



SECOND 2008 INTERNATIONAL RELEASE OF SNOMED CT® NOW AVAILABLE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Copenhagen, Denmark: August 2008 – The second 2008 International Release of SNOMED Clinical Terms® (SNOMED CT®) is now available for use, incorporating enhancements which are part of on-going efforts directed towards facilitating the use of the terminology in electronic health records.

SNOMED CT is a standardized clinical terminology which facilitates the consistent capture, exchange and aggregation of health data. The International Health Terminology Standards Development Organisation (IHTSDO®) owns SNOMED CT and has contracted SNOMED Terminology Solutions (CAP STS), a division of the College of American Pathologists, to develop and maintain SNOMED CT.

“Consistent, on-time delivery of SNOMED CT releases is critical to IHTSDO Member nations and other users who rely on the terminology in their electronic health record applications,” noted Jennifer Zelmer, CEO of the IHTSDO. “Ultimately, the quality of patient care will be improved by the use of a standardized terminology and electronic health records.”

This release of SNOMED CT includes more than 315,000 active concepts, 806,000 active descriptions and 945,000 defining relationships. Numerous content enhancements were made in this release. Some examples of specific areas of content focus included enhancements to the:

- **Specimen hierarchy** – Significant improvements to the definitions of concepts in the Specimen hierarchy have been made. Completion of the concept definitions allowed many concepts in the hierarchy to be fully defined. Fully defining the concepts allows automated processes to appropriately place concepts within the hierarchy. Additionally, more complete definitions allow users to perform more complex and comprehensive searches.
- **Imaging sub-hierarchy** – Standard naming conventions and consistent definitions have been implemented for many new imaging procedure concepts to allow for easier data retrieval. For example, there are several ways to name Computer Tomography procedures: CT, Computed Tomography, Computerized Tomography, CAT scan and CT study. Adopting standardized naming conventions for imaging procedures will assist SNOMED CT users in retrieving content, while the availability of synonyms for concepts in SNOMED CT enables clinicians to continue using their preferred terms.
- **Pharmaceutical/biological products hierarchy** – Dose forms (e.g., oral dosage) have been added to many concept definitions. This allows a computer-readable definition for concepts with specific dose forms and facilitates consistent retrieval, as well as the organization of these products by their dose form. These enhancements improve a clinician’s ability to identify specific drug products that have multiple dose



forms and enable decision support systems to more readily differentiate between these forms for treatment, contraindications and adverse effects.

- **Organism hierarchy** – More than 2,000 new organisms requested by public health authorities, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the United States, were added.

Additionally, a new References Table, which allows the inclusion of historical information about retired descriptions, was released for the first time in July. In the past, concepts with now inappropriate descriptions were often retired. A concept with a now-inappropriate description can now remain active and only the description is inactivated and referenced to another active concept. This benefits the user as the number of concepts which are retired in a release cycle will be reduced and change tracking will be facilitated.

“The progress in this release was the result of contributions from the international community of practice, a close working relationship between CAP STS and the IHTSDO staff and enhancements to the quality assurance process,” added Monique van Berkum, MD, CAP STS Director of Clinical Informatics.

SNOMED CT is continuously updated to meet the needs of users around the world. Revisions to the international version of SNOMED CT are released twice a year. Each release includes the core of the terminology (concepts, descriptions and relationships), together with works to support the implementation and use of SNOMED CT, including subsets, cross maps to existing classifications and coding schemes and an extensive set of guidelines.

These updates are driven by users of the terminology. Examples include refinements to descriptions, re-modeling of concepts or the addition of new concepts. Prior to release, the SNOMED CT content undergoes a quality assurance process. A preliminary version is then pre-released to members for broader review before the final files are generated and distributed.

About International Health Terminology Standards Development Organisation (IHTSDO)

The IHTSDO and its Members from around the world 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. The IHTSDO is an international organisation, established as a Danish not-for-profit association based in Copenhagen, Denmark. More information is available at www.ihtsdo.org.

About SNOMED CT

SNOMED Clinical Terms™ (SNOMED CT™) is a standardized terminology that can be used as the foundation for electronic health records and other applications. For example, different clinicians often use different terms to describe the same concept. SNOMED CT contains more than 310,000 unique concepts and more than 1.3 million links or relationships between them that ensure that this information is captured consistently, accurately and reliably across the health system. The terminology is used in more than 40 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, which was created on behalf of the UK Department of Health and is Crown copyright.

About CAP STS

CAP STS (SNOMED Terminology Solutions), located in Northfield, Ill., USA, is the division of the College of American Pathologists that provides support to the IHTSDO. As part of the organization that has led the development of SNOMED CT for more than 40 years, CAP STS also provides SNOMED CT consultation, training, education and implementation of products and services to healthcare and technology providers and government agencies worldwide. Visit <http://www.capsts.org> to learn more.

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