Collaboration of the Health On the Net Foundation (HON) with the French National Authority for Health (HAS)

Since its beginning 12 years ago, the Health On the Net Foundation (HON) has come to be a widely recognized name, associated with quality online health information. Not only has HON grown in terms of implementation of its services, but also has increased its liaisons worldwide to include the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations (UN), where it has consultative status to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC).

HON is proud to announce their collaboration with the French National Authority for Health (Haute Autorité de Santé – HAS), which chose HON to be the official certifying body of all French health websites.

In view of its pioneering work and long expertise, the HON Foundation has been chosen by the HAS to implement the certification of French health websites according to the French bill passed the August 13, 2004. This certification will be performed by HON through the implementation of the HONcode (a set of eight quality criteria established by HON).

“Our certification (provided free of charge) is concise while giving guidance towards conformity and is unique in its kind” said HON Executive Director Celia Boyer. She added: “The HONcode enables the identification of sites of quality and confidence, thus contributing towards the general improvement of trustworthy information and Web sites, as well as helping the user in his search for health information.”

France is the first government to have taken the initiative of standardizing the quality of the available online health information which will benefit the French public through the provision of a pool of trustworthy health information.

“The collaboration between HON and HAS reinforces the need for reliable and trustworthy health information and thus, the necessity for quality standardizing bodies like the HON foundation” stated HON President, Professor Antoine Geissbühler.

For further information on HON and its principles visit http://www.hon.ch/

IMIA Certified HON Compliant

IMIA is pleased to announce that the organization’s website www.imia.org has been certified as being in full compliance with all HONcode principles and as a result, IMIA’s HONcode certificate has been extended for 2008. IMIA has been in compliance with the HONcode since September 1, 1999.

The HONcode is Health On the Net Foundation’s initiative to improve the quality of the medical Internet.

Health On the Net Foundation is the leading organization promoting and guiding the deployment of useful and reliable online medical and health information, and its appropriate and efficient use. Created in 1995, HON is a non-profit, non-governmental organization, accredited to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

See: http://www.hon.ch/

Joint Initiative of Standards Development Organizations – Global Health Informatics Standardization

CEN/TC 251, ISO/TC 215 and HL7 launched their inaugural Joint Initiative Council and Joint Working Group at a meeting in Brisbane, Australia in August 2007 hosted by ISO/TC 215. This was the culmination of months of planning by the standards development organization (SDO) leaders responding to the strong call for coordination and collaboration of health informatics standards developments from government, health provider and vendor communities across the world.

The Joint Initiative Charter provides the basis, purpose, and structure of the Joint Initiative on SDO Global Health Informatics Standardization. It has been ratified by all three SDOs and was confirmed by their respective Chairs. The Charter is available from each of the SDO Secretariats.

The Joint Initiative Council and the first Joint Working Group meeting confirmed that their work will build on existing agreements and recognize existing standards collaboration work already in place. The readiness to engage with other SDOs and organizations that are involved in standardization work across the globe and that have potential common work products was also confirmed.

This first Joint Working Group meeting addressed their scope, structure and related processes and introduced the first set of work items that form part of the integrated work program. That set includes an EHR communications architecture standard, a joint data types standard, care information model standards requirements and patient and medication safety standards.

To satisfy health business requirements and to identify additional integrated work items the full lists of ISO, CEN and HL7
work programs was shared at the meeting. Along with strong support for ongoing sharing of all work programs the Joint Working Group initiated a process to identify gaps and overlaps and to rectify them. It was noted with appreciation by all attending that there were many groups represented at the Joint Working Group meeting and the work such as the ICH pharmacy standards within ISO/TC 215 is a great example of collaboration and cooperation.

Ed Hammond, newly elected Chair of the Joint Initiative Council stated: “The contribution of the many experts from each of the SDOs, all working together, is a huge strength of the Joint Working Group and we fully support this collaborative work that is so essential in delivering shared care through interoperability of our health information systems.”

ISO/TC 215 is the International Standards Organization Technical Committee for Health Informatics
http://www.tinyurl.com/2m8qk
http://isotc.iso.org/livelink/livelink?func=ll&objld=529137&objAction=browse&sort=name
Dr. Yun Sik Kwak, Chair

CEN/TC251 is the European Committee for Standardization Technical Committee for Health Informatics
http://www.tinyurl.com/2vr954

Kees Molenaar, Chair

HL7 is the Health Level 7 Inc, an American National Standards Institute affiliated Standards Development Organization
http://www.hl7.org/
Ed Hammond, Chair

ICH is the International Council on Harmonization.

TU Braunschweig and Hannover Medical School Announce Establishment of a Joint Institute for Medical Informatics

The Peter L. Reichertz Institute Stands for High-level International Research

Medical informatics is significantly relevant to both the University of Braunschweig – Institute of Technology (TU Braunschweig) and the Hannover Medical School (MHH) for research and education, and for MHH it is equally so for patient care and strategically managing its information system. With support from the State government of Lower Saxony, the universities have entered into a contractual agreement to unite their medical informatics institutes as a joint institute, named the Peter L. Reichertz Institute for Medical Informatics. The Director of this new institute is Dr. Reinhold Haux, Professor of Medical Informatics at TU Braunschweig, and the Vice-Director is Dr. Herbert Matthies, Professor of Medical Informatics at MHH.

Dr. Peter L. Reichertz (1930-1987) was the first professor of medical informatics at the Hannover Medical School and director of MHH’s then newly-established institute of medical informatics. He also initiated and actively contributed to setting up the medical informatics curriculum for computer science students at TU Braunschweig. He is renowned today as a pioneering researcher in the field of medical informatics.

In establishing this institute both universities expect to better stimulate internationally competitive research and education in the field of medical informatics, while encouraging interdisciplinary research between TU Braunschweig and MHH as a whole. The institute, with locations in Braunschweig and Hannover, can make good use of E-learning opportunities and help leverage regional, national and international connections for both education and research.

For the TU Braunschweig and the Hannover Medical School it was natural to seek such opportunities for cooperation in medical informatics by forging this regional center of excellence. The Scientific Commission of the state of Lower Saxony, Germany, where both universities are located, had suggested such initiatives for the universities.

The relevance of medical informatics for both universities is likely to grow in the future, as the impact of health care advancements and becomes increasingly critical to society as a whole. Even now, health care is for Lower Saxony one of the most important components of its economy, accounting for 385,000 jobs and 24.8 billion Euros of goods and services. An effective, modern health care system contributes substantially to the quality of life of the citizens of Lower Saxony. Informatics products and services are essential for this. In addition, new jobs are likely to spring up in this field, helping retain and even grow the employment base.

From the viewpoint of the state of Lower Saxony, the complementary strengths of the universities in Lower Saxony have been taken into account to improve regional cooperation and enhance their international competitiveness. Taking into account resource constraints, the setting up of joint, multi-site institutes, which are better able to successfully compete internationally and which can enable further synergies, is being strongly encouraged.

Because of the significant national and international implications of the formation of this institute, an International Symposium is planned for 2008, as both universities look forward to further expansion of their Peter L. Reichertz Institute for Medical Informatics.

For further information please access http://www.plri.de.
Venezuela to Join IMIA’s Family of Nations

Prof. Dr. Reinhold Haux is pleased to advise that the Venezuelan Association of Computer Science in Health (AVIS) (www.avis.org.ve) has been granted provisional National membership status within IMIA. The membership is subject to approval by IMIA’s General Assembly at its next meeting on Goteborg, Sweden to be held in conjunction with EFMI’s MIE2008 (www.mie2008.org). AVIS will be represented at the General Assembly by its President, Prof. Dr. Osmán Argüello.

Venezuela will be the fourth country representing Latin America in IMIA along with Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay. “The timing of Venezuela’s joining IMIA could not be better”, according to Dr. Fernando Martin Sanchez, IMIA’s VP, membership; “the nurturing and growth of Medical Informatics and Bioinformatics in the Latin American Nations is high on IMIA’s Strategic Planning Agenda”. In the fall of 2008, IMIA is supporting and sponsoring a Regional Conference in Buenos Aires.

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