

2 Benefits to Vendors

This section identifies key benefits for vendors arising from implementing SNOMED CT. It summarizes general benefits that encourage adoption, procurement and deployment of SNOMED CT enabled systems. It also notes direct benefits to vendors arising from use of a common global terminology that enables effective meaning-based retrieval, facilitates mapping to ICD-10 and other classifications, and supports localization and customization to meet specific national, regional or specialty requirements. Figure 1 illustrates the benefits to hospitals and clinics who procure SNOMED CT enabled systems; it is also possible to sell SNOMED CT enabled systems to others in the figure such as governments, clinical research establishments, and health funders & providers who too can derive similar benefits.

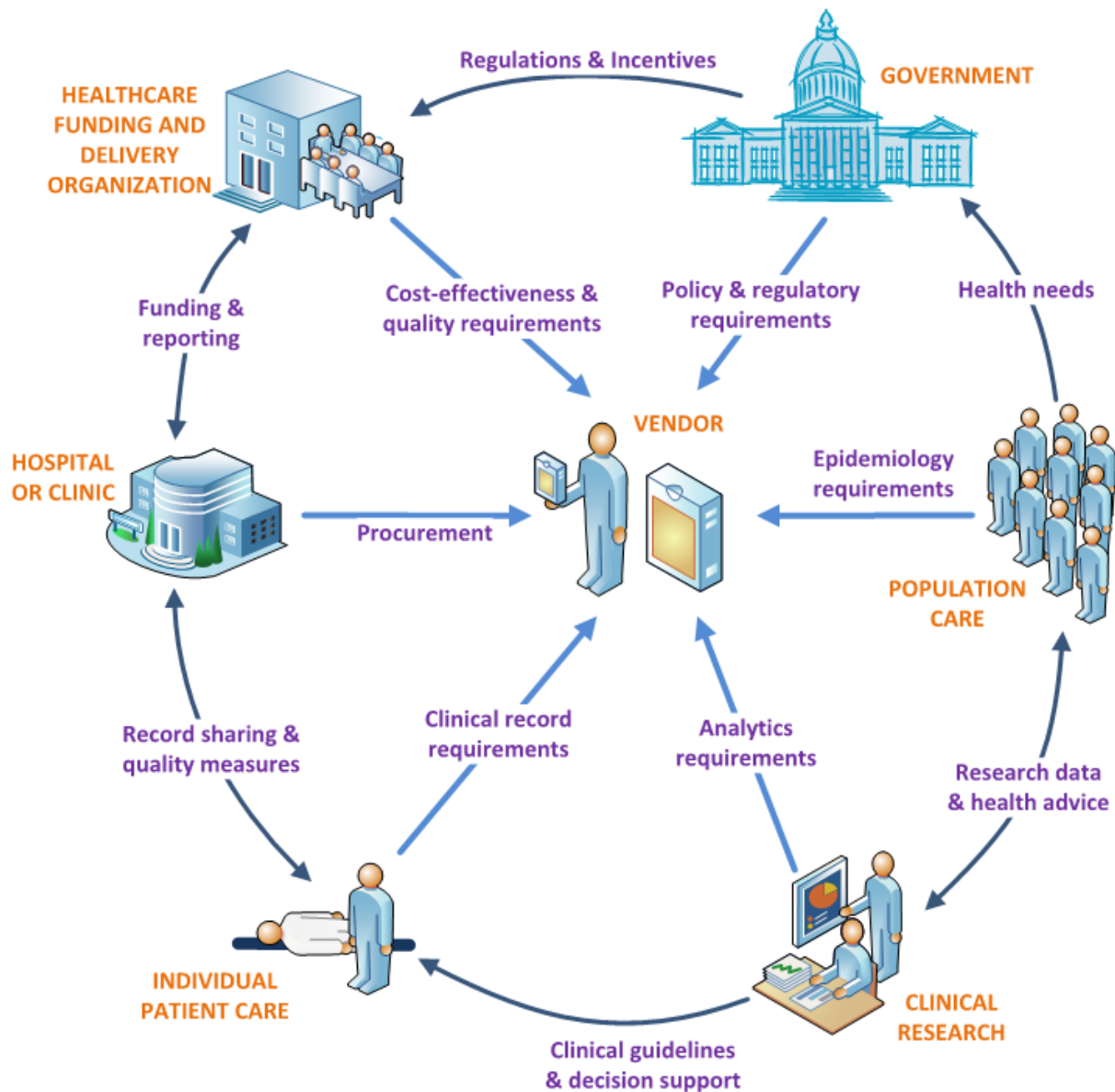


Figure 1. Vendors benefit from the value of SNOMED CT in meeting requirements of a range of stakeholders

General Benefits of SNOMED CT

SNOMED CT supports the consistent representation of comprehensive high-quality clinical content in health records. The value of SNOMED CT is strengthened by its solid clinical validation and a design that facilitates evolutionary growth to meet emerging requirements such as data analytics.

The use of an EHR improves communication and increases the availability of relevant information. If clinical information is stored in ways that allow meaning-based retrieval, the benefits are greatly increased. The added benefits range from increased opportunities for real-time decision support to more accurate retrospective reporting for research and management, as well as enhanced data quality and consistency at the point of data collection. As a result, use of SNOMED CT benefits individual patients and clinicians as well as populations and supports evidence-based care.

SNOMED CT Enabled Health Records Benefit Individuals

SNOMED CT enabled clinical health records benefit clinicians care for individual patients by:

- Enabling relevant clinical information to be recorded using consistent, common representations during a consultation.
- Enabling guideline and decision support systems to check the record and provide real-time advice, for example, through clinical alerts.
- Supporting the sharing of appropriate information with others involved in delivering care to a patient through data capture that allows understanding and interpretation of the information in a common way by all providers.
- Allowing accurate and comprehensive searches that identify cohorts of patients for follow-up or changes of treatment based on revised guidelines.
- Removing language barriers (SNOMED CT is multilingual).

SNOMED CT Enabled Health Records Benefit Populations

SNOMED CT enabled clinical health records benefit policy makers interested in population health by:

- Facilitating early identification of emerging health issues, monitoring of population health and responses to changing clinical practices.
- Enabling accurate and targeted access to relevant information, reducing costly duplications and errors.
- Enabling the delivery of relevant data to support clinical research and contribute evidence for future improvements in treatment.
- Enhancing audits of care delivery by providing capability for detailed analysis of clinical records (e.g. to investigate outliers and exceptions).

SNOMED CT Enabled Health Records Support Evidence-Based Healthcare

SNOMED CT enabled health records inform evidence-based healthcare decisions by:

- Enabling links between clinical records and existing clinical guidelines or protocols.
- Supporting the development of adequate evidence used in the development of clinical guidelines.

Consequently there can be:

- Enhanced quality of care experienced by individuals.
- Reduced costs from inappropriate and duplicative testing and treatment.
- Reduced frequency and impact from adverse healthcare events.
- Increased cost-effectiveness and quality of care delivered to populations.

These general benefits lead to SNOMED CT being increasingly included as part of clinical system procurements in Member countries and elsewhere. Population benefits arising from use of SNOMED CT may also motivate bodies responsible for governance, funding and management of healthcare provision to include it in their strategic plans. As a result, use of SNOMED CT is being increasingly recommended, incentivized or mandated to enable Members to gain the benefits of their investment in and ownership of SNOMED CT.

Strategic Benefits to Vendors

Staying Competitive and Relevant to the Market

- SNOMED CT is increasingly a stated requirement in EHR system procurements
- Even when not explicitly mentioned, SNOMED CT can contribute to meeting procurement requirements related to:
 - Clinical records
 - Decision support
 - Reporting
 - Care quality measures
 - Mapping to ICD-10 and other classifications
 - Standard reference data e.g. allergen list

Selling Into International Markets

- SNOMED CT is designed as global terminology for healthcare
- Products built to use SNOMED CT can be deployed in many different countries
- SNOMED CT is available for free use in Member territories
 - At least 25 countries and membership is continuing to grow
- Member countries welcome systems that make effective use of SNOMED CT
- Several countries specify SNOMED CT as a required or preferred clinical terminology
- SNOMED CT is used in more than eighty countries

Meeting Clinician Expectations

- SNOMED CT makes data collection by busy doctors easy, safe and reusable
- SNOMED CT supports recording at a level of detail appropriate to clinical record keeping

- Greater detail than commonly available from classifications such as ICD
 - Maps to classifications to support allocation of classification codes and avoiding double entry for clinical and classification/reporting purposes
 - Level of clinical detail is aligned to the needs of clinical decision making and clinical decision support systems
- SNOMED CT covers a broad range of clinical concepts required by different clinical specialties
- Enhanced features enabled by SNOMED CT lead to better clinician acceptance which influences procurement decisions and is essential for deployment
- Proven examples of effective clinical systems with innovative features which are enabled by SNOMED CT are key to winning new business

Supporting Standards

- SNOMED CT is a terminology standard for unambiguous representation of clinical information
- Standardization creates bridges for effective communication and reuse of EHR data
- SNOMED CT forms a configurable foundation for national and local standards
- SNOMED International is working with other standards bodies to meet the requirements for interoperability

Retaining Existing Customers

- SNOMED CT can be introduced in a staged manner minimizing disruption to existing customers
- SNOMED CT readiness avoids loss of customers when SNOMED CT requirements are adopted

Practical Benefits to Vendors

Common Terminology

- A single internationally-maintained clinically-validated terminology minimizes the need to support local code systems that duplicate effort and create incompatible solutions
- SNOMED CT covers the broad scope of clinical information represented in health records which can be used to meet the needs of most specialties
- SNOMED CT is regularly updated to keep pace with changing patterns of health and emerging clinical knowledge
- A managed request submission process supports quality-assured additions to SNOMED CT
- The SNOMED CT extension mechanism enables the addition of concepts to meet national or local requirements within the framework of a common terminology

Ease of Adoption

- While Section 4 covers the different ways in which SNOMED CT can be used in an EHR system, the simplest of those can be done quite with minimal effort
- Vendors can choose to implement SNOMED CT natively or choose to integrate with offerings from among the many specialists in terminology services

Enhanced User Interfaces

- SNOMED CT provides navigation hierarchies, and effective techniques to constrain searches
- SNOMED CT provides interface designers with concepts that have an unambiguous meaning and synonyms which they can employ directly
- SNOMED CT also allows searches to be performed over any synonym of a concept, thereby increasing the chances of finding the concept needed

Enhanced Analytics

- SNOMED CT concept definitions enable flexible and powerful querying of clinical information
- Analysis can be further enhanced by tools that exploit description logic inferencing i.e. computation which utilizes the [defining relationships](#) of concepts

Using Clinical Data to Meet External Reporting Requirements

- SNOMED CT maps enable clinical data to be reused to report statistical and management data using other code systems and classifications

Integration of Third Party Products

- Use of SNOMED CT enables systems to use common services that add functionality to an EHR system. For example:
 - Integration with guideline and decision support services based on knowledge encoded using SNOMED CT
 - A common example of this is the providers of medication knowledge bases to support prescribing decision support
 - Integration with add-on products and services to facilitate the management of specific diseases or participation in clinical research projects

Adapting to Meet Requirements

- SNOMED CT enables configuration to meet the various requirements of:
 - Multi-lingual environments
 - Different clinical specialties
 - Different clinical settings
 - Support for different types of implementation
- Vendors can use the configurability of SNOMED CT to meet diverse user requirements, but from a common platform
- Elements of a configuration can be reused to meet similar use cases