May 23, 2024

To: HL7 International Membership

Re: openEHR and HL7 Joint Announcement

HL7 International and openEHR are pleased to inform our collective communities that we are jointly considering aligning some of our standards and specifications for the global good.

We believe that this will be beneficial for:

- **The digital health ecosystem:** in the long term, having some aspects of openEHR co-published as HL7 standards will deliver clarity and harmony. This will increase the choices and power of software as an inevitable outcome is demonstrating how the specifications work together more completely than has been done previously.

- **The openEHR community**: by gaining additional community, alignment of formal adoption processes, and availability of shared conformance, compliance, publication tools and processes.

- **The HL7 community:** by leveraging openEHR's open collaborative culture, platforms, and people — particularly the clinical community - an extensive clinical model library, clinical modeling methodology, elements of the specifications, and the value provided by better integration of tooling and modeling between the communities.

We appreciate that this news may surprise some of you, and we recognize that there will be questions on how we can best work together. The questions we have already posed ourselves include:

- Which openEHR specifications are appropriate to benefit from an HL7-driven standardization process? Initial potential candidates include IPS and EHDS.

- Can we create a path through HL7 that meets openEHR's standardization needs, but works for an already existing community with a different geographical distribution and a different core requirement than HL7's existing community?

- Can HL7 create a path that meets its standards obligations, and works for the existing openEHR community that has a different geographical distribution and different core needs?

- Where we believe mutual value can be achieved in the alignment or reconciliation of openEHR and HL7 standards and specifications, how can we achieve that? How do we describe the process? How does the ecosystem benefit?

- Can (and should) we introduce more formal standardisation for some parts of openEHR and is this possible without harming the proven openEHR culture of open innovation?

- Can (and should) we introduce some aspects of openEHR methodology to HL7 without compromising a well-established standards process?

- Given the effort and commitment that this will take, and a need for ongoing activities such as standards maintenance, is there a lasting benefit for both our communities?

We do not have any formal agreement at this time, or even any certainty that we can overcome these challenges. We are announcing our intention to explore a closer collaboration.

Both openEHR and HL7 are open communities; our true value is that openness and having a transparent dialogue. We must not consider these matters without involving you, which is why we're letting you know that we're looking at this, and asking you for your input.

If we together decide to move forward, whatever we do will take time to build trust, develop approaches, and deliver outcomes.

Please do provide your honest feedback - in the spirit of working together towards our shared vision of an enhanced digital health ecosystem. Indeed, we anticipate and look forward to getting many comments!

Thank you for your time, and for considering this next step in the future of both our organizations.

Best wishes,

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