**SNOMED CT: at a glance**

**UNMATCHED CLINICAL BREADTH**

SNOMED CT enables clinicians to record data with enhanced accuracy and consistency largely through electronic health records.

The purpose of SNOMED CT is to encode the meanings used in health information and support the clinical recording of data to improve patient care.

SNOMED CT is the most comprehensive, multilingual clinical terminology in the world.
SNOMED CT is a controlled coded clinical terminology intended for use in electronic health records. When implemented in an electronic health record (EHR), SNOMED CT can be used to represent relevant clinical information consistently and comprehensively as an essential part of producing electronic health information. SNOMED CT provides healthcare professionals the ability to use different terms that mean the same thing when implementing SNOMED CT in their software applications. SNOMED CT contains concepts with unique meaning and formal logic based definition and is organized into hierarchies. SNOMED CT content is represented using three types of components:

- **Concepts**: Represent clinical thoughts. Every concept has a unique numeric concept identifier. Enables meaning-based queries.
- **Descriptions**: Link human readable terms to concepts. Assist searching for concepts and provides multi-lingual support.
- **Relationships**: Link concepts to other concepts whose meaning is related in some way. Support aggregation and queries.

A key benefit of SNOMED CT is that it allows the meaning of information recorded in electronic records using SNOMED CT concepts to be computer processable. This is possible because each coded concept is linked to other concepts, which are logically related.

For example: viral pneumonia is linked through a series of ‘is a’ relationships that represent a polyhierarchy of subtypes. Viral pneumonia ‘is a’ infective pneumonia, infective pneumonia ‘is a’ infection, and similarly, infective pneumonia ‘is a’ respiratory disease. SNOMED CT links concepts to the applicable part of the body, or finding site, as well as the cause (e.g. causative agent).