

# 3 KEY STEPS to Healthcare Data Governance Success



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*Some healthcare organizations have tried to institute data governance programs, only to be disappointed with their results. Many others, however, haven't even scratched the surface because they are uncertain where and how to start. This paper offers sound advice for all data users – the data citizens - looking to build and use a data governance framework to build confidence in the accuracy, access, and applicability of healthcare data.*

Many healthcare professionals—on both the technical and business sides of the spectrum—understand that data governance is essential to deal with the ever-increasing volume, variety, and velocity of data.

But data governance has historically been an elusive goal in a dynamic, complex industry with data expanding at astronomical rates. Just how much data are we talking about? A landmark industry study from just a few years ago indicated that healthcare industry data will have increased from 153 exabytes in 2013 to more than 2,300 exabytes by 2020—a 48% compound annual growth rate.<sup>1</sup>As a result, healthcare organizations have often struggled to come up to speed on data governance: One study from AHIMA noted that 32% of organizations reported that “progress has not yet occurred” on information governance, while another 31% said only modest progress had been made in the previous 12 months.<sup>2</sup>

Getting started with data governance is no easy task. But there are three steps your organization can take today in order to successfully implement and optimize a healthcare data governance program:

### STEP 1

Reduce complexity. Healthcare data is, by nature, complex. That's not going to change. But the astounding expansion of volume and variety of healthcare data has made it more difficult than ever for employees to locate the right data for the right job, and to feel fully confident in the accuracy and timeliness of the data. And it's not just the expanding regulatory footprint, the applications beyond the linchpin Electronic Medical Records (EMRs) or the emergence of new data capture and collaboration devices such as smartphones, wearable computers, and Internet of Things (IoT)-based smart medical equipment. Healthcare data can be defined and used in different ways, for clinical, regulatory, and financial systems. Data governance reduces complexity by providing context for the data. That way, users can easily identify the data's source, lineage, ownership, and more. And this context gives users confidence that the data they are using is right for the job at hand.

### STEP 2

Communicate and collaborate with less-technical stakeholders. Data governance is not just a technology issue, and it is not the sole purview of the IT department. Far from it, in fact. Data governance is about instilling trust and confidence in those that are most likely to benefit from accurate, timely and actionable data. And that includes the business users who often lack deep technical skills and who may otherwise be dissuaded from diving into data analytics

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<sup>1</sup>“How CIOs Can Prepare For Healthcare Data Tsunami,” CIO, December 2015

<sup>2</sup>“Information Governance Crucial as Providers Rely on Quality of Data,” Health Data Management, June 2016

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for fear of being overwhelmed by technology. Less-technical users—and not just those with a deep understanding of specific applications like EMRs, ERP and clinical documentation—need context around the data to be able to understand its applicability to their business problem. For example, is the report they are viewing using the finance or clinical quality definition of “length of stay?” And those in charge of data governance efforts should avoid making business stakeholders leave their applications to go searching for additional data points and data definitions, or request customized reports that may be time-consuming to produce. Instead, make that data available to them within the context of how a business user uses the data to do their job.

### STEP 3

Have a bias for action. Things are moving faster than ever for healthcare organizations. So while having a well-thought-out game plan is important, it’s vital that organizations put data governance into action ASAP. That way, organizations can achieve incremental learning and can build on those lessons, expanding their programs to other functions, departments, data types, and applications. Start by breaking down the data challenges in your organization, and pick a single, significant pain point to attack. Many organizations start by creating a searchable catalog of existing reports. This catalog significantly reduces the time users spend looking for the information they need. And, it prevents them from re-creating reports that already exist. Then, select a few key stakeholders from both IT and business groups, and consider establishing a data governance team if one is not already in place. Finally, make flexibility your watchword when designing systems and establishing priorities. Data governance is unquestionably a rules-based paradigm, but your organization will likely see those rules “evolving” over time based on the emergence of new data, new applications, new user needs and new business conditions.

### ONE PLATFORM TO CONSIDER: COLLIBRA

Data governance stakeholders and decision makers in the healthcare field should look for a platform that puts data trustworthiness, automation, and collaboration among all levels of data usage expertise as their overriding deliverables. The Collibra Data Governance Center is an enterprise-wide solution that helps all data citizens:

- Find essential information among a vast array of reports, dashboards, and metrics from EMRs or other applications, including those built in-house.
- Extract and understand critical context for the data to increase both understanding of the data and confidence in it.
- Align data to meet clinical quality and compliance reports.
- Build, operate, and manage a technology-neutral metadata management platform for both technical and business data.
- Navigate the often-complex and ever-expanding scope of clinical vocabularies and data assets.
- Apply and automate security and governance policies to enterprise data for compliance, legal, and patient privacy requirements.

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## **CONCLUSION**

Data governance is essential to creating a sense of trust and confidence for healthcare data citizens who need accurate, timely, and insightful information. A key requirement in any data governance platform is the ability to integrate and assimilate data from multiple applications—not just EMRs—and an increasing array of devices from personal devices to IoT-based in-home monitoring, instruments, and tomorrow's cutting-edge diagnostic equipment.

Healthcare professionals on both the IT and business sides of the organization should consider the Collibra data governance platform to create a trustworthy data environment, automate governance processes and enable non-technical data citizens to use data for improved clinical, regulatory, and financial outcomes.

For more information about how the Collibra Data Governance Center can help healthcare organizations move toward an actionable and successful data governance program, please visit [www.collibra.com/healthcare](http://www.collibra.com/healthcare).