Committee Meeting Summary

General Updates
The Laboratory LOINC Committee convened on June 8, 2017. Dr. Vreeman, Director of LOINC and Health Data Standards at Regenstrief, opened the meeting with an introduction and updates from the LOINC development team, including steady growth and adoption rates. The Regenstrief team announced the completion of the brand new loinc.org website, which went live earlier this year. Dr. Vreeman unveiled several enhancements to LOINC education, including webinars (dubbed LOINCinars) for Premium Members, and a future move to a modular approach for the bi-annual workshops. Additionally, Dr. Vreeman hinted at clarifications and improved structure related to the LOINC Committee, with plans to reveal details at a later meeting. The implementation of the Special Topics Workgroups went well and will remain a part of the Committee workflow.

Upcoming LOINC and RELMA Release
An interim LOINC release occurred in late February (2.59), primarily to update Third Party Attributions that were not incorporated in the December release (2.58). The Regenstrief team used this as an opportunity to thoroughly review and improve the release cycle processes.

Inconsistencies with Streptococcus pneumoniae Components were identified and reviewed in order to determine the best way to represent these Components moving forward. Starting with the June 2017 release, LOINC will be using the Danish serotype system. A technical brief will be included in the LOINC Users’ Guide, which includes information about serotype nomenclature, mappings between Danish and U.S. serotype numbers, and related names.

The Beta LOINC release (2.60) contains 1,060 new LOINC terms. 590 of those terms are laboratory terms, including 260 new Strep pneumoniae terms to replace those that were deprecated. Additional content includes CAP cancer panel terms relating to colorectal and breast cancer panels. The Regenstrief team is working alongside CAP for cancer protocols and this will enable additional content cleanup. There are 329 new clinical terms, including RSNA content, and 141 new survey terms, which are primarily for CMS Assessments. The Regenstrief team made approximately 7,000 term edits, of which 6,000 were in a field other than the six major axes, such as the Long Common Name or DefinitionDescription. 265 terms have been deprecated, nearly all related to Strep pneumoniae. Twelve California encephalitis virus terms were un-deprecated.

Current median turnaround time for a new content submission is 75 days for laboratory and 72 days for clinical requests. There is currently a queue of approximately 3,600 LOINCs; however, 87% of those were requested within the last three months. The remaining 13% are awaiting copyright approvals or committee decisions.

As announced at the December 2016 meeting, the upcoming release will include new LOINC artifacts. First, Regenstrief will publish a LOINC Core Table. The Core file will include a smaller, but stable set of fields that will be a subset of the fields currently published in the full LOINC Table. Additional artifacts include: LOINC Answer, LOINC Parts, and LOINC Groups. Additionally, the Multi-axial hierarchy now contains all LOINC terms, and not a subset. Each top-level branch (except for Attachments) contains a "NotYetCategorized" node, which includes all terms in a given class that could not be placed elsewhere. For now, all of the Survey terms are in the "SurveyNotYetCategorized" node. Over time, we intend to more fully develop the hierarchies in these areas and hope to reduce the number of LOINC terms in "NotYetCategorized" branches.
New changes are proposed for the June 2018 release. This includes renaming LOINC files and artifacts using Pascal case and aligning the Answers tab of the Panels and Forms File with the new AnswerList file.

**Updates from the LOINC Community**

Eight community updates were given. The presentations included: IICC (Ed Heierman); CIMI, HSPC (Stan Huff); CAP (Ray Aller); Mayo Clinic (Joseph Yao); CDISC (Lauren Becnel); FDA (Mike Waters); ACLA (Cindy Johns); 3M (Pam Banning); and Canada Health Infoway (Lorie Carey).

**Committee Business**

The following committee business was addressed:

**Gene Targets**

PCR-based testing for the presence of microorganisms is becoming more common. As genetic testing continues to evolve, distinguishing the analyte will be important to understanding the differences between tests. A Special Topics Workgroup met over the past six months to review and discuss. Final decision: LOINC will create target-specific terms when the target is provided either in the package insert or directly by the manufacturer to Regenstrief (with permission), but will not require information about the target when it is not clinically relevant. In cases where the target information was provided directly by the manufacturer and is not in the package insert, Regenstrief will provide the manufacturer and product (kit) name in the term description in order to help users select the correct code.

**System for Genetic Testing**

Clarification regarding the level of granularity are needed for Systems in human genetic terms. A Special Topics Workgroup met to review and discuss. The workgroup recommendation was to change the System name to Bld/Tiss/Cell so it encompasses blood, all types of tissue, and cells contained in swabs as well as fluids and saliva. The Committee recommended keeping Bld/Tiss as the name but enhancing the definition in the Users’ Guide and the Part description to reflect the current use of the Bld/Tiss System, and having the Workgroup reconvene to discuss this recommendation. A revised System description was drafted for Workgroup review.

**PCR-Based Methods**

A Workgroup was formed to review existing Methods for nucleic acid testing in LOINC and to make a recommendation for moving forward. The Workgroup recommended deprecating Probe.mag capture and creation of terms with Probe as Method where there are no existing Probe terms. The Workgroup also recommended that LOINC Methods continue to capture the concept of amplification and to distinguish between signal and target amplification, and updating the Users' Guide to incorporate more detailed descriptions. Finally, the Workgroup recommended updates to the Long and Short names for all of the nucleic acid testing Methods. The Committee agreed with with these recommendations, and approved them for implementation for the December 2017 release.

**Improving LOINC Display Names**

There is an ongoing conversation about creating display names that are shorter and more descriptive than the current LOINC Display names. Due to funder requirements and philosophy, LOINC is committed to creating and maintaining unambiguous names. In addition, LOINC does not have the authority to declare which name shall be used for display. A Tiger Team previously reviewed the name issue and suggested a 36-character limitation with a shortened 12-character version. There appear to be variations in both motivation and requirements for creating shorter or more descriptive names. A Workgroup was recently formed to review the name issue again and will be expanded to incorporate broader subject matter representation. The Workgroup is tasked with finalizing the requirements and attempting to create shorter display names on a subset of twenty, non-routine, tests as proof of concept. The results will then be disseminated to the Committee for review.