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**House Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee Hearing Statement
21st Century Cures
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Health care interoperability provides an important foundation for achieving the 21st Century Cures goal to accelerate the pace of cures in America and for creating a robust, patient-centered learning health system in our nation.

HL7 welcomes the chance to provide its suggestions on the 21st Century Cures Initiative today. Our organization -- founded nearly three decades ago -- has a wealth of standards experience to contribute to this effort. As the global authority on health care interoperability, HL7 is uniquely positioned to inform the interoperability debate and assist in achieving this critical goal.

- HL7 builds the interoperability highway for delivering 21st century cures. Over the past 30 years, our standards have become synonymous with the international roadways, the interchanges, and the bridges to arrive at healthy lives. Adopted worldwide, our standards have created innovation and cost-effectiveness for the continuum of health care from providers, to patients, and to public health.
- HL7 is continuing to develop and enhance standards at the heart of the health care system as well as those that offer the promise of a more efficient and information-rich future for providers and patients. Its new vehicle, FHIR (Fast Healthcare Interoperability Resources) is but one of them.
- HL7 originally created FHIR and Consolidated Clinical Document Architecture (C-CDA), both of which are cited in the Version 1.0 *Interoperability Roadmap* by the ONC as foundational for critical interoperability advancements in the near-term.
- And, HL7 is a cornerstone of Meaningful Use and interoperability, as well a key driver of the most promising of private sector innovations for achieving it.

Our organization is engaged in a sustained, bipartisan effort to educate Congressional leaders about necessary elements of workable and meaningful interoperability legislation. As part of this effort, HL7 submitted written comments on the first generation legislative draft that emphasized that the 21st Century Cures legislation must sufficiently address and support. These elements include:

Reliable and Sustained Funding: A reliable funding stream to support the private sector interoperability work of standards development organizations (SDOs) in order to meet increased and timely demands for the technical expertise to develop and refine interoperability standards. Sustained Federal support, over a period of four or more years, will be needed to ensure that

SDOs have sufficient resources to enhance the private sector's capacity to meet increased demands and to quickly ramp up for them.

Critical Interoperability Activities: Interoperability activities spearheaded by health care SDOs lead to clinical improvements and technological innovations in the health care marketplace. These include standards development, robust testing and piloting, and implementation.

Strong, Rational Standards Development Processes: Standards development processes provide the technical means to successfully achieve interoperability. A standards development process that is: (1) open, (2) transparent, (3) consensus-based and (4) subject draft standards testing for success and user acceptance including, but not limited to, piloting in appropriate venues and by the appropriate providers and other users.

Efficiently Leveraging Interoperability Experts: Consultation with representatives of relevant federal agencies and private sector clinical and technical experts with expertise provide the needed momentum to establish indispensable health care interoperability.

Equally importantly, HL7 is leading the way in private sector innovation. The highly regarded Argonaut Project was launched in December 2014 with the goal of accelerating the development and adoption of HL7's Fast Healthcare Interoperability Resources (HL7® FHIR®). HL7's FHIR is a next generation standards framework that leverages the latest web standards and offers enormous flexibility for patients and providers. Its versatility can be applied to mobile devices, web-based applications, cloud communications, and EHR data sharing. A list of current Argonaut project members can be accessed at: <http://bit.ly/1ziMcWj>.

As a global, national, public and private sector leader, HL7 welcomes the opportunity to work with House Energy and Commerce Chairman Fred Upton (R-MI), Ranking Member Diana DeGette (D-CO) and Health Subcommittee Chairman Joe Pitts (R-PA) as the 21st Century Cures initiative advances forward.