Understanding HL7 interface role in health information

Making decisions in the health information role is becoming more and more of a technological guessing game as the industry is quickly evolving. A key component of most health facilities technologies is the integration engine, HL7 (Health Level Seven) interface, which was built specifically for the healthcare industry. HL7 is one of the most widely discussed and used application data standards in the information technology industry. Most healthcare IT professionals have heard of HL7 and many work in enterprises that use it without ever knowing.

Health Level Seven (HL7) is a standard series of predefined logical formats for packaging healthcare data in the form of messages to be transmitted among computer systems.

Originally developed in 1987, HL7 is now in use in more than twenty countries around the world. HL7 contains messages for almost every conceivable healthcare application area, including the following:

- Registration
- Orders (clinical and other)
- Results and observations
- Queries
- Finances
- Master files and indexes
- Document control
- Scheduling and logistics
- Personnel administration
- Patient care planning
- Network synchronization
- Laboratory automation

What does an HL7 interface do?

An HL7 interface bridges the gaps between your facilities patient registration system, transcription solution and EMR/EHR by using a standard messaging protocol. Because hospitals and other healthcare providers usually have different systems for different aspects of services, they are often unable to communicate with each other. HL7 alleviates that problem by providing the framework for the exchange, integration, sharing and retrieval of electronic health information. HL7 interfaces provide an encrypted and secure means of transferring files. The HL7 is "Level Seven" because its message formats are layered upon the seventh level of the Open Systems Interconnection (OSI) protocol of the International Standards Organization (ISO). Unlike other standards, HL7 specifies almost no restrictions whatsoever on the protocols to be used in the lower layers of the interface. The definitions in HL7 concentrate on the logical arrangement of data and what is meant by information in various parts of the message.

What are the benefits of an HL7 interface?

Costs for healthcare facilities to interface are reduced because HL7 is the worldwide health interface standard and all service and solution providers should be knowledgeable and able to integrate.

By using a HL7 interface engine, health providers can realize the benefits of existing information systems without major reinvestment in new technologies, lowering costs and extending the life and efficiencies of current systems. There is also opportunity to link to systems outside the healthcare provider such as providers of outsourced services like radiology and transcription.
The HL7 interface also improves work flow by allowing medical professionals to focus on their core business activities and provide quality healthcare. Instead of having to write specifications from scratch each time data needs to be sent between two systems, we can make reference to a uniform document whose definitions assist in providing a common understanding to both systems.

One of MedScribe's fastest growing client states: "The importance of turnaround time, quality, and price were the first keys. MedScribe performed on all three as they had promised. What became more important is their knowledge and helpfulness interfacing with our new EMR. They put forth extensive effort to make this happen and without that, our EMR could not perform. They conducted the interface quickly and with expertise. That is when I knew I had a partner, not just a vendor. I recommend MedScribe without hesitation."

MedScribe has been 100% successful in developing HL7 interfaces with HIM systems and will work with your staff to guarantee the secure upload of completed reports.