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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **IHE Connectathon Draws 70 Healthcare IT Companies for Interoperability Testing**

*Ninth annual event tests compliance across spectrum of care*

CHICAGO – (February 1, 2008) - Representatives from 70 leading companies gathered at the Hyatt Regency Chicago from Jan. 28 - Feb. 1 to test 136 healthcare information technology systems for the ninth annual Integrating the Healthcare Enterprise (IHE) Connectathon. The 389 individuals taking part tested how well their systems conform to IHE integration profiles and share patient information with complementary systems. The IHE testing process is a critical step in achieving systems interoperability to enhance the quality of patient care.

**Integrating the Healthcare Enterprise:** IHE is an international alliance of healthcare professional societies, healthcare IT stakeholder organizations, government agencies and the healthcare IT industry. The IHE initiative defines standards-based profiles for achieving interoperability and effectively managing and communicating health information. IHE Integration Profiles provide a common language for healthcare IT purchasers and vendors offering a more precise definition of how standards are implemented to meet identified clinical needs.

During the Connectathon, vendors tested interoperability, which helps ensure patients benefit from the five “rights” of healthcare: the right information, at the right time, on the right device, in the right format, and in the right context.

“Interoperable systems provide clinicians with secure and efficient access to the comprehensive patient information they need to make fully informed clinical decisions,” said Joyce Sensmeier, MS, RN-BC, CPHIMS, FHIMSS, vice president, informatics, at HIMSS. “These systems are the foundation of the comprehensive electronic health record and nationwide and regional health information networks.”

**The Connectathon:** The IHE Connectathon is the largest interoperability testing event in healthcare. It provides a unique opportunity for healthcare IT vendors to work together with their competitors to break down barriers that prevent systems across the spectrum of care from successfully acquiring, managing and exchanging patient data. While IHE does not certify products, it does publish the results of Connectathon tests, which are accessible on the Web at [www.ihe.net/connectathon/results/](http://www.ihe.net/connectathon/results/). Participating vendors can also publish integration statements attesting to their conformance with IHE profiles. Links to company integration statements are at [www.ihe.net/integration\\_statements/](http://www.ihe.net/integration_statements/).

In North America, Europe and Asia, IHE conducts annual Connectathon events, where vendors refine and test their products for conformance with IHE integration profiles and interoperability with corresponding healthcare IT systems. The North American Connectathon is sponsored by the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS) and the Radiological Society of North America.

The Connectathon featured a one-day conference on Tuesday, Jan. 29, providing an overview of IHE, advice on implementing interoperable systems and information on national and regional health information exchange projects in North America. The event focused on educating healthcare organizations, health information exchanges, government contracting decision makers and other end users on interoperability and information sharing using IHE integration profiles and the IHE testing process. Conference attendees included 150 executives of provider organizations, healthcare IT companies, leaders of organizations and government agencies involved in the deployment of electronic health record systems and health information exchanges.

**The IHE Testing Tools:** For more than nine years, IHE has developed a growing body of testing tools to support this testing process. IHE has contracted with a number of leading research institutions, including the Mallinckrodt Institute of Radiology, Northwestern University, the University of Rennes, France, and the University of Mainz, Germany to develop these tools. In addition, IHE has established alliances with the U.S. National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and the French National Institute for Research in Computer Science and Control (INRIA), which have contributed both manpower and testing tools to support the testing process.

IHE is currently developing an advanced testing toolset called Gazelle, which will provide capabilities for persistently available remote testing.

Recently IHE and NIST agreed to work collaboratively on tools development with the Certification Commission for Healthcare Information Technology (CCHIT) and its software design partner, the MITRE Corporation wherever appropriate. All of the tools developed through this [collaboration](#) will be made available through an open source license so that they are free and publicly available.

#### **About IHE**

IHE ([www.ihe.net](http://www.ihe.net)) is a global initiative, now in its ninth year, that creates the framework for passing vital health information seamlessly – from application to application, system to system, and setting to setting – across multiple healthcare enterprises. IHE brings together health information technology stakeholders to implement standards for communicating patient information efficiently throughout and among healthcare enterprises by developing a framework of interoperability. Because of its proven process of collaboration, demonstration and real world implementation of interoperable solutions, IHE is in a unique position to significantly accelerate the process for defining, testing, and implementing standards-based interoperability among electronic health record systems.

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