

For more information, contact

Celina Roth/IHE USA

(312) 915-9213/connectathon@ihe.net

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

IHE Connectathon Registration Shows Dramatic Growth

Annual testing event shows jump in participation as demand for HIT interoperability testing grows.

CHICAGO – (October 27, 2011) – The annual IHE North America Connectathon (<http://www.iheusa.org/connectathon.aspx>) continues to show substantial year-to-year growth as the importance of systems interoperability in health information technology (HIT) becomes ever more evident. More than 100 leading HIT companies and research organizations have registered to test more than 180 HIT systems for interoperability and compliance with specifications called IHE profiles. This represents an increase of more than 20% over the 2011 event and indicates both the growing recognition in the HIT community of the need for standards-based interoperability and the growing embrace of IHE profiles as a practical means of attaining this goal. The Connectathon, which is the HIT industry's only large-scale face-to-face testing event, will take place Jan. 9-13, 2012 at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Chicago.

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 (<http://connectathon-results.ihe.net/>).

This year's Connectathon will test HIT systems from across the spectrum of care. Profiles from eight of the 13 clinical and operational domains represented in IHE will be tested at the event. The domains participating in testing are:

- Anatomic Pathology
- Cardiology
- IT Infrastructure
- Laboratory
- Patient Care Coordination
- Patient Care Device
- Quality, Research and Public Health
- Radiology

Separate annual Connectathon events are conducted in the Eye Care and Radiation Oncology domains. Dental, Endoscopy and Pharmacy are more recently organized domains and have yet to publish profiles for testing.

IHE profiles provide precise implementation specifications, based on established standards, to address specific HIT interoperability issues. They detail required actions for HIT systems with many different functions to acquire, manage and communicate vital medical information effectively, while supporting efficient provider workflows and protecting private health information.

“IHE profiles enable you to orchestrate the flow of information to make HIT work more efficiently, facilitating the interoperability between the systems populating the electronic health record creating a meaningful patient record and ultimately building the infrastructure for health information exchanges,” said Dr. David S. Mendelson, Chief of Clinical Informatics at the Mount Sinai Medical Center. Dr. Mendelson is the principal investigator on the RSNA Image Share project, a network for sharing medical images with patients funded as a pilot project by the National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering.

IHE profiles have provided the foundation for health information exchange networks in the US and worldwide. Numerous profiles were selected as components of the US federal electronic health record (EHR) standards published by the Healthcare Information Technology Standards Panel (HITSP). IHE profiles also support many of the functional requirements of EHRs subsequently published by the US Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC) under its campaign to promote “meaningful use” of EHRs.

“The continued success of IHE profiles in numerous Certified EHRs and deployment in HIEs helps to continue to drive the outstanding growth of our Connectathon event,” said Scott Maclean, Deputy CIO of Partners HealthCare and IHE-USA Board member, “It is also helping to demonstrate the real technical work being done to make health IT a reality.”

IHE Technical Frameworks, the volumes in which IHE profiles are published, are annually expanded and continuously maintained by committees of volunteers in all 13 active IHE domains. Each domain is sponsored and overseen by organizations representing health care providers and HIT stakeholders in the domain.

A suite of test tools for the Connectathon has been developed and continually enhanced by a consortium of research organizations including Inria, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and Washington University in St. Louis. The tools make it possible to manage the testing of thousands of transactions among Connectathon participants, monitor and record test results and simulate the functions of corresponding systems to enable rapid testing and debugging.

The initial IHE Connectathon was held in 1999. The North American Connectathon has been held annually ever since and has grown steadily in the level and scope of participation. IHE began as an initiative sponsored by the Healthcare Information Management and Systems Society (HIMSS) and the Radiological Society of North America (RSNA). IHE now has more than two dozen sponsoring organizations worldwide. Two non-profit corporations—IHE International, Inc. and IHE USA, Inc.—were formed in 2008 and 2010. IHE International publishes the IHE Technical Frameworks. The 2012 Connectathon marks the first year that IHE USA will act as the organizer and host.

A parallel event in Europe was established in 2001 and has followed a similar trajectory. The next IHE Europe Connectathon will be held May 21-25, 2012 in Bern, Switzerland. Connectathons have also been held in Australia, China, Japan and Korea.

The IHE North America Connectathon will also include a one-day conference, to be held on Wednesday, January 11, featuring experts in health information exchange and electronic health records.

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 nationwide 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.