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Radiation Therapy Equipment Vendors Test System Integration

ASTRO-led Project Aims to Reduce Medical Errors

Fairfax, Va., December 20, 2007 – The American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology hosted an Integrating the Healthcare Enterprise – Radiation Oncology (IHE-RO) connectathon recently at its headquarters in Fairfax, Va., to advance its effort to promote seamless connectivity and integration of radiotherapy equipment and patient health information systems. The connectathon was the final step in a multi-step process that included vendor development, software testing and real-time interconnectivity testing.

Allowing physicians to purchase the best equipment for their practices, regardless of manufacturer, will hopefully reduce medical errors as healthcare staff will no longer have to re-enter information because systems are unable to communicate. This will also allow equipment manufacturers to focus on developing their niche systems rather than forcing them to produce an entire product line.

IHE-RO is a branch of the Integrating the Healthcare Enterprise (IHE) project, which began in 1998 under the direction of the Healthcare Information Management Systems Society and the Radiological Society of North America as a way to improve the way that healthcare computer systems share information. IHE-RO involves the integration of radiotherapy equipment specifically and, when successfully implemented, provides for radiotherapy equipment produced by different vendors to work together and share information more efficiently.

The connectathon participants included BrainLAB, Elekta-IMPAC, Nucletron, Philips, Varian, CMS and TomoTherapy. Participants were required to show their ability to accept information from at least three different vendors and have their information accepted by three different systems.

BrainLAB, Elekta-IMPAC, Nucletron, Philips, Varian and CMS all passed the IHE-RO test suite, which involved computer software testing that the vendors submitted prior to the connectathon in order to validate the base functionality of the products, and the IHE-RO connectathon testing, which was performed between manufacturers live during the connectathon, by proving that the applications they submitted for testing

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conformed to the IHE-RO integration profile. Those vendors were invited to the IHE-RO public demonstration, which was held at ASTRO's 49th Annual Meeting in Los Angeles in October.

“ASTRO is honored to be a leader in such a critical initiative as the IHE project,” said Laura I. Thevenot, ASTRO's chief executive officer. “By ensuring that vendors meet the IHE-RO integration requirements, we are enabling radiation oncology teams to better implement the advanced technology available to them and better communicate vital information to the betterment of men and women undergoing treatment for cancer. I congratulate all the vendors who participated in this initiative.”

IHE-RO will next hold a technical committee meeting and profile pretesting session in March where vendors will conduct tests on two new profiles titled *Multimodality Image Registration for Radiation Oncology* and *Worklists for Simple Imaging and Treatment Delivery Protocols* for possible inclusion in IHE-RO's 2008 connectathon and public demonstration.

ASTRO is the largest radiation oncology society in the world, with more than 9,000 members who specialize in treating patients with radiation therapies. As the leading organization in radiation oncology, biology and physics, the Society is dedicated to improving patient care through education, clinical practice, advancement of science and advocacy.

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