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New Regenstrief and IHTSDO agreement to make EMRs more effective at improving health care

INDIANAPOLIS, USA, and COPENHAGEN, Denmark -- The Regenstrief Institute Inc. and the International Health Terminology Standards Development Organisation have signed a long-term agreement to begin cooperative work linking their leading global health care terminologies: Logical Observation Identifiers Names and Codes, or LOINC, and SNOMED Clinical Terms. This timely and significant agreement will help improve safety, functionality and interoperability for the rapidly growing number of clinicians who manage and exchange health data with electronic medical records.

This agreement builds on and complements the strengths of both organizations and terminologies. The cooperative work will link the rich clinical semantics of SNOMED CT to LOINC codes, which provide extensive coverage of laboratory tests and some types of clinical measurements. By aligning how the two terminologies represent the attributes of laboratory tests and some types of clinical measurements, this collaboration will provide users a common framework within which to use LOINC and SNOMED CT.

Regenstrief and IHTSDO are not-for-profit organizations that seek to enhance the effective delivery of health care. The organizations believe it makes sense to work together to limit duplication of effort and focus limited resources on enhancements that serve the practical needs of the growing number of users of LOINC and SNOMED CT.

Over the past few years, IHTSDO and Regenstrief have worked together on shorter-term and smaller-scale projects. This landmark 2013 agreement defines a long-term, broadly scoped, working relationship. To underline the long-term commitment of both organizations, the new agreement will be in force for at least 10 years. The organizations' immediate focus is laboratory testing as well as some basic clinical measurements, and they intend to expand into other areas of mutual interest in the future.

The signatories say the agreement is only the beginning and launches the practical work needed to realize shared objectives.

"IHTSDO is very pleased with the conclusion of the long-term agreement with the Regenstrief Institute Inc. and thereby with the LOINC Committee," said John van Beek, chair of the IHTSDO Management Board. "This agreement consolidates the growing cooperation between our organizations. It will lead to acceleration of cooperative work to improve interoperable use of SNOMED CT with LOINC, which will benefit the quality and effectiveness of health care."

"Regenstrief is enthusiastic about this joint work with IHTSDO because we believe it will enhance the ability of clinical systems worldwide to share and understand the health data they receive from many sources," said Regenstrief investigator Daniel Vreeman, P.T., DPT, M.Sc., associate director of terminology services at the Regenstrief Institute and assistant research professor of medicine at the Indiana University School of Medicine. "This joint work will add value to both LOINC and SNOMED CT and will help both organizations accomplish more by reducing duplicate effort. Most importantly, a closer alignment of LOINC and SNOMED CT will make electronic health records more effective at improving health care."

The full text of the agreement is available on the IHTSDO and Regenstrief websites.

About the Regenstrief Institute and LOINC
The Regenstrief Institute is a distinguished medical research organization dedicated to improving the quality and effectiveness of health care. The institute is the home of internationally recognized centers of excellence in biomedical and public health informatics, aging, and health services and health systems research. Institute investigators are faculty members of the Indiana University School of Medicine, other schools at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, or Purdue University. LOINC is a vocabulary standard that enables the exchange and aggregation of clinical results for care delivery, outcomes management and research by providing a set of universal codes and structured names to unambiguously identify laboratory and other clinical observations. LOINC was initiated by Regenstrief Institute research scientists who continue to develop it with the collaboration of the LOINC Committee.

About IHTSDO and SNOMED CT
The International Health Terminology Standards Development Organisation and its Members seek to improve the health of humankind by fostering the development and use of suitable standardized clinical terminologies, notably SNOMED CT, in order to support the safe, accurate and effective exchange of health information. IHTSDO's governance structure allows Members to control and guide the development of SNOMED CT, in order to ensure it meets both their joint needs and the specific needs of their individual countries. SNOMED Clinical Terms, or SNOMED CT, is a standardized terminology that can be used as the foundation for electronic health records and other applications. SNOMED CT is the most comprehensive, multilingual clinical terminology in the world. It enables safe and effective communication, retrieval and use of meaningful health information. More than 20 countries are now Members of IHTSDO, and SNOMED CT is in use in at least 60 countries around the world. SNOMED CT was originally created by the College of American Pathologists by combining SNOMED RT and a computer-based nomenclature and classification known as Clinical Terms Version 3, formerly known as Read Codes Version 3.

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