



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CDC SELECTS SURESCRIPTS TO ELECTRONICALLY LINK
NATION'S HOSPITAL LABS AND PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCIES**

**Surescripts Forms Lab Interoperability Cooperative with American Hospital Association
and College of American Pathologists to Support Meaningful Use**

ARLINGTON, Va. – February 21, 2011 – Surescripts, the American Hospital Association and the College of American Pathologists today announced they have been awarded a grant by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to connect hospital laboratories with public health agencies to electronically transmit data on reportable laboratory results. The three organizations will work together in what the CDC calls a “Lab Interoperability Cooperative.”

During the two-year grant period, the AHA, CAP and Surescripts will recruit, educate and connect a minimum of 500 hospital labs – at least 100 will be critical access or rural hospitals – to the appropriate public health agencies. The cooperative will provide the necessary technical assistance to enable these hospital labs to begin electronically transmitting lab results within six months.

The CDC grant will help hospital laboratories meet criteria established by the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT for meaningful use of EHRs -- criteria that includes submission of electronic data on reportable laboratory results to public health agencies.

Electronic laboratory reporting has many benefits, including improved timeliness of reporting, reduction of manual data entry errors and reports that are more complete. Electronic laboratory reporting has been promoted as a public health priority for the past several years and its inclusion as a meaningful use objective for public health serves as a catalyst to accelerate its adoption.

“The CDC is delighted to work with this diverse cooperative,” said Seth Foldy, director of the Public Health Informatics and Technology Program Office at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. “As a result of this effort, hundreds of hospitals will engage in electronic reporting that helps public health act more rapidly and efficiently to control disease.”

“Today’s announcement is the latest example of how Surescripts is expanding its network to support all types of clinical messaging,” said Harry Totonis, president and CEO of Surescripts. “Our work with the CDC also carries forward the legacy of the Surescripts network’s role in public health initiatives. Whether helping state health officials to monitor the potential spread of the H1N1 virus or providing critical prescription information to those caring for Hurricane Katrina evacuees, these examples combine with the CDC’s latest efforts to underscore the value that clinical interoperability brings to health care providers, their patients and the nation overall.”

“America’s hospitals are working to advance the quality of care they provide to patients and communities through greater adoption and use of electronic health records,” said Rich Umbdenstock, president and CEO of the American Hospital Association. “The challenge now is to extend its use and integrate it into the routine care processes in all hospitals, big and small, in both rural and urban areas and efforts like the one today take us in that direction.”

“This Lab Interoperability Cooperative is another example of how the CAP continues to advance meaningful health information exchange in the laboratory and health IT space,” said Charles Wagner, vice president, CAP STS (SNOMED Terminology Solutions™). “CAP STS specializes in clinical interoperability and systems integration, and we’re committed to improving patient care.”



A Catalyst for Interoperability

While technical standards exist to enable the secure, electronic exchange of lab results, the implementation and use of these standards by the commercial labs, hospitals and providers has been limited. By engaging hospital labs, which handle the majority of lab tests in the United States, the cooperative not only represents a unique opportunity to advance lab interoperability with public health agencies, but with the nation's health care system overall.

By enabling e-prescribing as well as the secure electronic exchange of clinical information (e.g., lab test results, referrals, patient summaries, discharge summaries), the Surescripts network offers broad support for the meaningful use of electronic health records. Taken together, these capabilities facilitate clinical interoperability, helping to improve health care quality and safety while reducing the cost of care. The Surescripts Network for Clinical Interoperability will support all federal and state policies and standards for health information exchange – including privacy and security standards (such as HIPAA and state law), technology interoperability standards (such as NHIN Direct and NHIN Exchange) and message types such as HL7.

In the coming weeks and months, the AHA and CAP will be providing more information to hospital executives and laboratory pathologists on how they can take advantage of this unique opportunity. Those attending this week's HIMSS conference can learn more by visiting the Surescripts booth (#3673).

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About Surescripts

The Surescripts network supports the most comprehensive ecosystem of health care organizations nationwide. Pharmacies, payers, pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs), physicians, hospitals, health information exchanges and health technology firms rely on Surescripts to more easily and securely share health information. Guided by the principles of privacy, security, neutrality, choice, transparency, collaboration and quality, Surescripts operates the nation's largest health information network. By providing that information for routine, recurring and emergency care, Surescripts is committed to saving lives, improving efficiency and reducing the cost of health care for all. For more information, go to www.surescripts.com and follow us at twitter.com/surescripts.

About the AHA

The AHA is a not-for-profit association of health care provider organizations and individuals that are committed to the health improvement of their communities. The AHA is the national advocate for its members, which includes 5,000 hospitals, health care systems, networks, other providers of care and 37,000 individual members. Founded in 1898, the AHA provides education for health care leaders and is a source of information on health care issues and trends. For more information, visit the AHA Web site at www.aha.org.

About CAP STS

CAP STS (SNOMED Terminology Solutions™), a division of the College of American Pathologists (CAP), offers clients services and solutions related to health IT strategy and planning; clinical health information management; and health care standards. CAP STS works with provider organizations, hospitals, health IT vendors, health information exchange initiatives, universities, research centers, and government agencies throughout the world. CAP STS' DIHIT (Diagnostic Intelligence and Health Information Technology) team advances health IT standards, practices, and tools, such as the CAP Diagnostic Work Station initiative; and standardized electronic reporting, including the CAP electronic Cancer Checklists (CAP eCC).

The College of American Pathologists is a medical society serving more than 17,000 physician members and the laboratory community throughout the world. It is the world's largest association composed exclusively of board-certified pathologists and is widely considered the leader in



laboratory quality assurance. The College is an advocate for high-quality and cost-effective patient care. For more information, visit www.capsts.org or write to capsts@cap.org.

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