

HL7 Approves New Standards

Standards development organization Health Level Seven has approved three new draft electronic messaging standards for trial use. Early adopters of the draft standards will submit feedback to Ann Arbor, MI-based HL7, which will make needed modifications. If HL7 voting members approve the modifications, they will be submitted to the American National Standards Institute for final approval as full HL7 standards. The new draft standards are:

- *Version 3 Standard: Patient Administration, Release 1* – The standard supports core administrative functions including, among others, patient registrations, discharges and transfers. An initial analysis identified nearly 460 possible messaging events. Release 1 supports 53 of the most common events such as “add a new patient” or “revise demographic information about a person.” Subsequent releases will support other messaging events and early adopters of each release will provide input on work for the future releases.
- *Version 3 Web Services Transport Specification* – This is a set of protocols that enable applications to work together by communicating data across the Internet or an intranet. Web Services are based on the standard protocols of XML, SOAP and WSDL, which enable disparate information systems to interoperate across platforms and programming languages.
- *Version 3 ebXML Transport Specification* – The standard is designed to enable the transmission of messages in XML or any other format and be a “transport structure” capable of handling new and legacy messaging formats.

For more information on the draft trial standards, visit www.hl7.org. (Source: *Health Data Management*)

Electronic Prescribing: Toward Maximum Value and Rapid Adoption

The practice of electronic prescribing is increasingly touted in medical journals and by respected healthcare innovators as a promising way to improve the quality, safety and efficiency of patient care, but what changes need to occur before it can fulfill the promise? The new report, *Electronic Prescribing: Towards Maximum Value and Rapid Adoption* is produced by the eHealth Initiative (eHI) and seeks to answer these questions and to transition electronic prescribing from a hot healthcare buzzword to an implementable reality across the nation.

The report:

- Outlines the graduated levels of electronic prescribing, from basic reference systems to advanced systems that integrate with electronic medical records.
- Features data on current electronic prescribing use and the demonstrated benefits, including improved quality,

reduced medical errors and potential cost savings for payers and employers

- Recommends specific features and functions clinicians should seek in electronic prescribing systems, as well as priorities for clinical decision support
- Reviews the state of the art of electronic communication between providers, pharmacies, payers, and patients, and considers steps that are needed to enhance and expand these valuable services
- Reviews current options and critical needs in prescribing standards and vocabularies
- Analyzes the needs and best possibilities for economic, legislative and other incentives that can stimulate adoption.

Electronic copies of the report are available at: www.ehealthinitiative.org/initiatives/erx.

Telestroke Service to Link Specialists to Rural Centres

Driven by an Ontario-wide shortage of neurologists and the need for speedy diagnoses of stroke patients, a telemedicine program is sweeping across the province. Soon, Telestroke will link Ottawa experts with patients who live in rural regions of eastern Ontario, allowing two-way real-time videoconferencing and the electronic transfer of CT images. For more information visit: www.itbusiness.ca.

Evidence-Based Medicine in 2006

A year-long study of 89 health plans study conducted at the Vanderbilt Center for Evidence-Based Medicine, U.S., has indicated that in the next three years health plan strategy will change dramatically. Find out what factors are causing this shift and how will it impact the healthcare landscape. Please visit: www.healthcare-informatics.com.

Smartcards in Healthcare

The use of smartcards in healthcare suggests a market of over 200m smart health cards in Europe alone over the next five years. That may not be in the league of banking or GSM volumes but it is not negligible. The recent decision by the European Commission to mandate the introduction of a card-based replacement to the E111 form, facilitating cross-border healthcare, should mean significant smartcard volumes too. So what's going on? Please visit: www.hi-europe.info/files/2004/9999.htm.

Financial Modelling for the EHR

This article explains how to combine an efficient, integrated EHR solution with rigorous ROI modelling to identify the positive qualitative and quantitative outcomes.

For more information visit: www.advanceforhie.com/common/Editorial/Editorial.aspx?CC=26885.