IHE North American Connectathon and Conference 2013 Introduces New Features to Advance Health Information Exchange

CHICAGO – (February 6, 2013) – A significant new step was taken toward the interoperability of Electronic Health Records (EHRs) with the introduction of a pilot Certification Program at the IHE North American (NA) Connectathon and Conference, which concluded last week. The Connectathon testing event drew over 500 of the industry's top engineers, while the one- day educational conference attracted well over 125 participants.

> **A new IHE USA Pilot Certification program was introduced during the IHE NA Connectathon 2013, which concluded last week. Also featured was testing for eight IHE International Domains and Health Level 7's Consolidated CDA.**

"The overwhelming majority of attendees at the IHE NA Connectathon Conference 2013 were first time attendees. This demonstrates the importance of interoperability and the essential role of IHE in enabling the meaningful use of health information technology. Connecting key stakeholders with the tools and resources they need to achieve interoperable systems is essential for enabling quality care," noted Joyce Sensmeier, RN-BC, MS, CPHIMS, FHIMSS, FAAN, President, IHE USA.

IHE USA partnered with ICSA Labs to launch a new IHE Certification Program for health IT systems.. Using an accredited, standards-based certification program, IHE USA will be able to certify that systems are, in fact, interoperable against established criteria.

"The IHE USA Certification Pilot Program, implemented in partnership with ICSA Labs, was a resounding success. A dozen vendors participated in this inaugural effort that complements existing testing of IHE integration profiles at the Connectathon. This accredited, standards-based Certification program will greatly enhance the value of IHE Integration profiles in products that are available in the marketplace." says Ms. Sensmeier. "We look forward to leveraging feedback from the pilot to augment future efforts that demonstrate IHE's role in advancing interoperable standards-based systems," she added.

Eight of the participants at the Connectathon were registered for certification testing on over 70 profiles. Results are being evaluated by the ICSA Labs Certification Body, which will grant certification based on requirements set forth by IHE USA, and the general principles covered by ISO/IEC Guide 65 for organizations providing product certification. Certification also will include industry-standard system surveillance activities that ensure that certified products continue to perform as tested, over time.

Certified products will be published by IHE USA, as well as in the official ICSA Labs product directory. Three tiers of Certification will be awarded:
• Tier 1: Conformance to IHE profiles
• Tier 2: Demonstrated interoperability amongst disparate systems
• Tier 3: Validated Implementations of deployed certified technology

"The Certification Program will benefit the purchasers and end users of the products that have proven IHE capabilities," noted Amit Trivedi, Program Manager, ICSA Labs.

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This year, in addition to the Certification Program, another new feature was added to the IHE NA Connectathon: testing of HL7's Consolidated CDA standard.

The HL7 Clinical Document Architecture (CDA) is a document markup standard that specifies the structure and semantics of "clinical documents" for the purpose of exchange. For testing at the Connectathon, the HL7 Consolidated CDA (C-CDA) offered a combined library of CDA templates and common document types, from progress notes to discharge summaries and more. C- CDA is now stipulated in Standards and Certification Criteria of Meaningful Use Stage 2.

"Over two dozen vendors signed up to test 27 systems for C-CDA – including a diverse group of EMR, document imaging and HIE vendors. After knocking on the virtual doors of EMR and HIE vendors for years encouraging acceptance of CDA document types, I have to say that the Health Story members are thrilled about the potential uptake of C-CDA and its role in contributing to comprehensive electronic patient stories," said Joy Kuhl, Executive Director of the Health Story Project.

Over 500 of the industry's top engineers attended the largest interoperability testing event in the U.S. The Connectathon, which is the health IT industry's only large-scale face-to-face testing event had over 100 vendors and 160 test systems, demonstrating powerful advancements in health IT. Approximately 70,000 sq. feet of the Hyatt Regency basement was occupied for the testing. There were attendees from 11 countries—including Austria, Brazil, China, France, India, Italy, Japan, Korea, Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, and Syria.

Introduced in 1999, the IHE Connectathon has been an annual event with continued growth in the level and scope of participation. A parallel event in Europe was established in 2001 and has followed a similar trajectory.

IHE Connectathons are professionally managed and independently monitored testing events. A technical project management team develops detailed test plans for each role being tested at the Connectathon and organizes the process to maximize interoperability testing between

corresponding systems from different vendors. Independent monitors observe and record test results, which are published in the Connectathon results database.

About IHE USA

IHE USA (www.iheusa.org) is a not-for-profit organization established in 2010 that operates as a deployment committee of IHE International®. The mission of IHE USA is to drive adoption of standards-based interoperability to improve patient care through innovation, standards profiling, testing, education and collaboration. IHE USA improves the efficiency and effectiveness of healthcare delivery by supporting the deployment of standards-based electronic health record systems, facilitating the exchange of health information among care providers, both within the enterprise and across care settings, and enabling local, regional and national health information networks in the United States, all in a manner consistent with participation in the activities of IHE International, Inc.

About IHE International

IHE International, Inc. (www.ihe.net) is the global hub of the IHE initiative, a multi-stakeholder effort started in 1997 to promote the effective use of electronic health records and health information technology (HIT) by driving the adoption of standards-based solutions for interoperability. IHE International brings together HIT experts and stakeholders in more than a dozen clinical and operational domains to develop implementation guides called IHE Profiles that define the use of standards to address specific HIT interoperability needs. It also oversees a process of testing that fosters the adoption of IHE Profiles in real-world HIT products and care settings. IHE interoperability solutions are implemented in hundreds of products and in care sites around the world.

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