

HL7 Standards Soon to be Free of Charge



Health IT Standards Leader to Support Widespread Global Adoption by Making Standards and Select IP Freely Available

Health Level Seven® International (HL7®), the global leader in developing interoperability standards for healthcare IT, announced today its decision to make much of its intellectual property (IP), including standards, freely available under licensing terms. The landmark decision represents HL7's commitment to the betterment of healthcare worldwide by ensuring that all stakeholders have equal access to its HIT standards. The new policy is expected to take effect in the first quarter of 2013.

"HL7's vision is to make its collaborative, consensus-driven standards the best and most widely used in healthcare," said Charles Jaffe, MD, PhD, CEO of HL7. "By eliminating this barrier to implementation, we can come closer to realizing our goal, in which healthcare IT can reduce costs and improve the quality of care. Coupled with increasing government demand for standards that do not require a licensing fee, our decision to move toward free standards is perfectly aligned. To this end, we have already received enthusiastic support for this decision from key healthcare stakeholders."

"This announcement is the most significant standards development in the past decade, said John Halamka, MD, MS, Chief Information Officer of the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School. "It ensures that every stakeholder will have ready access to the content standards they need for Meaningful Use. Enormous thanks to everyone who worked on this effort."

The volunteer-created standards and other select pieces of intellectual property will be made available to the international healthcare community after a period of careful analysis and planning by HL7, expected to take several months. In the interim, the traditional IP/membership model which includes access to, and the right to use HL7 standards, will continue to be in effect. Following completion of the analysis, HL7 expects to transition directly to a model in which use of HL7 standards and select IP is independent of HL7 membership. HL7 will continue to consult with its members to make their investment more valuable, and will seek their input to make this transition seamless and reflective of member needs.

"The IP from HL7 is crucial to achieving interoperability among healthcare providers," said Christopher G. Chute, MD, DrPH, Chair, ISO TC215 on Health Informatics. "It enables efficient and effective care across multidisciplinary teams that increasingly are the norm for healthcare. HL7's decision to make these resources effectively a public good is hugely welcome and will accelerate their value to society and patients everywhere. HL7 now more than ever deserves support and membership from the broader health community to ensure these resource remain state-of-the-art and freely available."

For more information, please visit: www.HL7.org

Published on : Thu, 6 Sep 2012