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Letter from the Publisher

Dear Reader,

As globalisation increases, healthcare facilities across the world are becoming more and more inundated with the need to transfer, process and store growing amounts of data and images. Coupled with the adoption of global network infrastructuresand networking concepts, the need to create, test and adopt international healthcare IT standards has never been more imperative. As information technologies, by nature, must work with each other to function effectively, no stand-alone solution or provider can exist without the support and cooperation of other organisations.

Because of the necessity to have open systems, distributed processing and systems integration, organisations such as DICOM, HL7, SNOMED International and IHE (amongst others) have already made significant progress in developing the international standards that are so needed in healthcare IT. In the Cover Story section of this issue of *Healthcare IT Management*, we have therefore asked the standards bodies of DICOM, HL7 and Snomed to explain their most recent standardisation developments affecting the healthcare IT sector.

Closely tied in with our Features section articles, we explore the impact of standards development in the systems integration of RIS-PACSVR-DMS. We also present articles covering PACS and reporting, and how to build trust in reporting to ensure future viability. The section concludes with part three of three, our series on designing a high-performance telemedicine system.

Our Country Focus section highlights Germany, with a report from the German Association of Hospital IT Managers - who have just celebrated their 10th anniversary. Also included is an analysis of the start of the test phase of the German health card. In our Best Practices section, we explore the steps for developing a hospital-wide standardised communications platformas was implemented at the Heidelberg University Hospital.

Finally, in our Management section, we present a comparison of Cost- Benefit Analysis (CBA) versus Return on Investment (ROI) methodology to assess the viability of healthcare IT investments. Also, be sure to read the latest news and membership information from the European Association of Healthcare IT Managers on page 5!

We are pleased to present these, and other interesting articles to the readers of *Healthcare IT Management*. As always, your opinions and suggestions are important to us – we invite you to contact our Managing Editor, Karmin Ruocco at

k.ruocco.me@eahitm.org and let us know what you think!

Yours faithfully,

Christian Marolt

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