



Health Level Seven, Inc.

For Immediate Release

Contact:
Andrea Ribick
+1 (734) 677-7777
andrea@HL7.org

Health Level Seven Awarded Grant by the Rockefeller Foundation to Convene Conference on the Path to eHealth Interoperability in the Global South

ANN ARBOR, Michigan, U.S.A.—June 19, 2008 — Health Level Seven (HL7) has been awarded a \$348,000 grant by the Rockefeller Foundation to convene a conference in association with the World Health Organization (WHO) to address the path to sustainable, interoperable health technology to support better health and health systems in the Global South. The week-long “Path to Interoperability” conference will be held at the Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center in Lake Como, Italy this July and is part of the Foundation’s conference series “Making the eHealth Connection: Global Partnerships, Local Solutions.”

Providing quality and affordable healthcare is a growing need for health systems around the world, but developing countries face unique challenges. The prevalence of disease, shortages in trained healthcare workers, poor infrastructure, unequal access to healthcare information, supply chain inequities and a lack of resources and funding all contribute to the healthcare crisis in the Global South. The “Path to Interoperability” conference will bring together 25 participants from critical stakeholder groups—industry, donors, governments, researchers and civil society—with the goal of forging new partnerships, identifying key areas of work, and raising the profile of eHealth and eHealth applications to the wider global health community. Focusing on the core challenges to the evolution of interoperability and the opportunities to develop innovative solutions, the participants will examine barriers, enablers and successful sustainability models.

The current status of healthcare information acquisition and utilization in the Global South reflects inadequate and poorly supported information systems. These systems consist primarily of donor-driven monitoring and substandard general information systems that receive little maintenance funding. Much of the data that is collected is of poor quality, is not

used where it is collected, and arrives at decision points late in the course of care. "One critical challenge in the Global South is to overcome these hurdles through the aggressive adoption of well-architected information systems. Improving interoperability is the key to improving the quality and use of information," said HL7 CEO Charles Jaffe, MD, PhD. "Focusing on developing an interoperability framework, the participants will bring a new approach to health information systems design based upon interoperability that overcomes one of the fundamental problems by breaking down silos and strengthening information use."

The conference participants are expected to devise an interoperability roadmap outlining what should be done by Global South leaders, policymakers, standards development organizations, IT corporations and donors on a one, three and five-year basis as well as develop useful resources for a broad range of constituencies.

The grant will also allow HL7 to create a pilot demonstration project for laboratory data interoperability at one location in the Global South that provides real value, scales, is reproducible, improves quality, and generates business value. Throughout the world, caregivers unequivocally cite the reporting and reuse of laboratory data as the single most valued first step in achieving interoperability. This is true both in the United States and in developing countries. Through the cooperation of the Office of the National Coordinator for Healthcare Information Technology (ONCHIT), the Healthcare Information Technology Standards Panel (HITSP), and the California Foundation for Healthcare, a sustainable model has been built and deployed. The reuse of this model would bring unique value to the Global South caregiver and would demonstrate a clear business case for large-scale deployment and sustainable interoperability.

For more information on the Rockefeller Foundation's Making the eHealth Connection Conference Series, please visit: www.ehealth-connection.org/.

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 standards for interoperability that improve care delivery, optimize workflow, reduce ambiguity and enhance knowledge transfer among all of our stakeholders, including healthcare providers, government agencies, the vendor community, fellow SDOs and patients. HL7's more than 2,300 members represent approximately 500 corporate members, which includes 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 Clinical Research Institute (DCRI); Eclipsys Corporation; Eli Lilly & Company; Epic Systems Corporation; European Medicines Agency; the Food and Drug Administration; GE Healthcare Information Technologies; GlaxoSmithKline; IBM; Intel Corporation; InterSystems Corporation; Johnson and Johnson; Kaiser Permanente; McKesson Provider Technologies; Microsoft Corporation; NHS Connecting for Health; NICTIZ National Healthcare; Novartis; Oracle Corporation; Partners HealthCare System, Inc.; Pfizer, Inc.; Philips Healthcare; Progress Software Corporation DataDirect Technologies Division; QuadraMed Corporation; Quest Diagnostics Inc.; Science Applications International Corporation; Siemens Healthcare; St. Jude Medical; Sunquest Information Systems, Thomson Reuters; the U.S. Department of Defense, Military Health System; the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Wyeth Pharmaceuticals.

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

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