboration with ASTM International and other groups, and the recent release of HL7 Version 3 Normative Edition top list of important HL7 healthcare standards activities.

ANN ARBOR, Mich.— February 14, 2006 — Health Level Seven, Inc. (HL7), now beginning its 20th year of healthcare standards development, is using its 2,000 square feet of exhibit space at the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society's (HIMSS) Annual Conference and Exhibition to highlight how its standards provide real-life solutions, to educate attendees on the plethora of HL7 standards activities and to show how those standards will be a major component in the National Health Information Network (NHIN).

Healthcare vendors and providers are joining together throughout the week in the HL7 HIMSS exhibit to present real use cases of how they use HL7 standards to provide real-life solutions every day. There has been no better example to date than HL7's support of Hurricane Katrina evacuees in the effort to match children's vaccination records. Since the disaster, through the HL7 capabilities of the Houston-Harris County Immunization Registry a total of 38,360 vaccination records have been searched. The resulting 13,377 matches that were made translate to a cost savings in redundant vaccines of over \$1.5 million. Significant additional savings were realized in administrative and overhead costs. This effort continues as evacuees take up permanent residence in other states.

"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 Technologies Corporation. Because each registry was fully HL7 compliant, this link was able to be made quickly and easily. 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."

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The release of HL7's Version 3 (V3) Normative Edition, one of many HL7 standards being featured in its educational theater at HIMSS, was another key event in 2005. At the same time, HL7's Version 2 (V2) messaging standard retains its crucial role in healthcare interoperability. Complementing V2, V3 will first serve new use cases such as structured documents (Clinical Document Architecture), genomics, structured product labeling (SPL), public health information networks (PHIN), and the Markle Foundation's Connecting for Health (CFH).

"By creating middleware which accepts both HL7 V2.x and V3, the Connecting for Health (CFH) approach supports existing systems and creates a foundation for the future without requiring 'rip and replace' of existing hospital applications," said John Halamka, MD, CIO, CareGroup Healthcare System.

Meanwhile, HL7 has begun collaboration with ASTM International to develop an implementation guide for the Continuity of Care Document (CCD), a specification that results from the use of ASTM's standardized data set—the Continuity of Care Record (CCR)—to constrain HL7's V3 Clinical Document Architecture (CDA), Release 2 specifically for summary documents. Tutorials on the CCD and CDA will be presented in the HL7 HIMSS exhibit by Liora Alschuler, an HL7 board member and co-chair of the HL7 Structured Documents Technical Committee. This implementation guide will afford the United States healthcare industry an incremental but immediate step toward the level of interoperability needed for a national Electronic Health Record (EHR). All stakeholders have been invited to join in this work, which will take place within the framework of HL7's Structured Documents Technical Committee and will follow HL7's normal, open balloting process.

"ASTM is dedicated and privileged to work in collaboration with HL7 on the expression of ASTM's Continuity of Care Record content within HL7's CDA XML syntax, and the seamless transformation of clinical and administrative data between the two standards," said Richard Peters, MD, an emergency physician for Kaiser Permanente and newly elected chair of ASTM's E31 committee on healthcare informatics.

Another recent HL7 collaboration showcased in the exhibit is with the Accredited Standards Committee (ASC) X12 and involves the Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) on Electronic Claims Attachments that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) published in the Federal Register. The publication of this NPRM—in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996—is a landmark event for ASC X12 and HL7, whose members have worked collaboratively on these complex standards for electronic claims attachments since 1997. Further collaboration in this area between HL7, X12 and the National Council for Prescription Drug Programs (NCPDP) involves attachments for retail pharmacy prior authorizations to meet another pressing regulatory requirement under the Medicare Modernization Act.

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HL7 is also strengthening its relationship with the Electronic Health Record Vendors Association (EHRVA) through participation in the Interoperability Collaborative (IC). The IC is the result of an agreement between HIMSS, HL7, Integrating the Healthcare Enterprise (IHE) and EHRVA, and marked a decision to accelerate interoperability by joining forces, where appropriate, to provide the industry with unified solutions for progress. The Interoperability Collaborative will continue to grow in this spirit, dedicated to enabling the exchange of national health information to increase the safety of patients and to reduce the costs of healthcare.

Presentations on HL7's Electronic Health Record System (EHR-S) Functional Model Draft Standard for Trial Use (DSTU) will also be given in the exhibit by Donald T. Mon, PhD., vice president for practice leadership at the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA).

HL7 and the NHIN

The theme of the HL7 HIMSS exhibit—*HL7 Standards: Driving the Industry toward a National Health Information Network (NHIN)*—is intended to illustrate how HL7 interoperability standards are essential to the success of real-life NHIN pilots currently underway, headed by the NHIN Consortia represented by Accenture, CSC, IBM and Northrop Grumman.

The consortia will attempt to simulate a Nationwide Health Information Network by either creating prototype regional health information networks (RHIN) with a small technology infrastructure, or building upon existing inter-organizational provider networks, which tend to resemble the RHIO model and already make extensive use of HL7 V2.x standards.

"IBM is committed to the use of open, non-proprietary industry standards," said David A. Epstein, Director, Public Sector Solutions, IBM Software Group. We consider HL7 to be a very important set of standards for healthcare information exchange and are actively involved in their development. We are now working with Dr. Brailer's office and the Health Information Technology Standards Panel (HITSP) to incorporate these standards into the National Health Information Network prototype that we are currently developing."

HL7 is participating through its position in the HITSP and in a separate parallel contract with the National Library of Medicine (NLM) to develop HL7 Version 3 implementation guides for specific use-case scenarios. General guidelines for standards that are being considered by contractors include the Federal Health Architecture standards and standards recommended by NCVHS to Congress. These include HL7 Versions 2.x and Version 3. Many of the existing inter-organizational provider networks that are participating in one of the four contracts (e.g. the Indiana Network for Patient Care (INPC)) already make substantial use of HL7 Versions 2.x. The next deliverables expected of the consortia will include standards that each contractor proposes to use in their infrastructure.

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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 2,000 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; Epic Systems Corporation; the Food and Drug Administration; GE Medical Systems; Guidant Corporation; IBM; IDX Systems Corporation; Intel Corporation; 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 26 countries throughout the globe including Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Turkey and the United Kingdom. Recently, the HL7 Board approved the establishment of three new affiliates in Chile, Malaysia and Uruguay.

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