**- DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION - NO OFFICIAL STATUS -**

**Proposed charter for HL7 ITS subgroup on**

**RDF for Semantic Interoperability**

**Health Level Seven**

*Semantic interoperability is the ability of computer systems to exchange data with unambiguous, shared meaning. (Source: Wikipedia)*

**Mission**

The *RDF for Semantic Interoperability* sub-group seeks to establish semantic interoperability of structured healthcare information by using W3C Resource Description Framework (RDF) and related standards to express machine-processable meaning. It supports the HL7 mission to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of healthcare delivery.

**Charter**

The goal of this sub-group is to facilitate the use of RDF as a common semantic model for interpreting instance data that may originate in any format, data model or vocabulary. The purpose is to enable data to be computable and semantically interoperable. Losslessly representing heterogeneous data in a semantically consistent way is critical to delivering quality healthcare. Semantic clarity is essential for knowledge representation that is sharable and actionable.

This work complements other standardization work, both inside and outside HL7, by offering a common semantic foundation for all healthcare-related information representations. Although this sub-group will encourage and indirectly facilitate convergence toward a set of common, semantically interoperable healthcare data models and vocabularies – potentially spanning many standards – choices about specific healthcare domain models and vocabularies are the responsibility of other groups whose missions are more specifically devoted to making those decisions. This sub-group shall remain neutral about specific healthcare domain models and vocabularies.

Some specific goals:

* Assist domain work groups in creating and adopting W3C RDF and/or Web Ontology Language (OWL) semantic definitions for existing and future healthcare information specifications.
* To assist domain work groups in their creation and adoption of standard mappings to and from RDF to facilitate their needs.
* Encourage the adoption of RDF as an authoritative semantic interpretation of structured healthcare information.
* Encourage the use of RDF as a lossless information exchange language, particularly in situations where the use of other representations could involve information loss.
* Encourage the use of W3C Linked Data best practice in the use of RDF.
* Facilitate convergence on common URIs and URI patterns in the use of RDF.
* Act as a knowledge resource for other work groups, on the most effective use of RDF and related standards.

These goals may be achieved partially through this group's own efforts and partially through the work of others. Much of the group's purpose will be to assist and coordinate with work done by others, both within HL7 and externally.

The purpose of this work is to:

* enable the meaning of any structured instance data to be accurately determined, regardless of the source format, data model or vocabulary in which that data is represented;
* enable domain models and vocabularies to be described and related, using RDF and/or OWL as a common description language;
* encourage community convergence around common RDF domain models and vocabularies, in order to minimize model and vocabulary transformations or mappings during data exchange;
* facilitate accurate semantic transformation and integration of instance data that originates in different formats, data models or vocabularies, using RDF as a common semantic representation;
* facilitate the sharing of model and vocabulary transformation rules and procedures, based on RDF as a common semantic representation; and
* facilitate semantic alignment and consistency within and between healthcare information specifications, using RDF, OWL and related standards.

**Formal Relationships with Other HL7 Groups**

This sub-group will collaborate with other HL7 work groups involved in domain models or vocabularies and the HL7 Terminology Authority as appropriate.

**Formal Relationships with Groups Outside of HL7**

This sub-group will collaborate with the W3C Semantic Web for Healthcare and Life Sciences Interest Group. This sub-group will also collaborate with other relevant external efforts as appropriate, such as IHTSDO (SNOMED CT) and WHO (ICD-11).

**Date of Last Revision**

28-Oct-2014